

Etiquette and Behavior

WORD LIST

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|---------|-----------|---------|------------|---------|
| brusque | cordial | dignity | hospitable | irksome |
| nicety | propriety | refined | suave | tact |

The word *etiquette*, which refers to proper behavior, comes from the same word as *ticket*. In the 1700s, at the royal court of France, rules of required behavior were very complex. People relied on small cards, or tickets (*estiquets*), that gave precise instructions on how to bow, address others, and even knock on doors. From this tradition, *etiquette* has come to mean “rules of behavior.” When you pronounce the word slowly, you can hear how similar it is to the word *ticket*.

- 1. brusque** (brŭsk) *adjective* from Medieval Latin *bruscum*, “rough”
Rough and short in manner or speech; abrupt; curt

 - The players jumped when they heard the coach’s **brusque** order.

brusqueness *noun* Despite his kind heart, the man’s **brusqueness** made him seem unfriendly.
- 2. cordial** (kôr’jəl) *adjective* from Latin *cordis*, “heart”
Warm and friendly

 - The class gave the new student a **cordial** greeting.

cordiality *noun* Mrs. Schwinn-Marquez is known for her **cordiality** to guests.
- 3. dignity** (dĭg’ni-tē) *noun* from Latin *dignus*, “worthy”

 - A calm manner indicating self-respect and worthiness
 - The man on trial stood with quiet **dignity**.
 - A sense of self-respect
 - Full-time employment restored the man’s **dignity**.

dignified *adjective* The homeless man remained **dignified** despite his circumstances.
- 4. hospitable** (hŏ-spĭt’ə-bəl) *adjective* from Latin *hospes*, “host; guest”
Open and welcoming to guests

 - The **hospitable** Miller family invited guests to stop by after the game.

hospitality *noun* Unfortunately, our tiny apartment limits the **hospitality** we can extend.



hospitable

5. **irksome** (îrk'səm) *adjective* from Middle English *irksum*, "tending to be weary"
Annoying; irritating
- Alicia found it **irksome** to have to do dishes every night while the rest of the neighborhood children played outside.
- irk** *verb* The little boy's constant questions **irked** his older brother.
6. **nicety** (nī'sī-tē) *noun* from Old French *nicete*, "silliness"
- A small, often unimportant detail; a fine point
 - Don't bother me with **niceties** while I am trying to deal with this emergency!
 - An elegant detail or distinction; a refined feature or custom
 - Observing an old-fashioned **nicety**, the gentleman took the lady's arm and escorted her into the dining room.
7. **propriety** (prə-prī'ī-tē) *noun* from Old French *propriete*, "one's own"
The quality of being proper; appropriateness
- Screaming at a formal dinner shows a definite lack of **propriety**.
8. **refined** (rī-fīnd') *adjective* from French *raffiner*, "to purify"
Very polite or cultured
- The **refined** young man stood up when the guests entered the room.
- refine** *verb* To purify; to improve
- This olive oil has been carefully **refined**.
9. **suave** (swäv) *adjective* from Latin *suavis*, "sweet"
Sophisticated; smoothly agreeable and polite
- The **suave** young actor was given the lead role in the romantic movie.
10. **tact** (täkt) *noun* from Latin *tactus*, "touch"
The ability to speak or act without offending others
- **Tact** can often accomplish more than rudeness or aggression can.
- tactful** *adjective* Because we disagree on this topic, the most **tactful** thing I can do is not to answer your question.

WORD ENRICHMENT

The many senses of "nice"

Word meanings change over time. We usually think of *nice* as meaning "kind." Yet the word *nicety* means "a small detail," or "a fine point."

Nice started out its journey as a word in Latin, in which *nescius* meant "ignorant." Later, the word became part of Old French, in which *nicete* meant "silliness." The word was then absorbed into Middle English, in which it meant both "foolish" and "exact." *Nicety* combines both meanings.

Although *nicety* has kept this meaning, the word *nice* has continued to change. In the past, it has meant "foolish," "wasteful," "of bad moral character," or "falsely modest." The *Oxford Dictionary of the English Language* lists more than forty meanings for *nice*, many of which are no longer used. Currently, in addition to its common meaning of "kind," *nice* is still used to mean "precise," as in a *nice distinction*, and to intensify a meaning, as in *nice and cozy*.