

## SOURCE A: Victorian Table Manners

*Below is an article, taken from a Victorian cook book published in 1890, detailing proper table manners. This provides a good overview of how to handle the various utensils on the properly set table as well as discussing the finer points of table service.*

The best teachers of etiquette are the fathers and mothers, and their lessons should be given mainly through example. The best company in the world are those of our own households; they deserve all the love and sweetness which we can bestow upon them, and the gracious manners of the home must follow them through life. All good breeding includes kindness, courtesy, unselfishness, respect, tact, gentleness and modesty of deportment. 5

If children are carefully taught to hold the knife and fork properly, to eat without the slightest sound of the lips, to drink quietly, to use the napkin rightly, to make no noise of the implements of the table, and, last but not least, to eat slowly and masticate the food properly, then they will always feel at their ease at the grandest tables in the land. Once seated at the table gloves are drawn off and laid in the lap under the napkin, which is spread lightly, not tucked in. 10

Soup is always served for the first course, and it should be eaten with dessert spoons, and taken from the sides, not the tips of them, without any sounds of the lips, and not sucked into the mouth audibly from the ends of the spoon. Bread should not be broken into soup or gravy. Never ask to be helped to soup a second time. Fish chowder, which is served in soup plates, is said to be the exception which proves this rule, and when eating of that it is acceptable to take a second plateful, if desired. 15

Drink sparingly while eating, as it is far better for digestion, but when you do drink, do it gently and easily and do not pour the liquid down your throat. Do not talk loudly or boisterously at the table, but aim to be cheerful and companionable and join in the conversation, but do not dominate it. Do not twirl your goblet, nor soil the tablecloth by placing bones or fragments on it. Never pour tea or coffee into your saucer to cool it, nor blow your soup. If you do not like any dish which you are served, allow it to remain untouched until the servant removes it. 20

Sit upright at the table, without bending over or lowering your head to partake of your food. Do not sit too far away or too near the table, and do not sit with one arm lying on the table with your back half-turned to your left hand neighbour. 25

Then one who serves at the table should not help too abundantly, or flood the food with gravies, as many do not like them, and it is better to allow each guest to help himself. Water should be poured to the right of a person - everything else is passed to the left. Do not watch the dishes while being uncovered or talk with your mouth full. If you discover anything objectionable in the food, do not attract the attention of others to it, but quietly deposit it under the edge of your plate. 30

Spoons are sometimes used with firm puddings, but forks are better style. A spoon should never be turned over in the mouth. One's teeth are never picked at the table; but if it is impossible to prevent it, it should be done behind the napkin. 35

Let us mention a few things concerning the eating of which there is sometime doubt. A

cream-cake and anything of similar nature should be eaten with a knife and fork, never bitten. Asparagus may be taken from the finger and thumb. Pasty should be broken and eaten with a fork, never cut with a knife. Raw oysters should be eaten with a fork, also fish. However, food that cannot be held with a fork should be eaten with a spoon. Potatoes, if mashed, should be mashed with a fork. 40

At the conclusion of a course, where they have been used, a knife and fork should be laid side by side across the middle of the plate - never crossed - with handles to the right. The servant should offer everything at the left of the guest, that the guest may be at liberty to use the right hand, except water, which is always poured at the right side. 45

When you rise from your chair, leave it where it stands.

### **SOURCE B: The Guardian newspaper article, published 3rd October 2013**

#### **‘Why teaching table manners can do more harm than good’**

It might be messy, but children should play with their food to stop them becoming fussy eaters. What are your rules at mealtimes?

