

HUMANITIES (ACT)

This passage is adapted from *Etiquette* by Emily Post.

5 People who ridicule etiquette as a mass of
trivial and arbitrary conventions, “extremely
troublesome to those who practice them
and insupportable to everybody else,” seem
10 to forget the long, slow progress of social
intercourse in the upward climb of man
from the primeval state. Conventions were
established from the first to regulate the
rights of the individual and the tribe. They
15 were and are the rules of the game of life
and must be followed if we would “play
the game.” Ages before man felt the need of
indigestion remedies, he ate his food solitary
and furtive in some corner, hoping he would
20 not be espied by any stronger and hungrier
fellow. It was a long, long time before the
habit of eating in common was acquired;
and it is obvious that the practice could not
have been taken up with safety until the
25 individuals of the race knew enough about
one another and about the food resources to
be sure that there was food sufficient for all.
When eating in common became the vogue,
table manners made their appearance, and
30 they have been waging an uphill struggle
ever since. The custom of raising the hat
when meeting an acquaintance derives from
the old rule that friendly knights in accosting
each other should raise the visor for mutual
recognition in amity. In the knightly years,
it must be remembered, it was important to
know whether one was meeting friend or foe.
Meeting a foe meant fighting on the spot.
Thus, it is evident that the conventions of
35 courtesy not only tend to make the wheels
of life run more smoothly, but also act as
safeguards in human relationship. Imagine
the Paris Peace Conference, or any of the
later conferences in Europe, without the
protective armor of diplomatic etiquette!

40 Nevertheless, to some the very word
etiquette is an irritant. It implies a great
pother about trifles, these conscientious
objectors assure us, and trifles are
45 unimportant. Trifles are unimportant, it is
true, but then, life is made up of trifles. To
those who dislike the word, it suggests all
that is finical and superfluous. It means a
garish embroidery on the big scheme of
50 life; a clog on the forward march of a strong
and courageous nation. To such as these, the
words etiquette and politeness connote
weakness and timidity. Their notion of a

55 really polite man is a dancing master or a
man milliner. They were always willing
to admit that the French were the politest
nation in Europe and equally ready to assert
that the French were the weakest and least
60 valorous, until the war opened their eyes in
amazement. Yet, that manners and fighting
can go hand in hand appears in the following
anecdote:

65 In the midst of the war, some French
soldiers and some non-French of the Allied
forces were receiving their rations in a
village back of the lines. The non-French
fighters belonged to an army that supplied
70 rations plentifully. They grabbed their
allotments and stood about while hastily
eating, uninterrupted by conversation or
other concern. The French soldiers took their
very meager portions of food, improvised
75 a kind of table on the top of a flat rock, and
having laid out the rations, including the
small quantity of wine that formed part of
the repast, sat down in comfort and began
their meal amid a chatter of talk. One of
the non-French soldiers, all of whom had
80 finished their large supply of food before the
French had begun eating, asked sardonically:
“Why do you fellows make such a lot of fuss
over the little bit of grub they give you to
eat?” The Frenchman replied: “Well, we are
85 making war for civilization, are we not? Very
well, we are. Therefore, we eat in a civilized
way.”

90 “To the French we owe the word
etiquette, and it is amusing to discover
its origin in the commonplace familiar
warning—“keep off the grass.” It happened
in the reign of Louis XIV, when the
gardens of Versailles were being laid out,
that the master gardener, an old Scotsman,
was sorely tried because his newly seeded
95 lawns were being continually trampled
upon. To keep trespassers off, he put up
warning signs or tickets—“etiquettes”—
on which was indicated the path along
which to pass. But the courtiers paid no
100 attention to these directions and so the
determined Scot complained to the king in
such convincing manner that his majesty
issued an edict commanding everyone at
court to “keep within the ‘etiquettes.’”
105 Gradually the term came to cover all the
rules for correct demeanor and deportment
in court circles; and thus through the
centuries it has grown into use to describe
the conventions sanctioned for the

110 purpose of smoothing personal contacts
and developing tact and good manners
in social intercourse. With the decline of
feudal courts and the rise of empires of
115 industry, much of the ceremony of life was
discarded for plain and less formal dealing.
Trousers and coats supplanted doublets
and hose, and the change in costume was
not more extreme than the change in social
120 ideas. The court ceased to be the arbiter
of manners, though the aristocracy of the
land remained the high exemplar of good
breeding.

1. The main purpose of this passage is to:
 - A) detail the etymology of the word *etiquette*.
 - B) show that the French are the most courteous nationality.
 - C) berate those who believe *etiquette* is unimportant.
 - D) describe *etiquette*'s creation and evolution.
2. The first sentence of the passage (lines 1-7) acknowledges that:
 - A) many people do not take *etiquette* seriously.
 - B) *etiquette* is a necessary but insufficient quality of the primeval state.
 - C) the writer does not believe in the importance of *etiquette*.
 - D) the arbitration of trivia contests requires *etiquette* and finesse.
3. The passage claims early man ate alone because:
 - A) there were not many other people around with whom to eat.
 - B) there was often not enough food to share.
 - C) table manners did not yet exist.
 - D) indigestion remedies did not exist.
4. As it is used in the passage, the phrase "the protective armor of diplomatic *etiquette*" (lines 39-40) most nearly refers to:
 - A) an actual item of body armor worn by individuals at international conferences.
 - B) a metaphorical covering of rules and courtesies shared by different countries.
 - C) a written agreement governing the rules and regulations of proper behavior.
 - D) an arbiter who serves the purpose of settling disputes regarding proper behavior.

5. The French word *etiquette* originally meant:
 - A) efforts.
 - B) signs.
 - C) rules.
 - D) aristocracy.
6. The purpose of the third paragraph (lines 63- 86) is to:
 - A) describe in a humorous way the traditional courtesy of the French.
 - B) mock French *etiquette*.
 - C) prove that it is unnecessary for the French to show good manners.
 - D) detail the custom surrounding a French meal.
7. The term *etiquette* has evolved to mean all of the following EXCEPT:
 - A) demeanor.
 - B) deportment.
 - C) courtesy.
 - D) clothing.
8. According to the passage, the form of *etiquette* that still most needs improvement is:
 - A) personal hygiene.
 - B) house rules.
 - C) table manners.
 - D) proper grammar and idiom.
9. In the context of line 85, the word *civilized* most nearly means:
 - A) urban.
 - B) urbane.
 - C) humane.
 - D) humble.
10. The passage asserts that *etiquette* "implies a great pother about trifles" (lines 42-43), suggesting that:
 - A) the writer does not support the ideas about which she is writing.
 - B) the very word *etiquette* is enough to annoy some people.
 - C) *etiquette* is not terribly important to some people.
 - D) time should be spent on things other than *etiquette*.