

LESSON 6



Social Etiquette and Dining-In, Dining-Out



Quick Write

What do you think are good rules and practices for courtesy and etiquette in the 21st century? Make a list of five specific things that you do to show courtesy and etiquette in your everyday life.



Learn About

- etiquette and manners in formal and informal settings
- dining etiquette
- handling social invitations
- public courtesies
- Dining-In and Dining-Out

“Military courtesy is simply an application of common, everyday courtesy and common sense.”

Richard S. Joslyn, 116th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry

Etiquette and Manners in Formal and Informal Settings

Through your Junior ROTC experience, you’ll meet new people and interact in many different situations such as Dining-Ins and Dining-Outs, which will be discussed later in the lesson. Military social occasions are filled with tradition and ceremony. It is important that each cadet know how to properly prepare and conduct themselves at these occasions. When you know the rules of proper etiquette, you will feel more relaxed and confident in these situations. You will also have the chance to make a good impression on others.

Proper social conduct and behavior are important elements in your character development. Although this lesson concentrates on the etiquette and manners required at military social events, the information here is useful for other aspects of your life. **Etiquette** is a code of behavior or courtesy based on rules of a polite society. **Manners** are socially correct ways of acting as shown in widespread customs. Manners are based on kindness, respect, thoughtfulness, and consideration. The rules of etiquette may vary with the changing times, but good manners are timeless. As you read about the rules of proper etiquette and the practice of good manners, remember that social etiquette and good manners are nothing more than common courtesy, sincerity, and consideration for others. It is important to treat others in the same way we want others to treat us. This is the very foundation on which a polite society is built.



Vocabulary

- etiquette
- manners
- receiving line
- dignitary
- place card
- monopolize
- RSVP
- stilted
- netiquette
- Dining-In
- Dining-Out
- protocol
- comradeship
- President of the Mess

Social Introductions

How many times have you attended school activities or social events with friends and met up with their friends, only to awkwardly stand around because you were not introduced to the new people joining your group? In social occasions, introductions are important to make everyone feel welcome and part of the group. Introductions should be simple, direct, and dignified, and the act of making them should be a formal occasion. They should be made whenever people gather socially, even for a short period. Introductions should be made automatically and immediately when discovering that two people do not know each other; this helps establish a connection between two people who may be strangers. You may make these introductions or have someone else do it, if custom demands. If you neglect an introduction, however, you run the risk of being seen as rude. There is nothing mysterious about making introductions, unless you do not know what to do.

Introductions in a Formal Setting

Introductions at a formal reception, such as at a cadet Military Ball, may often include a receiving line. A **receiving line** is *a group of people, including the host and honored guests, who stand in line and individually welcome guests attending a function.* It is customary, and often mandatory, that all cadets and their guests go through the receiving line upon arrival. The people who would be in the receiving line include (in order):

1. The host (Senior JROTC Instructor or commander of the unit holding the reception)
2. The honored guest or, if there is no honored guest, the spouse of the host
3. The spouse of the host
4. The next ranking guest, with his or her spouse or guest
5. Other special guests with their spouses or guests



A receiving line is a customary way of ensuring that the hosts of an event meet everyone who attends.

Courtesy of Army Staff Sgt. Carlos M. Burger III/Defense Video & Imagery Distribution System

A simple, pleasant greeting and a cordial handshake are all that is necessary when moving through a receiving line. Save lengthy conversation for later. Should your name get lost in the line, repeat it for the benefit of the person doing the greeting.

In the absence of an adjutant, the cadet still precedes the guest through the receiving line. The cadet introduces the guest first, and then introduces himself or herself directly to the host. After you have gone through the receiving line, you may proceed to the serving of refreshments or converse with other guests and await the signal for the next event. If the receiving and dining rooms are separate, do not enter the dining room until the signal to do so is given.

For the remainder of the event, you will be responsible for making introductions as you move around the room and during dinner and other activities. The following guidelines explain what you need to do.

Making Personal Introductions

When making a personal introduction, avoid using elaborate phrases. Remember that introductions should be simple and direct. The most generally accepted introductions are “Colonel Smith, may I introduce Ms. Breana Foster?” or “Colonel Smith, I would like you to meet Ms. Breana Foster.”

The general rule is that you introduce juniors to seniors (this applies to age and military rank), gentlemen to ladies, and so on. However, the degree of formality used when making the introduction depends on the position of the persons involved or the occasion.

In a receiving line, such as that held for a Military Ball, which people are encouraged to attend as couples, the unit member precedes the guest through the receiving line. The member introduces the guest first to the Cadet Corps Adjutant or other corps representative, who often announces the names of all attendees to the host. If the couple attending the Military Ball are both JROTC cadets, the gentleman will precede the young lady and conduct the introductions. A cadet attending without a partner should introduce himself or herself to the adjutant. Even though the adjutant may be a friend of yours, do not shake his or her hand. The adjutant will announce your name to the host as you step in front of him or her.

To introduce two people who are not near each other, you would typically take the lower-ranking individual to the senior-ranking person, the young lady to the older person, the gentleman to the lady, and so on.

When introducing someone to a **dignitary**, *a person of importance or someone who holds a high office*, mention the dignitary first to show respect for the office he or she holds. Be sure that you use the correct formal title for the dignitary when making the introduction; if you don't know the person's title, ask someone, such as an instructor, who would most likely know. Here are a few guidelines for introductions of people with titles:

- Introduce military personnel by their rank. For example, when introducing your guest to one of your JROTC instructors, you might say, "Sergeant Allen, I would like you to meet Miss Jones."
- Introduce doctors, judges, or professors by their titles.
- Introduce members of Congress as "Senator" or "Representative."
- Introduce a Catholic priest as "Father." A Jewish rabbi is introduced as "Rabbi." Protestant clergy use titles such as "The Reverend," "Pastor," or "Doctor;" however, others prefer to be addressed as Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms.

If the situation arose where you had to introduce a teacher to a parent, you would use the teacher's name first. An example is "Major Cooper, I would like you to meet my mother, Mrs. Eastern." If both of your parents were there, you would introduce the woman first and then the man, such as "Major Cooper, I would like you to meet my parents, Mrs. Eastern and Mr. Eastern."

If seated, you should rise to acknowledge an introduction and remain standing while other members of the party are being introduced to one another. When being introduced to ladies or gentlemen who are seated, you need not rise if rising may inconvenience others at the table.



Personal introductions should be simple and direct.

Courtesy of Petty Officer 3rd Class N.C. Kaylor/Defense Video & Imagery Distribution System

keys to LEADERSHIP

Before making an introduction, it is a good idea to ask the individual how he or she prefers to be introduced. This action will not only save you from potential embarrassment, but will also cause you to be remembered as someone who is thoughtful and courteous.

