Wardrobe or Closet?
Revised selection – original text by Anna Waszczuk, Shoreview
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To Open Your Mind, 2004 Edition

Pre-reading

Questions:
- What is a wardrobe?
- Where would you find one?

Definitions:
- Bare – not filled or covered; empty
- Convenient – easily used for someone’s needs or purposes; useful
- Practical – able to be used; useful

Reading

Foreigners have to get used to a lot of different things in America. One thing is closets.

Each bedroom in America has a huge closet. It is not movable, and it takes up a lot of space.

Some closets do not have doors. You cannot tightly close these closets, so dust gets in them easily.

People store more than just clothes in closets. They store things like toys, seasonal items, and even shoes. People from Poland do not store shoes in a closet. We believe shoes are dirty and do not smell nice.

Instead of closets, we have wardrobes in Poland. When you move into a house, there are four bare walls in the bedrooms. You buy your own wardrobe in whatever design and size you like. You can place it wherever you want. You do not have to have a wardrobe in a bedroom.

The word “closet” is an odd word for us because “closet” in Polish means toilet. It feels strange for us to say, “Put your clothes in the closet,” or “Your coat is in the closet.” There have been many misunderstandings and funny situations with the “closet/toilet” word.

After getting used to the American way of life, we now find that closets are nice and convenient. We can store lots of things in them. We especially like walk-in closets, which are even more spacious than regular closets. You can put very big items in them!

Even though I thought closets were not a good idea at first, now I would rather have closets in my home than a wardrobe. Closets are more practical.
Understanding

1. What country is the author from? __________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

2. What does the word *spacious* mean? __________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

3. How are closets and wardrobes similar? __________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

4. How are closets and wardrobes different? __________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

5. What does the word *store* mean in this story? __________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

6. How has the author’s idea of closets changed? __________________________
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Writing

**Choice A:** Retell the story in your own words.

**Choice B:** Write about a funny misunderstanding you have had or have heard about.

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