

Hi, this is Ross from Learning without Borders. Welcome to part two of my podcast on British manners and etiquette.

In the first part we looked at how to say "hello", so now it's time to look at some other things that are important to consider, especially if you're meeting somebody at their house.

First, let's talk about gifts. When invited to someone's home, it is normal to take along a box of good chocolates, a good bottle of wine or flowers. This doesn't need to be done every time you visit someone, but it's considered polite at more organised occasions, such as a dinner party, where the host will have gone to some effort to provide for you. Chocolates are an especially good way of contributing to the occasion as they are something that can be shared among guests. Note that gifts are opened when received!

Whilst at a social occasion it may be acceptable to be "fashionably late", this idea shouldn't be taken too far – especially if there aren't many guests. The more guests are at an event, the later you can get away with turning up without it causing anyone inconvenience. When it comes to more formal occasions, however, the Brits are generally punctual. Being late for a business event is an absolute no-no and could damage the business relationship. The Brits consider it very impolite if you turn up late for an appointment. Call even if you will be 5 minutes later than agreed. If you have been delayed or cannot make the appointment, then make an effort to contact the person to let them know. It is a good idea to telephone and offer your apologies.

Do not sit down at once when you arrive; it's a good idea to go around the room greeting other people first. Table manners are Continental, i.e. the fork is held in the left hand and the knife in the right while eating. When you finish eating, lay your knife and fork parallel across the right side of your plate. remember If you have not finished eating, cross your knife and fork on your plate with the fork over the knife. Regarding conversation, it's generally frowned upon to discuss politics or religion, except with people you know well, and money matters should always be avoided.

If invited to a meal at a restaurant, the person extending the invitation usually pays. Usually Starters will be served first, followed by the main course, before dessert. When discussing business over dinner, be prepared to back up your claims with facts and figures. Brits rely on facts, rather than emotions, to make decisions.