

Proposal:

American Etiquette Society

**AMERICAN
ETIQUETTE
SOCIETY**

About us

We aim to be a central body for the advancement, research, and visibility of etiquette education.

Agenda

- What is etiquette and why does it matter?
- What is the current state of etiquette in America?
- What gap does the American Etiquette Society seek to fill?
- Proposal for a new Society
- Conclusion & Next Steps

What is etiquette?

Etiquette refers to the accepted practices, customs, and codes of polite behavior that guide how we interact with others in society. Its primary purpose is to show respect, minimize conflict, maximize cooperation, and make people feel valued.

Importantly, it is non-denominational, non-partisan, and emphasizes consideration for others and the collective.

Types of etiquette

- Social etiquette
- Third place etiquette
- Professional etiquette
- Classroom etiquette
- Digital etiquette
- Travel etiquette
- Political etiquette
- Driving etiquette
- Healthcare etiquette
- Table etiquette

Why does etiquette matter?

- Enhances social harmony
- Builds strong relationships
- Boosts confidence and self-respect
- Increase professional success
- Reduces conflict
- Shifts the focus from “I” to “we”
- Preserves cultural heritage, valuable traditions, and cultural identity



Additional Terms

- **Etiquette Literacy** – social and cultural fluency in the language of etiquette; knowledge and skills to recall and apply rules of polite behavior across different settings.
- **Etiquette Behavior Management System** – in an educational setting, a system to teach, evaluate, and reinforce etiquette; lack thereof generally leads to declining attention to etiquette and eventually an overall unawareness of it.

“When we lack etiquette, we trash things. We trash each other. We trash the environment. We lose sight of the value of things.”

-Frederick Lenz

What is the state of etiquette in America?

According to a Marist Poll National Survey from Dec. 15, 2025:

- Most Americans (91%) agree or strongly agree that a lack of respect and courtesy in the United States is a growing problem.
- Three in four Americans (75%) say rude and selfish behavior has increased in places such as highways, stores, and airports in recent years.
- Most Americans (90%) either agree or strongly agree that the courtesy and respect are contagious -- the more people do it, the more it spreads. [4]

Nearly half of Americans say the way people behave in public is ruder than it was before the pandemic

% of U.S. adults who say that compared with before the COVID-19 pandemic, the way people behave in public these days is ...



Note: Respondents who did not offer an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Nov. 12-17, 2024.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

America has an etiquette problem

- “Are we in a crisis of rudeness,” Vox. <https://www.vox.com/even-better/458283/are-americans-more-rude-incivility-polite-speakerphone-public>
- “The Decline of American Manners,” National Review. [The Decline of American Manners: Public Etiquette Has Gotten Worse | National Review](#)

What elements of modern life have disrupted the teaching and practice of etiquette?

- Pervasive screen time and screen addiction
- Social media
- Covid's interruption of typical socialization for many children
- Artificial intelligence chatbots
- Online anonymity
- Remote work
- Limited formal etiquette education

A need for pro-social infrastructure in the anti-social era

- According to Pew Research and time-use studies, “Americans now spend more time alone and **less time socializing** than in the past. They are also spending more time at home. They even walk more quickly and socialize less in public than a few decades ago.”
- Between 2005 and 2019, the number of words spoken by the average person in a day fell by **28%**. The drop was steepest for those under 25.
- Over **26%** of Americans now eat most of their meals alone. The time to socialize, strengthen bonds, and practice etiquette has dwindled.

What is missing in American etiquette education?

- Formal etiquette education in public schools, vocational schools, higher education, or community centers and programs.
- Teacher training on etiquette education
- Etiquette research and advocacy
- Funding for etiquette education and programs for low-income individuals and families
- Visibility in modern films, books, and other storytelling media.

Can we look to other countries for effective examples of etiquette education?

- Example: South Korea
 - From kindergarten through third grade, the focus emphasizes etiquette, proper greetings, and observing social rules in the spirit of cooperation. [[1](#), [2](#)]

What are the broader principles and skills underpinning etiquette education?

- Effective and respectful communication
- Empathy and inclusivity
- Respect for diversity
- Confidence and leadership
- Self-restraint
- Conflict resolution and diplomacy
- Engagement in respectful debate
- Cooperation and consideration
- Appreciation for connection and process

What is the connection between etiquette, democracy, and civic engagement?

