

watching the english the hidden rules of english behaviour

Watching the English: The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour

Understanding the subtleties of English behaviour can be both fascinating and challenging for newcomers and even for those well-versed in the language. While language is primarily about words and grammar, cultural nuances and social norms deeply influence how communication unfolds. Watching the English—the act of observing and interpreting these hidden rules—can provide valuable insights into the unwritten codes that govern social interactions in England. This article explores the key aspects of English behaviour, shedding light on the subtle cues, manners, and customs that define social conduct in England.

The Cultural Foundations of English Behaviour

Historical and Social Context

English society has been shaped over centuries by historical events, class structures, and regional diversity. These factors influence behaviour, emphasizing politeness, reserve, and a sense of decorum. The British emphasis on tradition and social hierarchy manifests in everyday interactions, often in ways that are not immediately obvious.

The Value of Politeness and Reserve

Politeness is a cornerstone of English social norms. It manifests through formal language, courteous

gestures, and a tendency to avoid confrontation. Reserve, or maintaining a calm and composed demeanor, is often valued over overt emotional expression.

Key Hidden Rules of English Behaviour

1. The Art of Small Talk

Small talk serves as a social lubricant in England, helping to establish rapport without overstepping boundaries. Common topics include the weather, traffic, or general comments about the surroundings.

- Weather conversations are particularly popular: “Lovely weather today, isn’t it?”
- Compliments are often understated and polite, e.g., “I like your coat.”
- Avoid overly personal or controversial topics unless you know the person well.

2. The Importance of Queuing

Queueing is a well-respected social practice in England, embodying fairness and patience. Cutting in line is considered highly rude, and respecting queue order demonstrates social awareness.

- Always join the end of a queue and wait your turn.
- It’s customary to acknowledge others in the queue with a nod or brief smile.

- In casual settings, standing slightly apart from the queue is acceptable, but always respect the flow.

3. Maintaining Personal Space and Physical Contact

English social norms favor a moderate distance during conversations. Overly close proximity or touch can be perceived as intrusive.

- A handshake is a typical greeting in formal contexts.
- In informal settings, a pat on the shoulder may be acceptable among friends.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with strangers.

4. Using Humour and Irony

British humour often relies on irony, understatement, and self-deprecation. Understanding this humour can be key to interpreting behaviour and building rapport.

- Expect jokes that are subtle and may seem understated.
- Self-deprecating comments are common and considered charming.
- Misunderstanding humour can lead to miscommunication, so context is vital.

5. The Significance of Apologies and Thank You's

Politeness is reinforced through frequent use of apologies and gratitude.

- It's common to say "Sorry" even for minor inconveniences.
- Expressing thanks, such as "Thank you very much," is standard in service interactions.
- Not saying these phrases can be perceived as rude or indifferent.

Subtle Social Cues and Norms

1. Eye Contact

Maintaining eye contact is a sign of attentiveness, but too much can be seen as aggressive. A balanced approach—brief eye contact followed by looking away—is typical.

2. Silence and Pausing

Pauses in conversation are normal and often signify thoughtfulness. Silence is not necessarily uncomfortable and can be a sign of politeness or respect.

3. Tolerance for Ambiguity

English communication often involves indirectness, implying rather than explicitly stating opinions or desires. Reading between the lines is an essential skill.

English Etiquette in Specific Contexts

1. Dining Etiquette

Dining customs reflect politeness and consideration for others.

- Wait for the host to start eating.
- Keep elbows off the table but don't be overly rigid.
- Use "please" and "thank you" when requesting or receiving food or service.

2. Gift-Giving Norms

When visiting someone's home, bringing a small gift is appreciated, but overly extravagant presents may be viewed as showing off.

3. Dress Code Expectations

Dress tends to be smart-casual in many social settings, with more formal attire reserved for special occasions.

Understanding Regional Variations and Subcultures

While general norms apply across England, regional differences can influence behaviour.

London and Urban Areas

- Fast-paced and diverse, often more informal and tolerant of individualism.
- Use of slang and multicultural influences shape social interactions.

Rural and Traditional Areas

- Emphasis on community, tradition, and formality.
- Behaviour tends to be more reserved and conservative.

Challenges and Misinterpretations

Despite these guidelines, misunderstandings can occur, especially for visitors unfamiliar with the culture.

- Misreading politeness as disinterest or aloofness.
- Confusing sarcasm with sincerity.
- Overstepping boundaries by being too familiar too soon.

Learning to watch and interpret the hidden rules of English behaviour requires patience and attentiveness. Observing interactions, listening carefully, and gradually adapting your behaviour can help foster respectful and meaningful connections.

Conclusion

Watching the English—the subtle art of observing and understanding their unwritten social rules—opens a window into the culture’s values of politeness, reserve, and tradition. By paying attention to small cues, respecting social norms like queuing and personal space, and appreciating the layered humour and indirect communication style, visitors and newcomers can navigate social interactions with confidence. Embracing these hidden rules not only facilitates smoother interactions but also enriches your appreciation of England’s rich cultural tapestry.

Whether you're visiting England for a short trip or engaging with its society long-term, mastering the art of watching the English behaviour adds depth to your cultural experience and helps foster genuine connections.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are some common unspoken rules of English politeness highlighted in 'Watching the English'?

The book emphasizes the importance of politeness markers like understatement, indirectness, and maintaining a calm demeanor to show politeness and avoid confrontation.

How does 'Watching the English' explain the importance of personal space in English behaviour?

It suggests that English people value a certain distance during interactions, with respect for personal space being a key social norm that varies less compared to other cultures.

