

Practicing Good Manners

What to Know

By practicing good manners, you show the people around you that you respect them and are considerate of their feelings.

Good manners can be the difference between harmony and conflict at home or school. They make life more enjoyable for you and for anyone you meet. If you have good manners, you will make a positive impression. When you know the acceptable behaviors for any situation your confidence improves, and you will feel more comfortable. Here are some tips to practice good manners.

Be courteous. Say words like "please" and "thank you" when someone helps you. Say, "I'm sorry," if you need to apologize, or, "Excuse me," when you must interrupt or accidentally bump into someone. Write a thank you note to someone who does something kind for you.

Introduce yourself by name when you meet someone for the first time. If you're meeting someone you haven't met before, introduce yourself by name and ask them what their name is. When they say their name, repeat it so you have a better chance at remembering it. Offer your hand for a handshake and use a firm grip. If you're with another person and you meet someone you already know, be sure to introduce them to one another if they haven't met before.

Always be on time. If you say you are going to be somewhere at a certain time, show up when you say you will.

Respect others' personal space. Some people don't like to be touched. It can make them feel uncomfortable. Be aware of how close you're standing or sitting next to others and watch their face and body language to see how they feel. If they don't seem comfortable, give them more space.

Avoid calling attention to traits such as gender or physical appearance. Paying too much attention to certain traits can make others feel as if you don't see them as individuals, but only as a type or member of a group. Instead, show interest in their life by asking about their hobbies and interests. You might compliment their choice of clothes or shoes.

Keep yourself clean. Whether you are going to school or staying home, it's important to smell good. It's rude to expect others to spend time with you if you have poor hygiene.

Be mindful of your body functions. Burping, blowing your nose, and farting should be done in private. Excuse yourself from the group to move to a more private place.

Eating. Eat slowly and use your utensils whenever necessary. Use your napkin often to keep your face and hands clean. Chew with your mouth closed. Be courteous to the person feeding you. If you don't like the food, don't say, "ewwww!" or make faces.

- **Keep devices off the table so you don't get distracted.** Avoid setting your phone or tablet on the table while you're eating since they can distract you. Set your phone to silent or vibrate and keep it in a pocket or bag. If you need to respond to a text or take a phone call, excuse yourself from the table first by saying, "Excuse me, I need to take this. I'll be right back."
- **Wait until everyone else has been served before you start eating.** Don't start eating immediately because it's rude to start if people don't have their food. Instead, wait while everyone serves themselves or gets served before you take your first bite.
- **Ask someone else at the table to pass things to you.** Avoid reaching across the table. Instead, ask the person closest to the thing you want to pass it to you. Once you receive the item, thank them.
- **Excuse yourself from the table if you need to get up.** If at any point during the meal you need to go to the bathroom, check your phone, or leave, say, "excuse me," before standing up so others know you need to leave the table.

This worksheet will help you practice good manners.

What to Do

First, answer the following questions.

Your friend invites you to dinner and the food looks gross. What should you do?

You just took a bite of food when your grandma asks you a question. What should you do?

Your aunt sent you a gift through the mail. She knows it arrived. Is there anything for you to do in this situation?

A new student joined your class. What might you say to make them feel comfortable?

You accidentally knocked your dad's mug of coffee on to the floor. What should you do?

You're talking to your friends when another friend walks up. She doesn't know these friends. What should you do?

Your sister is angry that you borrowed her shirt and calls you a mean name. What should you do?

- a. call her a name back b. ignore her c. apologize to her

You accidentally bang your grocery cart into someone at the store. What should you do?

Your friend's birthday invitation says the party starts at 3:00. What time should you arrive?

- a. 3:15 b. 2:30 c. 3:00

The next time you eat a meal with other people, practice the "eating" tips described above. Describe what happened. What was easy? What was hard? Did anyone comment about your good table manners? What did they say?