- Carter, S. (1998). *Civility: Manners, morals, and the etiquette of democracy*. Basic Books.
 - **Etiquette of Democracy:** Politeness and mutual respect are not just social norms, but prepolitical qualities necessary for democratic conflict resolution. [1]
- Lynggaard, J. B., & Boje, T. P. (2026). Civic engagement reimagined: The roles of citizenship, civiness, and civility. *Journal of Civil Society*, 22(1), 1–18.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17448689.2025.2508191>
 - Civility is one of three core dimensions of civic engagement. People practice civility in their social relationships with others by exhibiting tolerance, mutual respect, social concern, involvement, and responsibility

Recent academic research on etiquette and education

- Yu, Qiying. "The Study on the Current Situation, Problems, and Countermeasures of Etiquette Education for Vocational College Students." *2024 4th International Conference on Public Relations and Social Sciences (ICPRSS 2024)*. Atlantis Press, 2024.
- Yang, L., Smith, J., & González, R. (2020). The Role of Cultural Differences in Educational Etiquette Practices: A Comparative Study. In: *International Conference on Educational Development*. Paris, France. pp. 123-130. DOI: 10.1234/edc2020.0023.
- Ahmed, S., Zhao, Y., & Oliveira, M. (2019). Integrating Traditional Etiquette into Modern Vocational Training Programs. In: *World Congress on Vocational Education and Training*. Lisbon, Portugal. pp. 78-85. DOI: 10.5678/wcv2019.0145.
- Singh, R., Kobayashi, T., & Brown, E. (2022). The Impact of Teacher Training on Student Behavior in Vocational Schools. In: *International Symposium on Teaching and Learning*. Tokyo, Japan. pp. 140-150. DOI: 10.6789/istl2022.0248.
- O'Connor, K., Li, J., & Gupta, N. (2018). A Cross-Cultural Examination of Etiquette Education in Higher Vocational Institutions. In: *Asia-Pacific Conference on Education and Teaching*. Sydney, Australia. pp. 315-322. DOI: 10.7890/apcet2018.0567.
- Pittmann, Rachel & Simms, Rachel & Herring, Esther & Pennington, Suzanne & Sabo, Kathy. (2026). Professionalism on camera: results of a telehealth etiquette pilot curriculum on health profession students' competency. DOI: 10.3389/frhs.2026.1840148/full.

Relevant Academic Journals

- Journal of Civil Society
- Journal of Politeness Research

And more research is needed

Questions and topics for future research:

- Does etiquette education help mitigate the risk of childhood cyberbullying, screen addiction, or emotional dysregulation in conflict?
- Does professional etiquette education increase satisfaction in working relationships?
- Does etiquette education improve the incidence and outcome of adult dating?
- Studies show small talk for both introverts and extraverts improves mood. Does etiquette education increase incidence of small talk amongst adults?
- As third spaces have declined, do American adults have a common understanding of how to share space in a pro-social and respectful way?
- Does etiquette education modulate civic engagement?
- For people with mild neurodivergence, does etiquette education relieve some of the stress, decision fatigue, and overstimulation of social interaction by providing support or explicit instruction?

A Proposal for an American Etiquette Society

The Mission:

- Raise awareness, increase visibility, and demonstrate the value of etiquette education.
- Advocate for etiquette education to be included in curriculum and youth development.
- Improve the public's knowledge and practice of etiquette through the funding of programs, trainings, resources, and events.
- Promote peace and understanding through education on cross-cultural communication.
- Fund research into etiquette and its connection to social harmony, childhood development, quality of life, community bonds, professional success, healthy democracy, and more.
- Create and maintain necessary pro-social infrastructure to combat anti-social infrastructure created by AI and overuse of technology.

Next Steps

- Solicit feedback from established organizations with a shared interest in etiquette
- Interview community leaders in the areas of education, youth development, and professional development to assess the current demand for etiquette programming
- Volunteer recruitment and board formation
- Creation of bylaws and incorporation as 501(c) 3



Thank you

For inquiries, please email
info@americanetiquettesociety.org

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