

Etiquette for a gentleman

The Victorians were very fond of etiquette, or rules, for how to behave. Here are some rules of behaviour for a middle- or upper-class man to follow. The boys in the class should try them out to see if they can remember them.

Introducing a gentleman to a lady

Ask the lady of your acquaintance if she wishes to be introduced then introduce the gentleman to the lady. Never introduce the lady to the gentleman.

When a gentleman is introduced to a lady

Do not shake hands – bow.

The wearing of gloves

When a gentleman is out of doors in town he must wear gloves.

When a gentleman meets other gentlemen friends in the street

Remove your hat with your left hand and shake hands with your right.

When a gentleman meets a lady whom he knows well in the street

The gentleman turns and walks with the lady. He does not stop her. When the couple have finished talking the gentleman bids her good day and returns to walking in his original direction.

When a gentleman meets a lady he does not know well in the street

He waits for her to recognise him before he bows. If she does not recognise him he walks on.

When walking along the street with a lady

Always let the lady walk next to the wall. In this way you can protect her from the splashes of carriages and the jostling of other people on the pavement. This also allows her to walk on the cleanest part of the pavement.

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Age range

- Years 3/4 (SP4/5).
- Years 5/6 (SP6/7).

Resources

Copies of the worksheet. Gloves, hats.

Using the worksheet

You may like to use this activity to show the rules of behaviour which middle- and upper-class men followed. It could be tried after activity **8** on pages 70–71. These rules were also followed by lower-class people who aspired to be thought of as higher class. There were many sets of rules for all occasions. Here are some rules concerned with meeting people and behaving in the company of ladies while walking in the street. Although the activity is concerned with the behaviour of the boys, girls are also needed to set the scene. You may like one or more boys to put on their hats and gloves and one or more girls take part in the introductions and street 'scenes'. After the activity you may like to ask the students about how they would like to cope with remembering different sets of rules for different occasions. They may like to consider how people should behave when someone makes a mistake.



Older students

The students can make up a small play in which the rules are to be applied then act it out to the class.

Outcomes

The students can:

- Appreciate that there were rules for behaviour in Victorian times.
- Follow some simple rules.
- Remember some simple rules.

Younger students

The students may need directions for each item of etiquette and perhaps a small number can demonstrate the activities to the class. Students who have watched the display may then try and see if they can follow the rules.

Outcomes

The students can:

- Appreciate that there were rules for behaviour in Victorian times.
- Follow some simple rules.
- Remember some simple rules.