

## Lesson 5 Explore the Amazing World

### A Law as a Window to Culture

Hello and welcome to today's show, Amazing World.

I am your MC, Junyoung Park, and with me are

Matilde from Switzerland, Chen from Singapore, and

Sophia from Italy. Today, we are going to talk about

interesting laws from around the world. Our guests

are here to share unique laws from their own

countries that may be interesting to others. They will

further explain why such laws were created, based on

their countries' cultural and historical backgrounds.

Matilde, can you share one from Switzerland?

Sure. Switzerland is very concerned about the welfare of not only humans, but also animals. In fact, it is one of the world's most animal-friendly countries, earning the support of many animal lovers. In 2008, the Swiss government made it a requirement for social animals that typically live in groups, like goldfish, rabbits, or guinea pigs, to be kept in pairs. In other words, it is illegal to own and raise just one goldfish, one rabbit, or one guinea pig. This law recognizes that social animals will experience loneliness if left alone and considers this to be a case of animal abuse. In my case, I raised two guinea pigs when I was young. When one of them died, I had to get another one. Otherwise, I would have been fined. There are additional laws in place to guarantee animals' quality of life. For example, Switzerland is known to be the only European country requiring all dogs to be microchipped and registered in the country's database. This is to stop the illegal trade of dogs. As these laws suggest, you can tell how much Switzerland cares about animal welfare.

I can tell how passionate Switzerland is about animals. Chen, what about Singapore? Are there any interesting laws?

In Singapore, there is a famous law about chewing gum. Chewing gum sales and imports are prohibited in the nation, and violators face fines of up to 2,000 Singapore dollars. Although the law itself is quite well-known internationally, I imagine that many of you are unaware of its historical context. Singapore was a small nation with limited resources when it gained independence. The nation's prime minister at the time came up with strategies to boost national prosperity, one of which was to transform the nation into an "oasis" for tourists in Asia. In order to accomplish this, he emphasized cleanliness and orderliness, which resulted in the establishment of the gum ban in 1992. At that time, chewing gum left on streets, roads, and stairs diminished the country's beauty and raised the cleaning costs. The country's ban on chewing gum has become one of the most well-known aspects of life in Singapore, along with its laws against improperly throwing away trash and spitting in public. These laws being implemented, people could enjoy clean public spaces. Today, Singapore leads the world in terms of cleanliness and welcomes millions of tourists every year.

Yes, I remember Singapore as a clean and pleasant country to visit. Sophia, can you tell us about an interesting law in Italy?

As you know, people from all over the world visit Rome, the capital of Italy. Unfortunately, some tourists' actions caused severe damage to the city's historical monuments. So, the city had to establish a number of laws to protect its numerous historical sites. One of them was to forbid adding a lock to any bridge in Rome. You may have heard that to symbolize their love forever, many couples carve their names on locks and attach them to a bridge. However, as the weight of the locks increases the pressure on bridges, they are no longer permitted. Even the existing ones have been removed since 2012. This law was also introduced in Venice so that locks could no longer damage the famous Rialto Bridge.

In addition, people are not allowed to go into the city's iconic Trevi Fountain. Although you may be tempted to dip your toes into the cool fountain water on a hot summer day, it is illegal to do so. Sitting on Rome's famed Spanish Steps has also been banned since 2019. If you don't follow this law, you are made to pay a fine ranging from €250 to €450. All of these laws are committed to protecting the city's historical monuments.

Considering the large number of tourists from all over the world, it is understandable why Italy passed these regulations to protect its priceless monuments. Thank you for sharing all these interesting laws with us, Matilde, Chen, and Sophia. Some of the laws may initially appear to be difficult to understand. However, now that you have learned the stories behind them, I am sure you understand why they were put in place. Knowing the unique cultural and historical contexts of these laws will help you appreciate them better.