Introductions in Informal Situations

When introducing two people whom you know very well and who have heard you speak about the other, you may be more casual. For example, to introduce a cadet friend to your sister, you might simply say, “Susie, this is Pete.” In this example, it is perfectly acceptable to make the introduction using the first names of both people. However, do not use the first name of an adult, a senior-ranking individual, or another important person when introducing that person.

Methods of Making Introductions

When making an introduction, speak each name slowly and clearly to be sure the names will be understood. When you are being introduced to someone, make a point of listening to the other person’s name. Not remembering a name is common, and is easy to forgive. However, forgetting a name is not an excuse for not making an introduction. If you forget the name, or did not hear it, apologize and ask the person to restate his or her name. Then use the name several times in conversation to help you remember it. If necessary, ask for the person’s name—with appropriate apologies—before starting an introduction to another person. For example, “I beg your pardon, sir (or ma’am), but I have forgotten your name.... Thank you, sir (ma’am). Colonel Smith, I would like you to meet Miss Jones.”

When you are introduced to others, it is proper to return a courtesy such as “Nice to meet you,” “Hello,” “I am really glad to meet you,” or “How do you do?” Additionally, when introduced to others, put your cell phone or electronic device away or down. Continuing to use your electronic device during introductions is rude and may give the other person the impression that you do not see them as important. When you introduce others, put your electronic device away before you make the introduction, and don’t walk off and leave the two people staring at each other. As the person who made the introduction, you should either say something about each person to get a conversation started or excuse yourself so that you and your guest can continue to move about the room or participate in some other event.

To start a conversation, mention something of common interest to both parties. For example, “Major Davis, I would like you to meet Michael Knight. Major Davis is my Senior Aerospace Science Instructor, Michael. Sir, Michael hopes to enroll in JROTC next year.” Before moving from the person whom you just introduced, your guest should respond with “Good-bye, I am very glad to have met you,” or something to that effect.

When leaving a group, it makes no difference if you were introduced or just included in their conversation; you should politely and quietly say good-bye to anyone who happens to be looking at you, without attracting the attention of those who are unaware that you are leaving.

When in doubt whether two people have met, it is perfectly fine to ask whether they have met. Be sure to address the senior first, using a courtesy such as “Colonel Smith, have you met Miss Jones?” If they have not met, make the introduction. Usually, most people will consider your question as equal to an introduction, and will proceed with “how-do-you-do?” The biggest mistake people make is to assume that people know each other. There is no harm in introducing people who have already met, but it is inconsiderate to have strangers together without introducing them.

Cadets sometimes assume, in error, that every cadet knows every other cadet. Do not hesitate to introduce cadets if you are not sure if they know each other.

In certain situations, you may find it necessary to introduce yourself to another person. If you are next to someone you do not know and no one is around to make an introduction, it is perfectly fine to introduce yourself. Use a greeting such as “Hello, I am Tom Frazier,” while shaking that person’s hand. Do not say, “What’s your name?” A good reply to you would be “Ted Wentworth, nice to meet you.” It is then up to both people to start their own conversation.

When and How to Shake Hands

When gentlemen are introduced to each other, they typically shake hands. Ladies who are JROTC cadets also shake hands during introductions. However, as a more general rule, whenever a lady or gentleman extends his or her hand as a form of greeting, the receiving party should extend his or her hand in return. Nothing could be ruder than to ignore a friendly gesture. At the end of the introduction or conversation, those who were drawn into it do not have to shake hands when parting; however, it is considered common courtesy to do so.

A proper handshake is brief, but the clasp should feel firm and warm. Maintain eye contact with the person whose hand you are shaking. Do not shake someone’s hand violently, grasp the hand like a vise, keep the handshake going for a long time, or offer only your fingertips.



Remember to ask your friends if they have met, if you aren’t sure if they have met before.

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A JROTC cadet shakes hands at a Military Ball.

When being introduced to a lady outside, a gentleman in civilian clothes should remove his hat. If in uniform, do not remove your hat. In addition, a gentleman will ordinarily remove his glove to shake hands unless he is a member of a Color or Honor Guard. If a gentleman is confronted with a sudden introduction when he has gloves on and it is awkward to remove a glove while the other person has his or her hand outstretched, it is better to shake hands with the glove on with no apology. These are good rules to follow as part of general public behavior, even in casual situations.

Shake, Take, and Salute

During your time in JROTC you will have many opportunities to receive awards and recognition. This recognition may include certificates, ribbons, or medals for doing something good for your school or community. It is important that you know how to receive this recognition, especially in uniform.

If the award is being presented by the Aerospace Science Instructor (ASI), other enlisted personnel, or a civilian official such as the principal, follow these rules:

- Offer the left hand to receive the award.
- Offer the right hand to shake the presenting official's hand.

If the award is being presented by the Senior Aerospace Science Instructor (SASI) or other military officer, follow these rules:

- Offer the left hand to receive the award.
- Offer the right hand to shake the officer's hand.
- Finally, come to attention, face the officer, and render the proper hand salute. Be sure to hold your salute until the officer returns your salute.

Dining Etiquette

Table manners are an important part of social conduct. Proper manners around the table are not just reserved for special occasions; you should use them whenever you dine. Relaxed politeness is the key to any dining situation. When you know what to do, you can relax and enjoy yourself. This section will help you learn the rules of the table.

Manners and Courtesies Before Eating

A gentleman does not sit down until all the ladies at his table are seated. He can help with the seating by holding the chair for each lady—first for his guest, then for other ladies near him if the ladies outnumber the men. He does this by pulling out the lady's chair from the table far enough for her to move easily in front of it. Then, as the lady sits down, he gently pushes the chair under her until she is seated. When all ladies at the table are seated, he may then take his seat by going around the left side of his chair. Posture at the table should be straight, but not stiff.

If a lady leaves the table at any time, the gentleman who seated her rises and assists with the lady's chair. When the lady returns to the table, her escort or the gentleman who seated her rises and repeats the courtesies mentioned in the previous paragraph.

The polite dinner guest will not touch anything on the table, not even the napkin, until after the blessing (or invocation) has been said or until it is obvious that there will be no blessing. Then you may pick up your napkin and partially unfold it on your lap. Do this unnoticeably—do not unfold a dinner napkin completely or above the table.

POW-MIA Ceremony

The POW-MIA Ceremony is generally used in conjunction with the opening of a dinner function. Although no one is sure where this ceremony began, it is believed to have been started by naval crewmembers known as the Vietnam River Rats. The River Rats were US Navy service members who patrolled the deltas and rivers in small patrol boats during the Vietnam War. This solemn remembrance is for the men and women in all five services—Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard—who were prisoners of war and those who are missing in action. There are many different versions of the ceremony.



POW-MIA Honor Guard.

Courtesy of MSgt Dale C. Hanson II

The ceremony, in which wheel hats of all military services are placed at a table of honor, symbolizes those whose sacrifice prevents them from being at the function or with their loved ones. JROTC units often do not have access to wheel hats from other services and may choose not to use them.

