Introduction
This support pack accompanies the audio file 'Manners'. To listen to the audio file, go to:
http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/uk-culture/manners

This support pack contains the following materials:

- a pre-listening vocabulary activity
- the transcript of the audio file
- a comprehension activity

Before you listen

Exercise 01
Match the words and phrases in the table to their definitions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Anthopological</th>
<th>b. branded</th>
<th>c. Broadly</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>d. clasped</td>
<td>e. Common ground</td>
<td>f. comply</td>
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<tr>
<td>g. defuse</td>
<td>h. Mercilessly</td>
<td>i. rub along together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. shortcut</td>
<td>k. stereotype</td>
<td>l. trip-wire</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. If you take a [………………..] you use a route which is shorter than the usual one.
2. If you are [………………..] it means you are have a negative reputation.
3. [………………..] is the things that people can agree on when they have different opinions or habits.
4. [………………..] means in general.
5. If something is [………………..], it is held very tightly.
6. When people [………………..], they are friendly and cooperate together under difficult circumstances.
7. If you [………………..] a situation or a conflict, you take away the cause of tension.
8. A [………………..] is a popularly held belief about a type of person or a group of people which does not take into account individual differences.
9. A [………………..] here means a mistake that you can easily make without knowing.
10. [………………..] means concerned with the study of humankind.
11. [……………………] means without pity.
12. If you [………………..], you act in accordance with someone's rules, commands or wishes.
Hello and welcome to Trend UK, your shortcut to popular culture from the British Council. In the next few minutes we’re going to be talking about modern manners. It’s an argument that, on the face of it, has been going on between the generations, for hundreds of generations. Older people can often be heard saying the youth of today lack the basics in good behaviour and with newspapers and the media focusing on the anti-social activities of a minority of young people, it’s easy for them to be branded with a negative stereotype. So are British manners really getting worse? Our reporter Mark went to find out.

Well I’ve come to a typical UK high street on a weekday to talk to the young mums and dads, business people, elderly people and students that are out doing their shopping. So we should get an interesting mix of views. Let’s go see what people think.

Excuse me Sir, would you say that manners are getting better or worse in the UK?

I actually think they’re getting worse. I think that the standards are declining generally. I think they are getting worse but not terribly so. Generally in buses and trains I think that people’s manners have improved in many ways. There are cultural differences, and you might meet someone from a different culture and your set of manners will quite be different to theirs.

Well, is it all a question of individual taste or is there some common ground? With me here is Simon Fanshawe, author of a book called ‘The Done Thing’, all about modern British manners. Simon, what are the basic dos and don’ts?

I think one of the things that’s confusing for people is when they come here is there appears to be hundreds and hundreds of rules, hundreds of things you should and shouldn’t do. And the truth of it is that most of them are about class. And lots of them are trip-wires actually for people who don’t know them. So what I tried to do in my book was take it back to the first principle and say look – there are anthropological reasons why we have certain kinds of manners. So I’ll give you a very good example, in Britain there are sort of two ways of holding a knife, very broadly. And broadly speaking the middle-classes hold it with the index finger on the top, gripped in the hand. And working-class people hold it like a pen. Entirely a class distinction and people mercilessly exploit it if they want to. The truth of it is, the one way not to hold a knife at the table, is clasped in your fist, raised as if to kill your guest. And what does that tell us about eating? Well what that tells us about eating is two things, which is never confuse your guests with either the food or the enemy. Don’t eat them and don’t kill them. That’s about how you should hold your knife, because actually manners are really about the reduction of violence. There’s a lot in there about reducing violence. So that’s just an illustration of what one tries to do so actually when you look at real table manners they’re about people feeling comfortable with each other, sharing food around a table. Very important human thing.

And are things actually getting worse?

Very broadly speaking, we all rub along together pretty well actually, we don’t do so badly. The trouble with bad manners is that when you experience it it completely occupies your field of vision. So you feel completely knocked back and rather hurt by somebody.

Should foreigners, say, comply with British manners when in Britain or just be themselves?

Well I think one issue we should be very gentle with is because we’re not terribly good at understanding that there are lots of different customs from round the world, so you know, be gentle. But I think the thing what I would say to anybody going to any other culture, any other country in the world: Number one – be curious, ask yourself. The other thing is don’t think there’s a right and a wrong way to do things in terms of little funny details. Always remember that fundamentals matter more than anything else. ‘Please’ and ‘Thank You’ is a gift and a grace in any language so treat people in the fundamental purpose of manners which is to make life easier. If I can give you a definition of manners, it is it the reduction of actual or potential violence between strangers. So always...
seek to defuse conflict, always seek to reach out and offer yourself to other people, always seek to open the door and let them through. Always do those kind of things because actually you'll find people love it and they'll respond to you.

Simon Fanshawe, it would be very bad manners of me not to say, ‘thank you’ for coming to talk to us.

Our reporter Mark, minding his p’s and q’s there. And that’s it for this time. Please remember that the opinions expressed in Trend UK are those of the individuals concerned, and not necessarily the views of the British Council. Don’t forget, you keep up with contemporary UK by using our local British Council Information Centre. Or by checking our website www.britishcouncil.org, that’s www.britishcouncil.org. Just follow the links under ‘Contact Us’. And while you’re on the website you can also update your English by checking out the words and phrases in the Trend UK online glossary. And tell us what you think by sending us a comment or voting in the online poll. But for now, from me and all the Trend UK Team, bye bye.

After listening

Exercise 02
Decide if each of the following statements about the text are true or false.

1. The interviewer is going to talk to a particular type of person
2. One person thinks people’s manners are worse on public transport
3. Simon Fanshawe thinks class affects people’s manners when eating
4. Fanshawe thinks that manners are a way for friends to interact peacefully
5. The interviewer thanks Simon Fanshawe for speaking.

Exercise 01
1. j; 2. b; 3. e; 4. c; 5. d; 6. i; 7. g; 8. k; 9. l; 10. a; 11. h; 12. f

Answers

Exercise 02
1. False - an interesting mix of views; 2. False – in buses and trains… people’s manners have improved; 3. True - there are two ways of holding a knife … middle-classes … working-class; 4. False - the reduction of actual or potential violence between strangers; 5. True – it would be very bad manners of me not to say …