

# Behaving politely

## Answers

1.

Sample answers:

We all greet the guests appropriately. Children do not interrupt when the adults are talking. If nibbles or a meal and drinks are served, we offer them to guests first before taking anything ourselves. If the guests have finished their food or drink, we offer them some more but we don't insist strongly if they refuse a second helping.

2.

Rules of politeness	Australia		Indonesia	
	Important	Less important	Important	Less important
a) Seek permission before visiting	✓			✓
b) Take your shoes off at the front door		✓	✓	
c) Say 'Thank you' when given food or a drink	✓			✓
d) After you have been handed your drink or snack, wait for the host to say 'please eat / drink' before consuming it		✓	✓	
e) Finish all your food if eating a meal	✓			✓
f) If dropping by uninvited, do not stay longer than you need to	✓		✓	

Sample answers:

a)

- The table shows that you are not expected to seek permission before visiting someone in Indonesia.
- I think this means that dropping in on people unannounced is acceptable. You do not need to contact someone first. It also means that if you were living in Indonesia, you would need to accept unexpected visitors even if they called at an inconvenient time.

b)

- The table shows that you are expected to remove your shoes before entering someone's home in Indonesia. Maybe it helps keep dirt and mud out of the house, especially during the rainy season.
- It would mean that wearing lace-up shoes might be inconvenient and that slip-on shoes would be easier to take off and put back on each time you went to someone's house.

- c)
- The table shows that you are not expected to say 'Thank you' every time you are given something to eat or drink in Indonesia. Indonesians often express their gratitude by simply saying 'Ya' accompanied by a slight nod of the head instead of using the phrase *Terima kasih* (Thank you).
  - This means that I should not expect people to say *Terima kasih* every time I offered them something. I could also adapt my behaviour and try and say 'Thank you' in the Indonesian way.
- d)
- The table shows that it is impolite in Indonesia to immediately begin consuming food or drink when you are served.
  - This means that even though I have been given a drink or something to eat, it is polite to wait for the host to tell me to begin or to wait until the host begins first.
- e)
- The table shows that people are not expected to finish all the food on their plate in Indonesia.
  - I think this means that if I have had enough to eat, I should leave something on my plate so that the Indonesian hosts understand I have had sufficient. If I finish all the food on the plate, they might think I haven't had enough and will continue to offer me more. If I keep finishing everything every time I am offered something, the hosts might feel embarrassed that they haven't prepared enough food. There is also a chance they might think I am being greedy.
- f)
- The table shows that although it is acceptable to drop by unexpectedly in Indonesia, you should only stay for as long as is necessary. You shouldn't 'overstay your welcome' as we say in English. It might be an inconvenient time for the host.
  - This means that you need to be able to judge for how long it is appropriate to stay.

### 3. Sample answers:

- a) I think they might feel a bit shocked or uncomfortable. However, they probably wouldn't say anything but would politely accept what I did. They might also realise that I am from a different country and that I don't fully understand their rules of politeness.
- b) First, I would read some good travel guides as they often have sections on how to behave politely in other cultures. I would also ask someone who knows more about polite behaviour in Indonesia than I do, such as my teacher or Indonesian friends, if I have them.

If I am already in Indonesia at someone's house, I would try to be as observant as possible and always wait to be invited before doing something. I would try to remember that what might be considered polite behaviour in Australia might not be as polite in Indonesia or vice versa.

I would make an effort to learn as much as I could because I would not like to continually offend or embarrass people. I would like to show my respect for and understanding of their culture.