The ceremony opens when a cadet narrator announces, “Ladies and gentlemen, please direct your attention to the center of our gathering. You may have noticed the table set before you. It is filled with symbolism. This table is set for our prisoners of war and those missing in action—from all wars. They are not with us today. Their chairs are empty, but saved for their hoped return. Let us remember their absence.”

Once the Honor Guard members have placed the hats representing the missing members of the individual services at the unoccupied table, the cadet narrator explains the symbolism of the objects on the table. At the end of the evening, the POW-MIA table is retired by the Honor Guard as a symbol of both farewell and hope.

The intent of the ceremony is to recognize the presence, in spirit, of those POWs and MIAs whose sacrifice prevents them from being physically present. The ceremony also serves as a way of recognizing the powerful bond among all of those who serve our nation.

The POW-MIA Ceremony: A Cadet Narrator’s Speech



© Christopher Nolan/Fotolia.com

As you entered the banquet hall this evening, you may have noticed a small table in a place of honor. This table is our way of symbolizing the fact that members of our armed forces are missing from our midst. They are commonly called POWs or MIAs. They are unable to be with us this evening and so we remember them.

The tablecloth is white, symbolizing the purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call to arms—so that their children could remain free.... Remember.

The lone candle symbolizes the frailty of a prisoner alone, trying to stand up against his oppressors.... Remember.

(A cadet lights the candle.)

The single rose in the vase symbolizes the blood that has been shed. It also reminds us of the loved ones and families of our comrades-in-arms who keep the faith and await their return.... Remember.

A slice of lemon is on the bread plate to remind us of their bitter fate—if we do not bring them home.... Remember.

(A cadet slices a lemon and places a slice on each bread plate.)

There is salt on the plate, symbolic of the family's fallen tears as they wait.... Remember.

(A cadet shakes salt onto each bread plate.)

The glasses are inverted. They cannot toast with us tonight—maybe tomorrow.... Remember.

The yellow ribbon tied around the vase is worn by family and friends; keeping the faith, while awaiting their return.... Remember.

The empty chairs at the table are a reminder that they are not here with us.... Remember.

As we look upon this empty table, do not remember ghosts from the past, remember our comrades.

Remember those whom we depended on in battle. They depend on us to bring them home.

Remember our friends. They are the ones we love—who love life and freedom as we do.

They will remember what we do. Please honor and remember them.

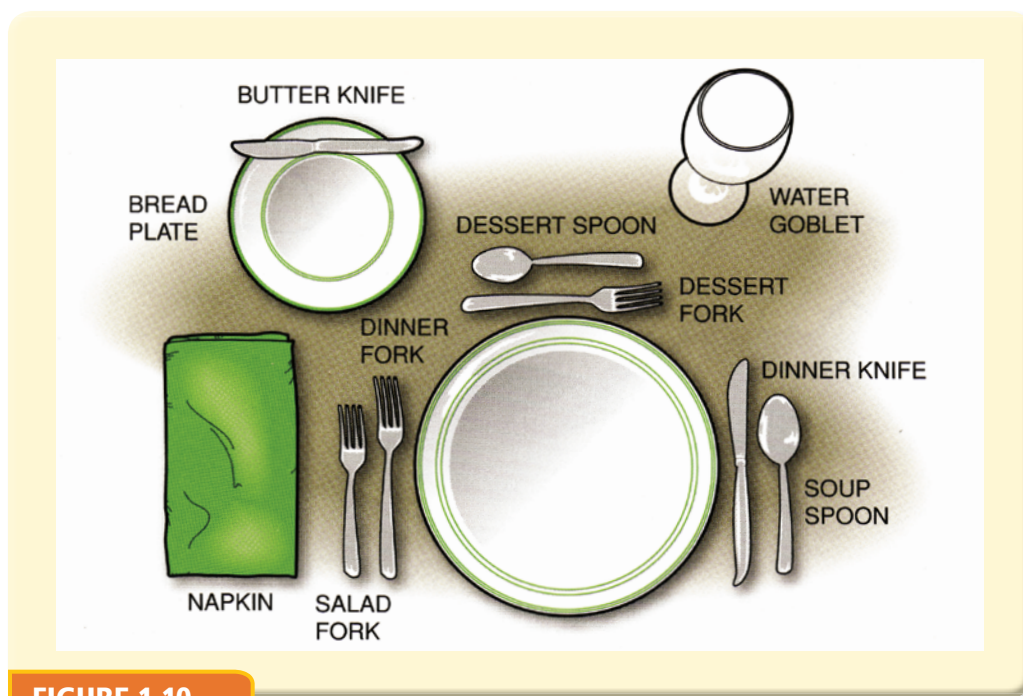


FIGURE 1.10

A formal place setting can be confusing if you are not familiar with it.

A Formal Dining Table Setting

At a large dinner, you may encounter a confusing array of silverware at your place setting, including one or two knives, two or three forks, and two or three spoons. A formal table setting is shown in Figure 1.10. If you have any doubt about the correct piece of silverware to use for a particular course, start with the outside piece of silverware and work inward. If you end up without a spoon or a fork, it is fine to ask for a replacement.

Specialized pieces of silverware include the butter knife, soup spoon, dessert fork and spoon, iced-tea spoon, oyster fork, and fish knife and fork. The number of pieces of silverware indicates the number of courses to expect. For example, a six-course meal might include soup, fish, sorbet (a fruit-flavored ice served to cleanse the palate, or clear your taste buds), salad, an entree, and dessert. The placement of the silverware indicates the order of these courses.

Proper Use of Silverware

In today's diverse social environment, you'll encounter different methods, manners, and courtesies of eating, depending on your host, the guests, and the occasion. To feel confident in any situation, you should be familiar with the proper use of silverware, how to eat with your fingers, how to handle a soup spoon, the differences between American and European styles of dining, and more.

