
Primary Source Comprehension: Colonial Manners

Reporting Category: Reading and Comprehension

Topic: Demonstrating Comprehension

Primary SOLs: 3.1 c, f. 3.6 a, d. 3.10 d. 4.1 b, d. 4.4a. 4.6 b, e, h. 4.7 e, j. 5.1 a-d, h. 5.4 a, b, f. 5.6 g, i, k.

Document Context: Built in 1747, Rippon Lodge was the private home of the Blackburn Family from 1747 until 1811. Richard Blackburn was from England and came to the colonies to start a new life. He owned vast amounts of land and grew several types of crops, including wheat, corn, and tobacco. One of his sons, Thomas, was involved in politics and served in the militia during the Revolutionary War. The home was visited by many important guests, including George Washington.

Document Text: The Blackburn's entertained many important families, such as the Washington's, Mason's, and Lee's. These public and social gatherings required pristine manners. Back in the 17th century one's behavior, and how they treated and spoke to others, reflected on who they were and their level of education. There were books as well as classroom trainings on manners. *The School of Manners or Rules for Childrens Behavior*, published in London in 1701, was one of the many sources available to families like the Blackburns to assist in teaching their children how to behave. The handbook instructs a child on how they should behave in school, at home, with company, at the dining room table, and on vacation!

Chapter 4 has forty-four rules for how to behave at the dining room table. Here are the first twelve transcribed.

1. Come not to the Table unwashed or not comb'd.
2. Sit not down till thou art bidden by thy Parents or Superiors.
3. Be sure thou never sit till Grace be said, and then in thy due place.
4. Offer not to carve for thy self, or to take any thing, though it be what thou ever so much desires.
5. Ask not for any thing, but tarry till it be offered thee.
6. Find not fault with any thing that is given thee.
7. When thou hast meat given thee, be not the first to begin to eat.
8. Feed thy self with thy two Fingers, and the Thumb of the left hand.
9. Speak not at the Table; if thy Superiors be discoursing, meddle not with the matter.
10. If thou want any thing from the Servants, call to them softly.
11. Eat not too fast, or greedily.
12. Eat not too much, but moderately.

Exercise:

1. What do you think of these manners? Which one's were difficult to understand?
2. Are there any people practice today?
3. Why would these manners be important for children to learn?
4. Do you think young children would be able to follow them?
5. What one manner are you expected to follow at the table at home today?
6. Do you think you behave differently when there are guests over for dinner? If so, why?

THE
SCHOOL
OF
MANNERS.
OR

RULES for Childrens
Behaviour:

At Church, at Home, at Table,
in Company, in Discourse, at
School, abroad, and among
Boys. With some other
short and mixt Precepts.

By the Author of the *English
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The Fourth Edition.

L O N D O N.

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cers-Hall in the Poultry, 1701