



George Washington's



List of Rules

When he was a school boy, George Washington made for himself a list of rules of behavior. He probably translated and copied them from a French etiquette book. Below are just a few of the rules. The spelling and capitalization is as young Washington wrote in his list.

Pick one of the rules and explain what it means. How does it apply in today's world? Is it something that polite people do now, or is it an old-fashioned idea today?

The Rules of Civility and Decent Behaviour in Company and Conversation

- 1st Every Action done in Company, ought to be with Some Sign of Respect, to those that are Present.
- 4th In the Presence of Others Sing not to yourself with a humming Noise, nor Drum with your Fingers or Feet.
- 12th Shift not yourself in the Sight of others nor Gnaw your nails.
- 19th Read no Letters, Books, or Papers in Company but when there is a Necessity for the doing of it you must ask leave: come not near the Books or Writings of Another so as to read them unless desired or give your opinion of them unask'd also look not nigh when another is writing a Letter.
- 23d Shew not yourself glad at the Misfortune of another though he were your enemy.
- 47th Mock not nor Jest at any thing of Importance break no Jest that are Sharp Biting and if you Deliver any thing witty and Pleasent abstain from Laughing there at yourself.



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Answers: Student's choice.