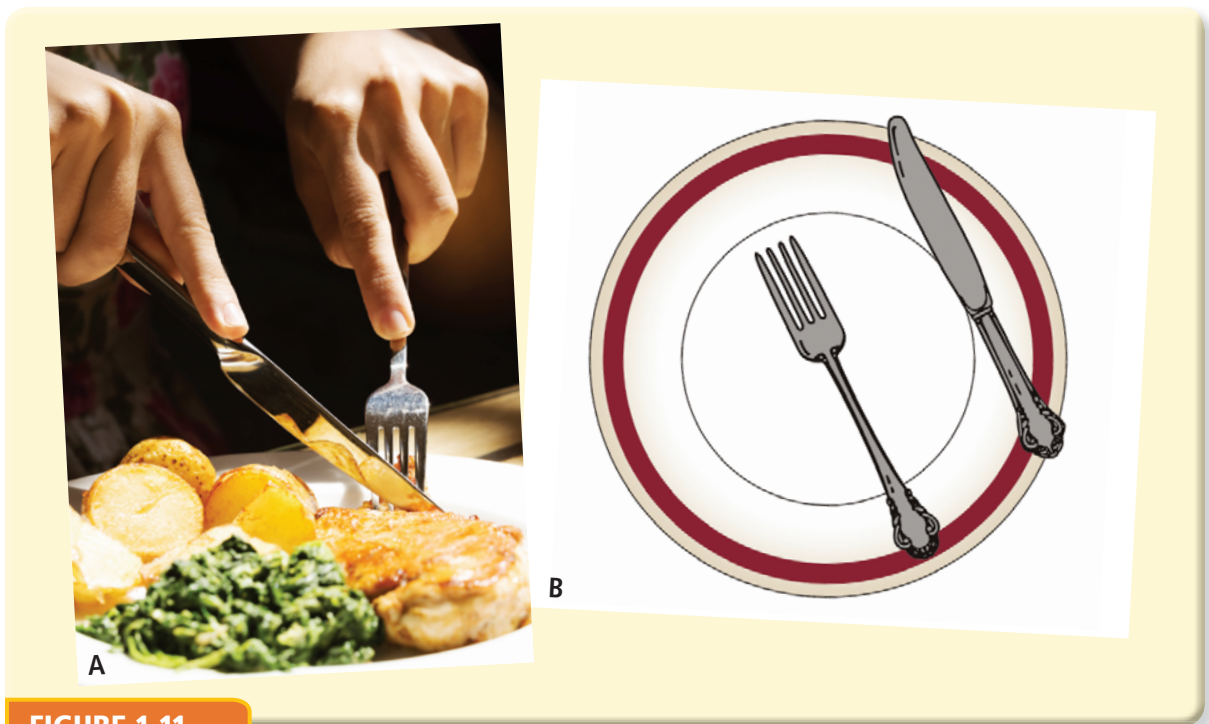


FIGURE 1.11

The American style of eating and resting silverware.

Left: © Piotr Marcinski/Fotolia.com

In the American style of eating, food is cut as shown in Figure 1.11A. Hold the fork in your left hand, tines down, with your index finger on the back of the fork. Secure the food being cut with the knife, which is held in your right hand. Cut in front of the fork, not behind it. After cutting no more than two or three bites of food, place the knife on the plate and transfer the fork to your right hand. This is called the “zigzag” method.

When not using your knife and fork, place them separated across the top of your plate as shown in Figure 1.11B. This is the resting position. When you have finished the main course, place the knife and fork beside each other on the dinner plate diagonally from the upper left to lower right, or from the 10 o’clock to the 4 o’clock position. This is the “finished” position and indicates that your plate may be removed.

Various rules govern how to use silverware properly. These rules include:

- After you use a piece of silverware, do not place it back on the table.
- Do not leave a used spoon in a cup; place it on the saucer.
- Do not leave a soup spoon in a soup bowl. You may leave it on a soup plate if one is provided; otherwise, place it on the dinner plate when not in use.
- Do not lay a knife with the handle on the table and the tip of the blade on the edge of the plate. This also applies to the fork.
- Leave unused silverware on the table in its proper position.

How to Eat Soup and Finger Foods

When eating soup, the motion of the spoon should be away from you while filling it. Sip from the side of the spoon; do not slurp. If it is necessary to tip your soup bowl, tip it away from you. If your soup is too hot to eat, let it sit until it cools; do not blow on it.

Bread, rolls, biscuits, nuts, fresh fruit, olives, celery, radishes, raw carrots, cookies, and small cakes may be eaten with your fingers. Place finger foods on the bread plate if there is one. If there is no bread plate, use the salad or dinner plate.

As seen in Figure 1.12, break your individual servings of bread, rolls, and large biscuits into small pieces before buttering and eating them, one piece at a time. Do not cut these items. Buttering and eating a whole roll or whole slice of bread is also not appropriate.

Proper Use of Napkins

You should not tuck the napkin under your belt or wear it like a bib. Napkins are for dabbing lips, catching spills, and covering sneezes. Do not use a napkin to blow your nose. Never lick food from your fingers; always use your napkin. Before taking a drink of water or any other beverage, wipe your lips with your napkin to avoid leaving smears on the glassware. One quick, light pass with the napkin should be enough.



FIGURE 1.12

It is customary to break bread, rolls, and biscuits with your fingers before you butter them.

Left: © Lovrencg/Fotolia.com; Right: © gani_dteurope/Fotolia.com

If you must leave the table during dinner, say, “Excuse me, please,” with no explanation, and rise, placing your napkin on your chair. When leaving the table after dinner, place the napkin on the table in loose folds to the right of your plate. Do not refold, crumple, or twist it. Always push your chair to the table when you leave it.

Basic Table Manners

The following list includes hints about table manners. Follow each one in any dining situation.

- If place cards are used, do not move or remove them. A **place card** is a name card for a formal dinner. In addition to showing the specific seating arrangement, place cards are used to make guests feel welcome and to help people get to know one another in large social settings.
- Take small bites. Large mouthfuls of food are unsightly. Do not chew with your mouth open or make loud noises when you eat. It is not polite to talk with food in your mouth.
- If you burp, say “Excuse me” (to no one in particular), and continue eating. Do not make a big deal out of it.
- Hats, gloves, cell phones, cameras, purses, sunglasses, and so on do not belong on the table. If it is not a part of the meal, do not put it on the table. Hats and gloves belong in the cloakroom. You may place cameras and purses under your chair. Unless you are expecting an emergency phone call, turn off your phone while in the dining room, and keep all electronic devices out of sight.
- Your hands should go no farther over the table than is necessary to eat and to pass things. Between courses, place your hands in your lap or at your side. Do not place your elbows on the table.
- If bread is placed in front of you, feel free to pick up the basket and offer it to the person to your right.
- Do not take the last piece of bread without first offering it to others.
- If you cannot easily reach something on the table, ask for it to be passed to you. Say “please” and “thank you.” If you are the one passing something, place the items on the table for the person to pick up, if possible. When passing salt and pepper, pass them together.
- If food spills off your plate, you may pick it up with a piece of your silverware and place it on the edge of your plate.
- If you drop something, leave it on the floor until the meal is over; then pick it up. If a piece of your silverware falls onto the floor, pick it up if you can reach it and let the server know you need a clean one. If you cannot reach it, tell the server you dropped a piece of your silverware and ask for a clean one.

- Do not season your food before you taste it.
- Hold a long-stemmed glass with the thumb and first two fingers of your right hand at the base of the bowl or on the stem.
- It is not appropriate to ask for a “doggy bag” during a formal occasion.
- Do not scold or correct a server. Make any complaints to the person (cadet) in charge of the ballroom arrangements.
- If food gets caught between your teeth, and you cannot remove it with your tongue without being too noticeable, leave the table and go to the restroom where you can remove the food in private.
- At the end of dinner, after the host and honored guests have departed, make sure that you say good-bye to everyone at your table before departing.

