

LINKS TO:

Stage 2, Module 9

Learning Object 2: Can I go to both?

Exercise 1**When have you been shouted to a meal or a movie?**

When I walk home from school with my friends, we take turns to shout each other a drink. When I was invited to my friend's house, his mother shouted us lunch at McDonald's. My older brother, who works full-time, shouted me and my friend to a movie one Saturday.

Exercise 2**Why do you think people shout others to a meal or a movie?**

Sometimes it's simply a way of being friendly, especially if they work but their friends or younger siblings don't. So, as an act of generosity, they may buy food for the others.

Sometimes it is for an occasion such as a birthday party. If we invite friends to a birthday party at a restaurant or the movies, then the family or the parents will shout the friends.

Exercise 3**Are there any rules that can be applied to shouting people?**

The most obvious rule is that if the person states that it is 'my shout', then that person is obliged to pay, and the others need not offer.

Sometimes, if a group of friends shout each other on informal occasions, such as a drink on the way home from school, they take it in turns. So if one person shouts on one occasion, then another will probably be expected to shout the next time.

This is an 'unwritten rule' among friends and does not apply to birthday parties and other occasions. Just because a friend's parents shout us to a birthday party, it doesn't mean the other parents are obliged to do the same.

Exercise 4**How are birthdays celebrated in Australia? Who pays for the meals? How does this compare with Indonesia?**

Sometimes we invite friends over to our house for a party, which could be a barbecue or something similar.

Sometimes the party is held at a family restaurant. In these situations, the host provides all the food and drinks. Guests are not required to pay for anything, however, it is customary for guests to bring a gift for the person who is celebrating their birthday. This is similar to Indonesia, although, there, birthday parties such as these are a recent introduction. Most birthdays in Indonesia are low-key, private events with a simple thanksgiving meal and prayers.

Exercise 5**Are there any other events in Indonesia where invited guests are shouted or provided with meals and all expenses are paid?**

Virtually every formal event or celebration includes a meal of some sort. In modern, urban settings, these are usually served as a buffet. In traditional settings, such as in villages, guests take part in a communal meal seated on the floor in two rows facing each other. The host provides the meal, which is in the form of several dishes placed on a mat between the two rows of guests. Guests are not expected to bring anything. At the end of the meal a plate of cigarettes is passed around for the men. Women generally do not smoke in Indonesia.

Exercise 6**If you were living in Indonesia, how would you feel if you were invited to eat in a local café with friends where one person offered to shout?**

I would probably go along as it would be a good opportunity to learn more about social interaction in Indonesia, and, also, out of respect for the person who is shouting. I may feel awkward at first because there may be some unwritten rules that I haven't yet learnt. Of course, the more I mix with people my age, the more I will learn about these rules.

Exercise 7

Because the word *traktir* is frequently used in social interactions among Indonesians, what does it tell you about Indonesian attitudes towards hospitality?

It tells me that Indonesians enjoy getting together for meals or social events and that they are a hospitable people. It also tells me that they take pleasure in paying for, or shouting, their guests, to show them respect and as a way of creating an opportunity to socialise.

Exercise 8

In Australia, when we invite people for a meal, we sometimes ask them to 'bring a plate'. Do you think this expression may be confusing to an Indonesian? Why or why not?

The saying 'bring a plate' is an example of Australian idiomatic speech: Australians know that it means to bring a plate of food to share, but if an Indonesian was asked to 'bring a plate', they might interpret it literally and wonder why they are being asked to bring their own plate (without food on it). They might think the host doesn't have a sufficient supply of plates!

Exercise 9

How do you think Indonesians might perceive the Australian practice of asking invited guests to bring food? Why?

In Indonesia it is not common practice to invite guests to bring food. Particularly for formal occasions, Indonesians tend to supply all of the food for their guests. Because of this, they might find the Australian practice of asking guests to bring something to share unusual and confusing. Because they are unfamiliar with the practice, they might be unsure of what's expected, and concerned as to whether there are other, unspoken rules about visiting someone's home they aren't aware of. Some Indonesians might think the person making the invitation is not being a good host, since their expectations about how to host a party are different to an Australian's.

Exercise 10

Looking at your response to Exercise 9, what does this tell you about the similarities or differences between Australian and Indonesian attitudes and values concerning hospitality?

Some of our values concerning hospitality are quite similar. In both Indonesia and Australia, people like to invite their friends into their homes, and want their guests to have a good time. They value friendship and good conversation, and want to make sure that everyone at the gathering is comfortable.

One major difference between Australia and Indonesia is that in Indonesia, guests are not expected to bring anything to contribute to a meal, whether it is a formal or an informal occasion, while in Australia, for informal events, guests often are asked to bring something, or they may offer, and this offer is often accepted.

In Australia, a guest would be pleased to make a contribution to the party, and would probably discuss with the host what they are going to contribute. They would see it as an opportunity to support the host, thank them for the invitation and for all the trouble they have gone to in hosting the party, and perhaps to show off their cooking skills! A guest at an Australian dinner party is often treated as one of the family; guests are often invited into the house with the phrase 'make yourself at home'.

In Indonesia, a guest is treated more like an honoured visitor whose role is to appreciate the host or hostess's skills as a host, and to contribute to the conversation. A dinner party seems to be a little more formal than a typical Australian dinner party. The host would be pleased to be able to be generous in providing for their guests and would take pleasure in providing the best food and drink they can prepare.