English Speech Competition Topic

Table Manners around the World

"Keep your elbows off the table!" In America, it's common for parents to say this to their children during a meal. That's because eating with your elbows on the table is considered impolite. This isn't the case in every country. When it comes to dining, bad manners in one place could be considered good manners in another.

Would you burp loudly at the table after a meal ? In many countries, that would be considered rude, but not in parts of China. In these places, burping is a polite gesture. Similar differences can be found in the choice between using or not using a fork. If you're in Mexico, make sure you don't eat your taco with a knife and a fork.

In some countries, there is a proper time for enjoying certain foods and drinks. If you're dining in France, don't eat all of your bread before your meal arrives. Bread is eaten with the main course or with the cheese course.

Good table manners also include showing respect for the people who prepared your food. For this reason, don't ask for salt or pepper if it's not already on the table in Portugal. Doing so would be an insult to the cook.

Wherever you are, having good table manners lets you show your respect for other cultures. It also helps you make new friends because it tells others that you know their customs and values.

Thank you for your listening.

(選自 Live ABC 英語雜誌)

English Speech Competition Topic

The Art of Idioms

When I was young, I was a couch potato. ”Couch potato” is an idiom. A couch potato is someone who sits on the couch all day. That person is like a potato, because a potato never moves.

  My mother said that if I didn’t change my habits, I might become the black sheep of the family. If a good family has one person who always makes mistakes, that person is the black sheep of the family.

  In conversations, people often use idioms. Some idioms are clever, some are funny, and some are strange. For example, if you’re ”under the weather, ”you feel sick. If a man has no goals in his life, we can say he has no direction.

   When I got older, I became a workhorse. A workhorse is a hard-working person. I’m also an eager beaver. Eager beavers are energetic. They’re always excited about work.

  These days, I still have bad habits. For example, I go to bed after midnight. Therefore, some people call me a night owl. When I stay up late, I like to read. I’m definitely a bookworm. English has idioms for almost everything. A snake in the grass is a sneaky person. A teacher’s pet is a student that the teacher loves. An egghead is a very smart person.

  Just remember that it’s good to be a workhorse. If you work hard, then someday you might become the big cheese. What does that mean? It means a very important person.

Thank you for your listening.

(選自 Live ABC 英語雜誌)