

Which is more polite?

business manners/ cultural training/ business socialising

Student A: Business manners 1

Work in groups of two to four students, with different worksheets each. Choose one of the questions on your worksheet, choose someone from your group, circle the answer they think they will give, ask them, and tell them what answer you predicted. Discuss for longer if you like, then take turns doing the same.

Is it more polite to:

1. interrupt your meeting or phone call to greet the person who has arrived to speak to you next, or give your full attention to the person who was speaking you first?
2. give a foreign person who has joined the company a nickname, or just carry on mispronouncing their real name?
3. call your colleagues by their first name or by their surname?
4. call your colleagues by their name or by their job title?
5. stop a meeting if someone comes in late and greet them, or just carry on speaking?
6. mention a female colleague's new outfit, or say nothing?
7. say goodbye loudly as you leave work early, or just slip out?
8. mention that a colleague looks tired or unwell and ask if they are okay, or say nothing?
9. tell your boss you think it's a bad idea, or just say yes and then delay and not do it?
10. correct someone who is using your name wrongly to save them embarrassment later, or just say nothing?
11. cough to get someone's attention, or say something with actual words?

When your teacher stops you, look at all four worksheets and ask about any you are wondering about, predicting your teacher's answer (related to their own country/ culture) each time.

Make similar questions for each other and/ or for your teacher.

Student B: Business manners 2

Work in groups of two to four students, with different worksheets each. Choose one of the questions on your worksheet, choose someone from your group, circle the answer they think they will give, ask them, and tell them what answer you predicted. Discuss for longer if you like, then take turns doing the same.

Is it more polite to:

1. ask for someone's name again, or just try avoiding using their name until someone else uses it?
2. tell your boss you still don't understand their instructions, or say you understand then ask one of your colleagues to explain it to you?
3. tell a client you don't know, or make up some information or an explanation and get back to them again later if you need to correct it?
4. sack a long-term employee who has nothing useful to do, or give them less and less work until they realize they are not needed?
5. complain to your colleague directly about their work, or go to your boss to complain?
6. stand close to each other during a handshake, or stand far apart while doing so?
7. use two hands when shaking hands, or just use one?
8. use a firm grip when shaking hands, or use a loose grip?
9. start speaking to a new foreign colleague or client in the local language and then switch to English if you need to, or start speaking in English?
10. keep eye contact when you are apologising, or avoid eye contact when saying sorry?
11. bow the best you can even if it's the wrong angle, or insist on shaking hands?

When your teacher stops you, look at all four worksheets and ask about any you are wondering about, predicting your teacher's answer (related to their own country/ culture) each time.

Make similar questions for each other and/ or for your teacher.

Student C: Hospitality

Work in groups of two to four students, with different worksheets each. Choose one of the questions on your worksheet, choose someone from your group, circle the answer they think they will give, ask them, and tell them what answer you predicted. Discuss for longer if you like, then take turns doing the same.

Is it more polite to:

1. help the host and hostess clear the table and wash up, or just enjoy their hospitality?
2. ask where the toilet is, or just try to find it yourself?
3. say why you can't come to a party, or just say too are busy?
4. arrive on time to a dinner party at someone's house, or arrive a little late?
5. sit back comfortably on your friend's sofa, or sit on the front edge attentively?
6. bring a party to a close by making coffee, asking if they will have any problems getting home or bringing their coats?
7. leave quickly when it's time to leave someone's house, or carry on chatting at the front door?
8. make up a false excuse for not coming to the dinner party, or just say that you can't make it?
9. say you will phone someone to arrange to meet up later and then not phone, or just say that you can't meet?
10. insist on paying for your date's meal, or let them go Dutch?

When your teacher stops you, look at all four worksheets and ask about any you are wondering about, predicting your teacher's answer (related to their own country/ culture) each time.

Make similar questions for each other and/ or for your teacher.

Student D: Others

Work in groups of two to four students, with different worksheets each. Choose one of the questions on your worksheet, choose someone from your group, circle the answer they think they will give, ask them, and tell them what answer you predicted. Discuss for longer if you like, then take turns doing the same.

Is it more polite to:

1. blow your nose in public or keep sniffing?
2. reply with a different greeting, or use the same one in reply?
3. visit your new neighbours, or wait for them to visit you?
4. openly cry at a funeral, or hide your emotions?
5. talk to another guy in the toilet or just ignore them?
6. move past people (for example in a row of cinema seats) with your back to them or with your front facing them?
7. tell someone a new dress looks bad, or let them carry on wearing it?
8. tell a Chinese person visiting England for the first time that they have chosen an inappropriate English name, or just let them carry on using it?
9. show the number two with your palm towards you, or with your palm facing out?
10. thank someone for a compliment, or just say it's not true?
11. say something when people sneeze, or just ignore it?
12. say sorry many times, or just use a stronger phrase once?

When your teacher stops you, look at all four worksheets and ask about any you are wondering about, predicting your teacher's answer (related to their own country/ culture) each time.

Make similar questions for each other and/ or for your teacher.