A New Country

by Angela Blanco

Genre
- Realistic Fiction

Build Background
- Culture and Customs
- Adaptation
- Friendship

Access Content
- Definitions
- Captions

Extend Language
- Verb Ending –ed

Scott Foresman Reading Street 3.5.3

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Question of the Week
Why is it hard to adapt to a new culture?

Key Comprehension Skill
Sequence of Events

Concept Words
relatives polite

Learning Goals
• It is hard to learn what to do in a new culture.
• Different cultures do things in different ways.
• Different cultures have different languages.
My name is Ángela. A year ago, my family came to the United States. We moved from Cartagena, Colombia, to New York City.

We moved because my father got a job in New York City. He is a doctor.

I was excited! I like to do new things and meet new people.

Moving here was easy for my parents. They had visited New York many times. They speak English very well. They studied in the United States for many years.
But moving to the United States has not been so easy for me. I thought I knew English. I was wrong!

At the airport in New York City, I was surprised. Everyone spoke so quickly! It was hard for me to understand them. And when I spoke, people could not always understand me.

There were other differences. In Cartagena we lived in a house. We had a garden with lemon trees. In New York, we live in an apartment. We have no garden.

But then I made friends with Luisa. She lives in our building. Luisa is from Mexico. She speaks Spanish and English.
Luisa helped me understand many things. “Many people here do not visit their families often,” she said. “It is different in Colombia and Mexico.”

Sometimes I am homesick. I miss my relatives in Colombia. I saw them all the time. We had parties and big meals together.

Luisa described other differences. “In Mexico, we greet people with a kiss on the cheek. Not here! Here you smile and say, ‘Hi.’”

I said, “In Colombia, it is polite to leave some food on your plate at a meal.”

“But here,” Luisa said, “it is polite to eat everything on your plate.”

**relatives**: family members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins

**polite**: good manners
It is hard to learn what to do in a new country. So many things are different! How can you learn what to do? I can tell you. Find a friend like Luisa. Luisa is a great teacher. We are also best friends.

Talk About It
1. Why does Ángela have trouble understanding the people speaking English at the airport?
2. How is Luisa a good friend?

Write About It
3. When someone moves to the United States, they may find things that are new or different. Write about how you would explain an American custom to someone new to our country.

Extend Language
The verb ending –ed tells us that the action happened in the past. We moved because my father got a job in New York City. Luisa helped me understand many things. What other –ed verbs can you find in this story?