My seven-year-old daughter has a friend round for dinner. They’re pretending that raspberries are lipstick and squidding them against their lips, with lots of giggles and red-stained fingers. I could object. Instead, I smile and start loading the dishwasher. 5

It’s not that I think table manners are entirely unimportant. I have no intention of raising slurpy, finger-licking, face-smearing chimps. But I’ve always instinctively felt that if I wanted my children to grow up with a positive, happy, healthy, adventurous attitude to food, nagging them from a young age to behave like mini adults at the dinner table was going to be counterproductive. Not only would it create tensions at the table, it would crush their enthusiasm and open-mindedness towards food pretty damn quickly. 10

My own childhood memories of mealtimes are still marred by my mum constantly pestering me to hold my knife right and telling me off for sculpting faces in my Angel Delight with my spoon. No, if I wanted my children to explore food by eating it, I was going to have to relax and let them explore it in any other ways, too. 15

Food is, after all, multisensory. It doesn’t appeal to us through taste alone. The smell of freshly baking bread can sell houses. The colour of the inside of a perfectly ripe avocado is good enough to be painted on living room walls. And the snap of a carrot stick is a rather satisfying sound. A young child learns about the world directly through their senses. Just as a five- or six-month-old puts toys in their mouth as part of their developmental process, so babies and toddlers naturally want to touch food, feel it, squidge it, squelch it, sniff it and see what noises it makes. It’s not a substitute for eating, or a distraction from it. It’s an important part of learning to love food and to be comfortable around it. 20

Anna Groom is a lead NHS paediatric dietitian. She works with children who are “selective eaters” (fussy buggers to you and me) on a daily basis. “It’s really important to let children explore the sensory side of food as a whole – not just what it tastes like,” she says. “It makes it more familiar to them. It makes them feel ‘safe’ with it.” The idea is that they are more likely to try it, and less likely to become fussy. 25

She points out that the emphasis on keeping everything clean and tidy and under control at mealtimes often starts at weaning. Watch many a parent feeding her baby and notice how they scrape the spoon around the baby's mouth after each mouthful, how they hold the bowl at arm's reach when the baby swipes for it eagerly. Yet exposure to a food, she explains – any exposure – is a vital first step, whether the child eats it or not. "When I work with children who have become phobic about a particular food, I get them to draw it, touch it, play with it, smell it, kiss it, lick it!"

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So – even at age seven – I will continue to let my daughter mould sand dunes out of her rice, make a clown's nose out of cherry tomato or put a blob of peanut butter on her boiled egg just to see what it tastes like. I am teaching her table manners, but I'm doing it gradually and gently. In fact, I believe it has the most impact when I talk to her about them away from the table, when she's not hungry and trying to enjoy her food. The other day, as she was engrossed in using her fork to make fossil patterns in her mashed potato, she looked up and said: "You know Mummy, I wouldn't do this if I was in a restaurant."

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My other child is now 14. He has always eaten everything and anything that comes his way, with the exception of raw tomato. How are his table manners? Pretty good. I've noticed he still likes to have a (discreet) animalistic sniff of a frankfurter before he puts it in his mouth, but he knows how to eat politely and conform to society's expectations.

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By the time I've finished loading the dishwasher, the girls have gone off to play. I go to clear the last things from the table. The squashed raspberries have all been eaten.

**Taken from:**

<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/wordofmouth/2013/oct/03/teaching-table-manners-play-food-children>

**Q1: Read Source A.** Tick **four** statements below which are **TRUE**

- The writer believes parents should teach their children table manners
- The writer suggests that soup should be eaten with a tea spoon
- The writer considers it rude to talk loudly at the dining table
- The author thinks it is unacceptable to turn a spoon over in the mouth
- The author thinks it is acceptable to blow your soup if it is hot
- The writer suggests you should eat all your food, even if you dislike it
- The writer explains you should cross your knife and fork when finished
- The author states that raw oysters should be eaten with a fork

[4 marks]

**Q2: Refer to Source A and Source B.**

Write a **summary** of the writers' different **attitudes** to table manners.

[8 marks]

**Q3: Refer to Source B.**

How does the writer use **language** to engage the reader with

her opinions about table manners?

[12 marks]

**Q4:** Now refer to both **Source A and Source B**.

**Compare** how the writers convey their different **attitudes** to manners.

[16 marks]

In your answer, you should:

- compare their **different attitudes**
- compare the **methods** they use to convey their attitudes
- **support your ideas with quotations** from both texts