Conversation During Meals

Conversation is an important part of social interaction around the table. It is perfect for the enjoyment of good companionship and a pleasant meal. A few important tips include:

- Try not to talk too quickly or too slowly.
- Keep the conversation light. Small talk includes casual, unofficial, interesting things in everyday life, such as the weather, music, upcoming events, movies, or sports. Keep topics of conversation safe and non-controversial. Avoid discussions about religion, race, politics, or any controversial issue. Avoid health issues, off-color jokes, and gossip.
- Answer respectfully when addressed.
- Be mindful of engaging in conversation with a person who has just taken a bite of food. Remember, do not talk with food in your mouth.
- Loud voices or laughter can be disturbing to others. Do not yell; use a pleasant tone of voice that can be heard only at your table. Do not use profane, abusive, or vulgar language.
- Be a good listener. Give others a chance to talk. Do not monopolize a conversation. To **monopolize** means *to take exclusive ownership or control*. Pay attention to the person speaking by making eye contact; do not look at other people when someone is talking to you.
- Do not interrupt. Allow the other person to finish what he or she is saying before speaking. If you and another person start talking at the same time, give way quickly in a friendly manner with a simple “Please go ahead.”
- Do not ridicule or laugh at an unfortunate remark or someone’s mistake. Although a person who makes good conversation does not contradict someone in a social setting, it is okay to state your opinion. When you do, always be tactful and respect the other person’s point of view, especially when personal feelings are involved.

Handling Social Invitations

When you are invited to attend a social event, which could be a short afternoon visit, a dinner party, or a Military Ball, you have certain obligations that you must observe as a guest.

You must understand the invitation: what you are invited for, where it will be held, when you should be there, and what you should wear. A written invitation will usually spell out most of these things quite clearly. Certain things are implicit in an invitation, as you shall see.

RSVP

RSVP comes from the French expression “Répondez s’il vous plaît,” which means “please reply.” **RSVP** means that *you must reply to the hosts to let them know if you can or cannot attend the function to which you’ve been invited*. On many invitations, you will see RSVP followed by a telephone number or email address. In this case, the courtesy of a prompt reply by telephone or email is required to permit the host, hostess, or planning committee to plan the event properly. It is polite to call or send your message within two or three days to accept or decline the invitation. When telephoning, make your call between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Do not invite someone else unless the invitation clearly indicates the number and names of those invited.

Several variations on RSVP are coming into widespread use, especially on informal invitations. One variation is “RSVP Regrets Only.” This notation means that the host or hostess is expecting you unless you notify him or her that you cannot come. If you can accept, you need not reply. Make sure to be there on time.

If your plans for that day are unsettled, do not pass this problem on to the host or hostess. It would be much better to decline the invitation than to give a complicated account of your social schedule. Even if the other arrangement or engagement is uncertain, it is best to decline the invitation. After you have declined, do not call back if your plans change.

When declining, it is enough to say to the host or hostess that a conflicting engagement prevents you from accepting. You can turn down an invitation because you do not want to go. However, use good judgment for the invitations you refuse.

Most written invitations will indicate exactly where the function is being held. Some invitations may include a small map for your convenience.

If the invitation is telephoned to you, repeat back all of the important information to be sure there is no misunderstanding when you accept the invitation. If you must first check your calendar before answering, get all the details and explain that you will call back as soon as you have looked at your schedule. Thank the caller for the invitation, make sure you have the phone number, and promise to call right back. Make sure you call back as you promised.

After you accept an invitation, if an illness or an absolute emergency prevents you from attending, call the host or hostess immediately with regrets and apologies. Invitations to dinners, receptions, and weddings will usually give a time. For dinners and receptions, this is the time at which you should arrive; do not arrive earlier or later. Plan your timing so you can be punctual. The time on a wedding invitation is the time the ceremony begins; allow enough time to be seated before the ceremony begins.

If you are invited to an open house from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., you may arrive any time after 3:00 p.m. and depart before 6:00 p.m. You are not expected to stay the entire three hours. After a dinner party, you should stay at least an hour. If you do not, it hints of “eat-and-run” rudeness.

Regardless of the type of invitation, keep in mind that a delayed reply without reason, or no reply, or failure to attend the function after accepting are all serious breaches of etiquette.

Formal, Informal, or Casual Wear?

The invitation may specify what you should wear. For example, an Air Force JROTC cadet would most likely wear a semi-formal dress uniform to a Dining-In or Military Ball. In this situation, male guests should wear a suit, while female guests should wear either short or long evening attire.

Some invitations may simply indicate that the dress is formal, informal, or casual. Be sure that you understand what these terms mean. If you are in doubt, ask the host or hostess what to wear when you call to RSVP. As a general rule, use the following guidelines:

- **Formal**—For male cadets, the service dress or semi-formal service dress is expected. For a male guest, a suit may be acceptable, although a tuxedo equivalent is preferred. For female cadets, the service dress may be expected for Dining-Ins. For other formal occasions, a short or long evening gown may be appropriate for female cadets and female guests.
- **Informal**—For gentlemen, a sport coat and tie are appropriate; for ladies, a dress appropriate for daytime wear or a pants suit is acceptable.
- **Casual**—For gentlemen, nice slacks and a sport shirt are appropriate; for ladies, a sundress or pants and blouse are appropriate. In some situations, jeans or shorts and a shirt or blouse may be acceptable. Any form of sagging or revealing clothing is considered inappropriate for any gathering.



A cadet in semi-formal dress uniform receives an award at a Military Ball.

Courtesy of the US Air Force JROTC

Responsibilities to the Host

When attending a small gathering or dinner party, seek out and greet your host or hostess immediately upon arrival. Even at a large event, a crowded room should not keep you from properly greeting your host and hostess. You should also delay getting any refreshments until after you have properly greeted the host and hostess.

Because the host and hostess are in charge, let them run things. As a polite, unassuming guest, you can help by making conversation and joining wholeheartedly in whatever activities are planned. You should not sit when other guests are standing in your presence.

Before leaving, you must thank your host and hostess for a wonderful time. Even if there are still dozens of people present, you must seek out the host and hostess to say thank you and good-bye.

Writing Thank-You Notes

Be sure to write a thank-you note within two or three days, and no more than a week after you have been a guest at someone's home. A thank-you note should be handwritten in ink on nice writing paper. It is best to use stationery sets that provide matching paper and envelopes. Be conservative in the choice of color and design. Plain white is always acceptable. The requirements for a thank-you note include:

- Spell out the month—The 3/9/14 format is not used socially; this date would be written as March 9, 2014. Place the date in the upper-right corner, just below the fold line on the informal notepaper.
- Make sure the margins are large enough—Leave about 1¹/₄ inches on the left side and about ³/₄ inch on the right, depending on the size of the paper.
- Place the salutation, such as “Dear Mrs. Elliott,” at the left margin.
- Indent only the first line of each paragraph. Align the rest of the paragraph with the left margin.
- Place the closing about as far to the right as the date at the top of the page. “Sincerely,” or “Sincerely yours,” with your first and last names, are acceptable closings. Do not use “Yours truly,” and use “Love” only for a family member or close friend, followed by your first name only.
- Do not use “Cadet” or your cadet rank in your signature.
- Place your return address on the envelope, not under your signature.

