

10 Basic Rules of Etiquette

1. How to Dine

When invited to a pre-arranged meal, always use your utensils from the "outside in." After all, utensils are set in the order that food will be served.

2. Telephone Manners

When calling a friend, identify yourself to the person who answers the phone before asking to speak your friend. By doing so, the parents or other family member who answer the phone will appreciate this courtesy and see you as friendly.

3. On Correspondence

Anytime it takes someone more than 15 minutes of their time on something they have done for you, you should send the person a thank-you note. By doing so, the person will know you really appreciated what was done for you. You should also use thank-you notes for any special gift, task, or comment, regardless of the amount of time involved.

4. Be Gracious

When you are sent an invitation that requires an RSVP, be sure to let the person know if you will be able to go to the gathering. After all, "RSVP" means "respond if you please."

5. Be Open to New Foods

When you are invited out to eat and are served a food that is not your favorite, try a piece of it anyway. You may be surprised and find that you end up liking it. If you don't, you are welcome to leave the item on your plate – just don't make a scene about it.

6. Be Prompt

Always try to arrive on time. Don't keep people waiting on you.

And leave promptly from events that have a specific ending time, unless you are staying to help clean up. (It's never a bad idea to ask if your help is needed!)

7. Ask Questions

When talking with friends and family, always make a point of asking them questions about themselves. People will see you as interesting if you are interested in them.

8. At the Table

Know the basic rules of etiquette at the table:

- Elbows off the table, unless food hasn't been served and you are leaning forward to listen intently to another guest.
- When eating a roll, be sure to break off a bite-sized piece at a time. No bread-and-butter sandwiches, please.
- Small bites, small drinks – chew and swallow thoroughly before you speak. Never talk with your mouth full.
- Set your utensils down on your plate between bites so you aren't waving them around during conversation.

9. Be Friendly

When you are in school, be cool by making a point to talk with that new kid in your class. If the tables were turned, wouldn't that make you feel good?

10. The Rule of Twelve

When talking with others, always use a form of thanks and the person's name in the first 12 words you speak ("It's good to see you, Mary," or "Thanks for picking me up from soccer, Dad.") By following this rule of 12, people will want to continue to do nice things for you.