

## Doing the right thing

### 1 Reading

Look at these words and answer the questions.

What do you think the text will say about these things?

Read the text and check your ideas. Were you right?

knife and fork plate shaking hands waiting in line prices

## *Am I doing it right?*

- 1 **W**hat we say in different situations is important, but sometimes what we do or how we behave is just as important. One of the biggest problems is that our behavior is not the same everywhere in the world. The etiquette (the way we behave in certain social situations) will depend on the culture of the country.
- 5 One area where there are lots of “rules” about the way we should behave is food. It is very easy to find ourselves in an embarrassing situation because we didn’t know what was expected. In most countries, it is impolite to start eating until everyone has been served and often the host or head of the family will say something such as “Enjoy your meal”. However, once we’ve started eating, there are many differences. In the U.S., it is rude to make too much noise when you are eating, but in some
- 10 countries if you are too quiet, people may think you are not enjoying your food. It is quite normal to smack your lips and make fairly loud noises to indicate your appreciation. How we eat the food can differ a lot as well. Do you pick up food with your hands, eat with chopsticks, or use a knife and fork? And do you leave any food on your plate? In the U.S., it is polite to finish all the food you are given, but in China, if you empty your plate, your host will give you more food because you must still be
- 15 hungry. You need to be careful, otherwise you’ll never stop eating!
- Meeting and greeting people is also an area that can be confusing. Should you shake hands with both men and women, kiss people on the cheek (and if so, how many times?), or is it not polite to touch people (especially if you’ve never met before)? Getting it right can be difficult and, of course, if you get it wrong, it can be very embarrassing.
- 20 This brings us to personal space. In the U.S., people stand in line when waiting for a bus, waiting to pay in a store, entering a movie theater or theater, and in many other situations. But you must not stand too close to the person in front of you. If you do, they are likely to become nervous and will start to glance at you. This idea of an acceptable distance also works when you are speaking to someone. Standing too close is regarded as rude, but how do you know how far away you should stand?
- 25 Finally, shopping can be quite an experience in some countries. If you go to markets in many places around the world, you will be expected to haggle when buying something. Often you end up paying half the amount that the person originally asked for the item. However, this kind of behavior is very unusual in the U.S., and often people will be offended if you start saying you don’t want to pay the original price. So, knowing how to behave and where each kind of behavior is normal can be quite
- 30 a challenge. One way of finding out what you should do is watch people around you and follow the way they do things. It doesn’t always work, but at least you are less likely to do something that will upset the locals.



## 2 Comprehension

Read the text again. Then read the sentences and write *T* (True), *F* (False) or *N* (Not given).

- |    |  |                                     |
|----|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1  | Etiquette is the same wherever you are.                                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2  | In most countries, people start eating as soon as they get their food.     | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 3  | In the U.S., people are fairly quiet when they are eating.                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 4  | In China, you should leave some food on your plate at the end of the meal. | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 5  | You should shake hands with both men and women in the U.S.                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 6  | It is OK to stand near someone when you are standing in line in the U.S.   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 7  | In the U.S., people stand about half a meter apart when they are talking.  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 8  | Bargaining about the price of something is quite usual in many countries.  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 9  | In the U.S., people might be upset if you argue about the price.           | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 10 | You should always apologize if you upset someone because of your behavior. | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

## 3 Vocabulary

Find words in the text which mean:

- rude, not the way you should behave \_\_\_\_\_
- a person who invites people for a meal or party in their home \_\_\_\_\_
- make a loud sound \_\_\_\_\_
- to show something \_\_\_\_\_
- a feeling when you like something a person does and it makes you happy \_\_\_\_\_
- things used by Chinese people for eating their food \_\_\_\_\_
- give someone a quick look \_\_\_\_\_
- something that most people think is OK or can be allowed \_\_\_\_\_
- to bargain about the price of something \_\_\_\_\_
- upset by something someone does or says \_\_\_\_\_

## 4 Speaking

Work in groups and discuss these questions.

- How would you behave in each situation described in the text in your country?
- What types of behavior would upset people in your country?
- How can people learn about the etiquette of your country?