The thank-you note should be at least three paragraphs long. The first paragraph expresses your thanks specifically and in detail for the occasion. The last paragraph briefly summarizes your thanks. One or more paragraphs in the middle can be on any topic you choose about the occasion you attended. Be careful not to invite yourself back in your thank-you note.

How to Express Yourself

When expressing yourself, be yourself! If you do not normally speak a stilted or flowery language, do not sound that way in your note. **Stilted** means *stiffly or artificially dignified or formal, pompous, or lofty*. Sincerity is far more important than eloquence. For example, “I was overwhelmed by the sumptuousness of the repast in your exquisite domicile” will sound silly from most people. “I enjoyed the dinner in your attractive home” sounds much more natural. If you particularly enjoyed the soup or if the chocolate cream pie was out of this world, by all means say so in your note.

Sincerity is the first rule in social correspondence. Simplicity is the second rule. You can hardly go wrong with a few simple and direct statements about the things that pleased or amused you. Write just as you would say it to someone you know very well. Also, use correct grammar and spelling, and keep it neat.

The thank-you note is an individual responsibility. If more than one of you attended a dinner party at someone’s home, it is not proper to send one thank-you note. Each of you should write your own note.

If you are on the planning committee for a Military Ball, you should also send thank-you notes to the special guests, any organizations that sponsored the event, and the organizations that provided services and entertainment.

Addressing Thank-You Notes

Make sure that you use a block style when addressing the envelope. Include the proper title with the name (such as Mr., Mrs., Miss, Dr., Colonel, MSgt, and so on). Place the city, two-letter state abbreviation, and zip code on the same line.

Place your return address on the front top left corner of the envelope. You may use an address label. You may also include “Cadet” in your title, but not your cadet rank. For example, Cadet John C. Scott is acceptable, but Cadet Captain John C. Scott is not correct.

Public Courtesies

Life is full of ways to show courteous behavior toward others. This section describes just a few ways you can act in a thoughtful and civilized manner.

Telephone Courtesy

In the 21st century, the telephone—especially the cell phone—has become the primary means of communication. We use it to keep in touch with friends and family, to shop, and to study, to name just a few. Because we now use our phone to communicate both in speech and in text, it’s important to use proper **netiquette**, which means *the rules for communication using the Internet or electronic devices*, when talking and texting.

Here are some tips for proper voice telephone courtesy.

Avoid calling others during meal hours. If you are in doubt, ask the person you are calling if this is a convenient time, and offer to call back later if necessary. Let the phone ring at least six times to allow the person to reach the phone or to let the call go to voice mail.

Identify yourself when placing a call. Unlike talking to someone face-to-face, the person on the other end of the phone may not recognize your voice until you identify yourself. While talking on the phone:



In the 21st century, cell phone courtesy is as important as any other form of etiquette.

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- Be polite. This applies to any conversation.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Do not eat, drink, or chew gum.
- Do not sneeze or cough into the receiver. Turn your head or excuse yourself.
- Do not carry on a conversation with someone in the room while talking on the phone.
- Call back immediately if you get disconnected from a call that you placed.
- When answering a call for someone else, say, “May I ask who is calling?” This sounds better than “Who is this?”
- If the phone number you are calling goes to voice mail, always leave a message identifying yourself, why you called, and what time you called. It is considered rude to call someone and hang up without leaving a message.

No matter how careful you are, you may still dial a wrong number. When that happens, apologize to the person who answers. That person is not interested in hearing a story about how you misdialed; just tell him or her, “I’m very sorry to have disturbed you,” and hang up. Then make sure you have the correct number, and try again. It is rude to hang up without an apology.

When leaving a message, clearly state your name, the date and time of your call, and a brief message. Leave a phone number only if you need to be called back.

Cell Phone Common Sense

Because cell phones can be used virtually anywhere, cell phone users need to remember commonsense courtesy. Results from numerous nationwide surveys show that wireless users need to improve their phone etiquette and put people—and safety—before phone calls.

Here are a few tips to follow:

- Do not drive and use a cell phone. If you need to have a conversation while driving, be sure to pull off the road before talking or texting. This is an extremely dangerous activity and against the law in many communities and states.
- Use of cell phones may be prohibited in most schools and at school functions, check electronic device rules at your school prior to using your cell phone.
- Use of cell phones during social gatherings or appointments is not appropriate.
- Do not place a cell phone on the table during a meal. It is considered impolite to make or receive cell phone calls during a meal.
- Do not use a cell phone when it will inconvenience or disturb others.
- When in public places or at gatherings, limit your cell phone use. If you see a sign requesting you not use your cell phone, turn it off.



Texting while driving is dangerous and, in many states, it's also illegal.

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Text Messaging Tips

Text messaging is convenient and quick, but also needs to be courteous. As the etiquette authority Emily Post's *Etiquette* states, "With it you can get a message to someone without causing their phone to ring at an inopportune time, ask a friend a question and let them respond at their leisure, or just shout out a quick greeting to someone without making a big deal about it." Here are a few of her text-messaging tips, along with some of our own.

- Do not read or send text messages while driving; it is extremely dangerous and against the law in most communities and states.
- Do not send a text message when a phone call would be more appropriate; this is considered rude.
- Make sure you are texting to the right phone number.
- Do not text anything confidential, private, or potentially embarrassing to you or anyone else.
- Just as you should not be answering your phone during a conversation, you should not send a text message when you are engaged with someone else. If you are with someone who will not stop text messaging during your conversation, feel free to excuse yourself until they have concluded their messaging.
- Avoid using text messaging when informing someone of sad news, urgent meetings, or other information that may be misunderstood in a brief text message.

- If you receive a text message that was sent to you by mistake, reply explaining that you aren't the intended recipient. You don't have to respond to anything else in the message.
- Do not let texting distract you from other activities, especially when safety is involved.

Email Netiquette

The same general principles of courtesy and etiquette that apply to text messaging also apply to email. However, since email has been with us much longer, and used as a more formal, way of communicating electronically, people who receive your messages will expect you to be a bit more formally courteous. Here are our current "top ten" tips for courteous email communication.

