

Read this article about unspoken rules. Talk about the underlined words.

Every culture has rules about time. These rules are usually unspoken, but everybody knows them. In some countries, such as the United States, England and Canada, punctuality is an unspoken rule. It is important to be on time, especially in business. People usually arrive a little early for business appointments. When you are late, people might think you are rude, disorganized or irresponsible.

These countries also have cultural rules about time in social situations. For example, when an invitation for dinner says 6 PM, it is impolite to arrive more than five or ten minutes late. For public events with specific starting times, such as movies, concerts or sports events, you should arrive a few minutes before the event begins. In fact, some theaters do not allow people to enter if they arrive after the event is started.

Other cultures have different rules about time. In Brazil, it is not unusual for guests to arrive an hour or two after a social event begins. In the Philippines, it is not uncommon for people to miss scheduled events such as a class or appointment in order to meet a friend at the airport. Many Filipinos believe that relationships with people are more important than keeping a schedule.

1. What are the unspoken rules about time in your culture?
2. Another unspoken rule in many countries is that “cutting” in line is considered unacceptable and rude. In the U.S. it has resulted in fights and even shootings. Is it OK to cut in line if you see your friends in front of you?
3. Tipping is another cultural difference. Typically in the U.S. we tip 20% at a restaurant where the waiter comes to the table to serve you. In England, people tip much less because waiters are paid a higher salary and are not as dependent on tips. How about your country?
4. Do friends kiss when they meet in your country?
5. Name some other unspoken rules in your country.

Talk about the underlined words or idioms. Explain the meaning in your own words.

1. Rachel is so powerful because she divides and conquers all her minions. She creates jealousy among everyone so that they won't work together to unseat her.
2. The only way we'll finish this project is if we divide and conquer. You and your group work on the presentation, while we work on the hand-outs.
3. A good rule of thumb for vegetable gardeners in Texas is to plant in early spring as soon as the last threat of frost has passed.
4. As a rule of thumb, you should drink one glass of water for each hour on the plane. This helps avoid dehydration and illness at the end of your journey.

5. Before we begin the debates, let's establish the ground rules. Each candidate will be allowed one three minute opening speech. Then they may ask questions of the other candidates.
6. The drug is so new that there are no hard and fast rules about dosage. As we have more experience with patient's tolerance of the drug, we'll be able to adjust the dosage.
7. The super rich always manage to stretch the rules to get what they want.
8. I generally don't allow students who arrive late to start the exam, but because he was in an accident, I bent the rules.
9. What happened while I was on vacation? Nothing to speak of. We have a few new clients, but no one to get excited about.
10. Did we get any rain last week? Nothing to speak of.
11. The house alone is worth a couple of million, not to mention the contents.
12. I hope I'm not speaking out of turn, but I feel the voters will never support an initiative that raises their taxes by 15%.