1. Check and answer your email on a regular basis; don't keep someone waiting for a response.
2. Check your addressee list before each mailing; the longer your addressee list, the easier it will be to send a message to the wrong person by mistake.
3. Assume that your email is permanent (it is) and could be read by anyone at any time.
4. Think twice before sending humorous remarks; avoid forwarding jokes.
5. Do not use email for confidential or personal information.
6. Use a clear subject line to identify your topic. When someone receives a message with an unclear or—worse—no subject line, they tend to delete or not read the message.
7. Refer clearly to the message to which you are responding. Consider setting your email program to include the original message in your response.
8. Spell words out completely, use spell check (and, if necessary grammar and style check) before you click "Send."
9. Avoid writing in FULL CAPS. Using FULL CAPS indicates directness or anger.
10. Never answer an email message in anger.

Assisting the Elderly and Disabled

One drawback of our current technology use is that it tends to draw in your attention so closely that you can easily ignore or miss what is happening around you. As our older population becomes more numerous, it is easier to find elderly individuals needing our assistance. If an older woman or gentleman wants some support, it is appropriate for you to offer your arm. The cadet does not offer his or her hand. Hand holding in public is not appropriate and is considered a public display of affection, which is improper when in uniform. A cadet may offer his or her hand only when it is not practical to offer the arm, for example, to help an elderly lady or gentleman out of a car. Offer your hand palm up, and do not force it upon the person to whom you are offering it. Withdraw your hand as soon as it is no longer needed.

When walking with a lady, a gentleman may walk on the curbside, or on her left if there is no curb.

Opening Doors for Others

If a gentleman arrives at a door first, he should open it and allow others to pass through. If a lady arrives at the door first and opens it, the gentleman may hold the door for her to continue.

If you are driving or riding to a social event in a privately owned vehicle, the gentleman should open the car door for your passenger to enter first on the right side of the car. Then go around the car and take your seat, either behind the wheel or in the back seat beside your guest. When you reach your destination, walk around the car and open the door for your guest if she has not already exited the vehicle. If the gentleman is a passenger in a car driven by a lady, he should always open the car door for the lady driver before taking his seat on the passenger side.

Being Responsible for Your Guest

Depending upon the nature of the social occasion, cadets should inform their guests about the traditions and courtesies of the occasion before arriving. For example, for the Military Ball, cadets should inform their guests about appropriate dress, conduct, the receiving line, traditions, and so on. Remember, if you invite a guest, you are responsible for your guest's behavior. If you have duties to perform after you arrive at the social, arrange for someone else to act as an escort for your guest until you are free. Introduce your friends and ensure that your guest is cared for.

Respect for Authorities and Senior Citizens

By this time in JROTC, you should not have any difficulty showing respect to military senior-ranking individuals; in fact, it should be automatic. You should also show respect for all adults, including parents, teachers, and others in a position of authority. In short, you should treat all persons with the utmost respect.

Just as it is unacceptable to use slang or poor grammar, such as “yeah,” “nope,” or “uh-huh” to a JROTC instructor, it is also socially rude to say these things to others.

You may encounter situations when adults address you by your first name. Although this may be flattering, you should never address an adult by his or her first name, unless that person specifically asks you to do so.

Chewing Gum

You may chew gum in public as long as you do it in a non-offensive way—quietly and inconspicuously. Do not chew gum in formal situations, in class, wearing your uniform, at work, if you are a host or hostess, or if you are around food.

Waiting in Line

When you are in public places with friends, do not make a lot of noise that might upset other people. Be respectful to others around you; do not engage in loud conversations with people around you or over a cell phone.

Do not push ahead of anyone. Wait your turn in line to go through a door, into an elevator, or onto an escalator.

Politeness

Use “Please,” “Thank you,” “You’re welcome,” “Excuse me,” and “I’m sorry” naturally and sincerely in conversations. Say “Excuse me” if you accidentally brush against someone. You can also say, “I beg your pardon,” but do not use the phrase, “Pardon me.”

Hygiene and Grooming

Careful attention to all aspects of personal hygiene will help you be welcome in social situations. Be certain that you are well groomed every time you make a social appearance. One dirty or untrimmed fingernail may seem like a small thing to you, but it may be the basis for a negative impression. You never have a second chance to make a first impression. The following are just a few of the basics you should already be doing to make sure your appearance is up to standards.

- Make sure your hair is clean, neatly trimmed or styled, and combed at all times.
- Shower daily and use deodorant as part of your daily routine.
- Brush your teeth and floss daily. Try to brush after meals.
- For young men who already have to shave: if it is necessary for you to do so once or twice a day to be presentable, then do so.

Good grooming is an individual responsibility, it says a lot about your attention to detail. It should not be necessary for an instructor or an upper-class cadet to tell you to maintain proper personal hygiene. Additionally, cadets must make sure that their uniforms are clean, pressed, and presentable.

It’s often said, you only get one opportunity to make a first impression. To make that first impression count, we have spent a lot of time in this lesson focusing on dining etiquette, how you should dress, and proper social behavior. While you are enrolled in JROTC, you will have many opportunities to make that first impression and put proper etiquette into practice. The last part of this lesson puts everything you have learned into practice. Attending a Dining-In or Dining-Out allows cadets to interact socially with other cadets and guests. It allows you to enjoy an evening filled with military traditions in a tasteful and dignified manner.

Dining-In and Dining-Out

You should be familiar with the terms *Dining-In* and *Dining-Out*, which refer to formal military dinners. **Dining-In** is a formal dinner for members of the military only. **Dining-Out** is a formal dinner to which non-military guests are invited. Many JROTC programs use Dining-Outs as their Military Ball since both are similar in tradition and activities. The protocol for these affairs often reflects long-standing traditions within a unit of the armed forces. **Protocol** is a code of precedence in rank and status and of correct procedure in ceremonies; a form of etiquette observed in ceremonies; a combination of good manners and common sense that facilitates effective communication. The intent is to promote cordiality, **comradeship**, which is *companionship*, and esprit de corps.

It is believed that Dining-In extends back to the Roman practice of holding great banquets to celebrate victory and parade the spoils of war. However, most historians believe that Dining-In began as a custom in English monasteries. It was then adopted by the early universities. Later, it spread to military units when the officers' mess began. The customs and traditions of our modern Dining-In come from those of the British Army Regimental Mess. The British mess was an occasion to observe the unit's longstanding customs and traditions. It also provided a time for solemn formality, horseplay, and an excuse for living beyond one's means. The first recorded American Dining-In occurred in September 1716 when Governor Spotswood of Virginia, along with a company of Rangers, celebrated after crossing the mountains and descending into the Shenandoah Valley. Air Force Dining-In began in the US Army Air Corps when the late General Henry H. (Hap) Arnold held his famous "wingdings." The custom also grew in popularity during World War II, when members of the US Army Air Corps participated in British Dining-Ins. The Dining-In is now recognized as an occasion where ceremony and tradition combine with good fellowship as an important element in Air Force life.

The primary elements are a formal setting, posting of the Colors, invocation, traditional toasts, a fine dinner, comradeship of cadets, benediction, and retirement of the Colors.

The Dining-In and Dining-Out provide an opportunity to recognize individual, flight, and unit achievements for the school year. They also give cadets an opportunity to honor teachers, principals, and other school personnel. The Dining-In may also be used to present individual and/or unit awards. As such, the Dining-In helps build esprit de corps within JROTC program; it also provides an enjoyable time for cadets. In addition, a Dining-Out may include entertainment after the formal portions, such as music and dancing.

Toasting at a Dining-In

Toasting is a universal custom. It is a simple courtesy to the person being honored. It is improper to drain the glass after each toast; it is also improper to raise an empty glass to make a toast. You need to know how many toasts are being given so you can gauge how much to drink with each toast. Toasts are made standing up. One person, usually the President of the Mess will present a toast by saying, “Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States” or “Ladies and gentlemen, I propose a toast to the President of the United States.” All in attendance will then raise their glasses and say “The President” or “To the President.” The **President of the Mess** is usually the cadet group/wing commander hosting the Dining-In. On the presentation and retirement of the Colors, face toward the Colors at attention until the ceremony is completed. Remain standing for the toasts and the invocation at the beginning of the program. You should rise again for the benediction at the end of the program.

The Military Ball

Another widespread custom in Air Force JROTC is the Military Ball. This formal event requires cadets to wear formal or semiformal service dress and guests to wear formal attire. The Military Ball presents certain rules, procedures, and protocol to be observed. For example, you must wear the uniform the JROTC instructors prescribe, and your date should also be dressed in appropriate attire. An important element of a Military Ball is the receiving line, which is made up of the official hosts and hostesses. You learned about the receiving line earlier in this lesson.



Cadets and guests at a Military Ball.

Courtesy of Michael Wetzell/US Air Force JROTC

Planning a Military Ball

Careful planning is needed to ensure that the Military Ball—or any social occasion—is successful. The first step is for the JROTC instructors to appoint a planning chairperson. This person should be given the authority to make many of the planning decisions, although some decisions may be subject to the instructor’s approval. One of the chairperson’s first duties should be to review the file reports on previous cadet organized Military Balls. These reports will provide the chairperson with details on what must be done to ensure a successful ball.

These activities include:

- Establishing committees, appointing committee leaders, and providing them with the necessary people and other resources. The chairperson also is responsible for supervising these committees. At a minimum, the chairperson will need to create the following committees:
 - Advertising
 - Decorating
 - Entertainment
 - Food
 - Fund-raising
 - Invitations, including the special guests
 - Program and seating arrangements
- Establishing short-term and long-term goals, identifying the tasks necessary for the achievement of these goals, and delegating the tasks to committees for execution.
- Identifying problem areas and lessons learned from previous cadet balls, and preventing them from reoccurring.

Invitations should be sent out as early as possible. If some guests do not accept, this allows time to invite others without offending them with a last-minute invitation. The invitation must clearly state the location, time, and dress requirements. Guests should know exactly what is being planned and what is expected of them. How to handle social invitations will be discussed later in this lesson.

Helpful Planning Tips

Helpful planning tips include:

- Be sure that all arrangements are carefully made for the special guests.
- Select a band that plays a variety of music, as well as music that does not offend anyone. Another option is a disc jockey (DJ). DJs can provide quality music at a reduced cost. If the ball is to be held during a holiday season, contact the band or booking agency at least six months in advance and provide them with a list of tentative dates.
- Arrange to have a photographer.

- Arrange to have several door prizes if you can find sponsors to donate them.
- Give credit in the program to all sponsors, as well as to individuals and organizations that helped put the ball together.
- Rehearse the Color Guard, POW/MIA ceremony, the sequence of events, and any special activities at the actual location at least one day prior to the actual event.
- Be sure that the staff at the site will prepare the correct number of meals and provide the correct number of chairs and tables, and check that the seating arrangements match the seating chart.

Other areas to consider include:

- Sign a contract that specifies the date, fees, and total hours the hall or ballroom will be available. The hours need to include time before the ball for decorating, as well as time after the ball for cleaning up. The band or DJ contract should specify the hours the band will play.
- Reserve the site and the band early, so you can be sure they are available on the desired date. A National Guard armory, officer or NCO club, American Legion hall or high school gym are some of the appropriate places for a cadet ball. The location you choose should include a kitchen.
- Set a working budget. Expenses include band or music fees, rent for the dance hall, security guard(s), decorations, tickets, food, flowers, invitations, and postage.
- Appoint a ticket chairperson if cadets are going to be charged in order to pay for the ball. Ticket sales should start early, and then be cut off at least one week before the ball. Ending sales a week before the ball gives you an accurate count of the number of people who will attend. Even if your unit has plenty of money, cadets should be charged a minimum amount for the ball, so they will value the event.
- Appoint a publicity chairperson to write up a series of news stories before and after the ball. Photos should be taken to go with the stories.
- The decorations chairperson should look over the site and start planning decorations. Supplies should be ordered or purchased at least one month in advance to ensure they are available. Major portions of the decorations should be completed no later than the day before the ball.
- Mail handwritten or engraved invitations to faculty members and special guests at least three weeks before the event. Keep a list of responses, and provide nametags for all expected guests.
- The food and refreshments chairperson must know how much money has been budgeted for food and refreshments. If catering is too expensive or inappropriate, cadets can contribute food items in lieu of paying for tickets.
- Formal dances often provide a commercial photographer to take pictures of cadets and their dates. If a photographer is hired for this purpose, be sure that everyone knows how much the pictures will cost before they are taken.
- If awards are to be presented, they should be ordered, engraved, picked up, and presentation scripts written.

 **CHECKPOINTS**

Lesson 6 Review

Using complete sentences, answer the following questions on a sheet of paper.

1. What is the difference between etiquette and manners?
2. When introducing someone to a dignitary, who should be mentioned first?
3. When introductions are made, what is the biggest mistake people make?
4. Dinner guests will not touch anything on the table until when?
5. The POW-MIA table has a slice of lemon on it; what does the lemon represent?
6. Give three examples of proper dinner conversation topics.
7. What does “RSVP” mean in English?
8. If in doubt what to wear for an open house, who should you contact?
9. List two examples of courteous cell phone use.
10. List three tips for proper text messaging.
11. When a gentleman and lady approach a door, who should open the door?
12. Provide two examples for proper appearance.
13. When did the first recorded American Dining-In, hosted by Governor Spotswood of Virginia, take place?
14. If you are attending the JROTC Military Ball, what clothing should the cadet and a guest wear?
15. If you are planning to invite a speaker or other guests to the JROTC Military Ball, when should invitations be sent?

APPLYING YOUR LEARNING

16. You just attended a formal dinner party presented by your instructor and his or her spouse where you really enjoyed the dinner. Write a short thank-you note to the host or hostess indicating your appreciation.