What role does humor play in English social interactions according to the book?

Humor is often used as a social lubricant, to diffuse tension, and to express politeness subtly, reflecting the English tendency towards irony and understatement.

How does 'Watching the English' describe the use of small talk in English culture?

Small talk serves as a polite way to establish rapport without delving into personal or controversial topics, acting as a social lubricant in casual interactions.

What does the book reveal about the English attitude towards rules and etiquette?

It highlights that adherence to social rules and etiquette is highly valued, often seen as a sign of good manners and social competence, even if these rules seem subtle or unspoken.

According to 'Watching the English', how do English people typically handle disagreement or conflict?

Disagreements are often handled indirectly or subtly, with a tendency to avoid open confrontation to maintain social harmony.

What is the significance of 'queueing' in English behaviour as discussed in the book?

Queueing is seen as a symbol of fairness and respect for social order, with patience and adherence to the queue reflecting good manners.

How does 'Watching the English' explain the concept of 'stiff upper lip'?

The phrase describes the tendency to maintain composure and emotional restraint in public, reflecting a cultural emphasis on stoicism and self-control.

In what ways does the book suggest that English behaviour values understatement?

Understatement is used to express opinions or emotions subtly, avoiding boastfulness or confrontation, which is considered a sign of good manners and humility.

What insights does 'Watching the English' offer about English attitudes towards privacy and personal boundaries?

English culture tends to respect personal privacy and boundaries, with a preference for privacy in personal matters and a dislike for overly intrusive questions or behaviour.

Additional Resources

Watching the English: The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour

Understanding a culture often requires more than just learning its language; it involves deciphering the subtle, unspoken rules that govern social interactions, etiquette, and communication styles. When it comes to the English, these hidden rules—often referred to as "the unwritten rules"—are particularly intriguing. They shape everyday behaviour in ways that might seem puzzling to outsiders but are deeply ingrained in the national identity. In this guide, we delve into watching the English: the hidden rules of English behaviour, providing insights into the social etiquette, communication nuances, and cultural expectations that define the British way of life.

The Significance of Watching the English

Before exploring specific rules, it's important to understand why observing English behaviour is so revealing. The British tend to value politeness, understatement, and a certain level of emotional restraint. These traits are reflected in their social customs, and recognising them can foster better cross-cultural understanding. Watching the English involves paying attention to subtle cues—body language, tone of voice, and patterns of interaction—that reveal underlying norms.

Core Principles of English Behaviour

1. Politeness and Courtesy

Politeness is the cornerstone of English social interaction. It manifests in various ways:

- Using polite phrases like "Please," "Thank you," and "Sorry" frequently and genuinely.
- Maintaining a calm and reserved demeanour, even in disagreement.

- Respecting personal space and avoiding intrusive questions.

2. Understatement and Irony

The English often communicate through understatement and dry humour, which can sometimes be confusing for outsiders:

- Making light of serious situations to avoid confrontation.
- Using irony as a form of social bonding or humour.
- Downplaying achievements or compliments ("It's just a small thing") rather than boasting.

3. Formality and Social Hierarchy

While casual interactions are common, there remains a respect for formality, especially in professional or unfamiliar settings:

- Addressing elders or superiors with titles like Mr., Mrs., or Dr.
- Maintaining a degree of formality until a more relaxed rapport is established.
- Observing social hierarchies, such as the importance of punctuality and proper dress code.

Watching the English: Key Behavioural Rules

Respect for Personal Space and Privacy

- Avoid standing too close during conversations.
- Refrain from asking invasive personal questions, especially early in acquaintance.
- Recognize that silence or minimal responses are normal and not necessarily indicative of disinterest.

The Art of Small Talk

Small talk is a vital social lubricant in England, often serving as a way to establish rapport without delving into personal issues:

- Topics typically include the weather, current events, or local happenings.
- Avoid controversial subjects like politics or religion unless well-acquainted.
- Use humour to break the ice, often employing self-deprecation or understatement.

Queueing and Waiting Your Turn

One of the most iconic aspects of English behaviour is the strict adherence to queues:

- Always join the end of a line and wait patiently.
- Do not attempt to cut in or skip ahead.
- Recognize that queueing is a deeply ingrained social norm, reflecting respect for fairness.

Respecting Silence and Personal Reflection

The English often value silence and personal reflection:

- Silence during conversations is not necessarily awkward; it can indicate thoughtfulness.
- Avoid filling every pause with speech; patience is appreciated.
- When in doubt, remain quiet and observe.

Communication Nuances

Indirectness and Ambiguity

English communication tends to be indirect:

- Instead of outright refusal, phrases like "I'll think about it" or "That's an interesting idea" are common.
- Reading between the lines is often necessary to understand true feelings.
- Recognize sarcasm and irony, which are prevalent.

The Use of Humour

Humour is a key social tool:

- It often involves self-deprecation, understatement, or dry wit.
- Irony and sarcasm are common forms.
- Be cautious with humour until you understand the context and the audience's sensibilities.

Apologising and Thanking

- Frequent use of "Sorry" even for minor inconveniences.
- Thanking others sincerely is customary, reinforcing politeness.
- Apologies are used both genuinely and as social politeness to diffuse tension.

Social Situations and Expectations

Greetings and Farewells

- A simple handshake is common for initial meetings.
- Friends may greet with a hug or cheek kiss, but this varies.
- Saying "Goodbye" or "See you later" is customary upon departure.

Dining Etiquette

- Keep hands visible but avoid resting elbows on the table.

- Use cutlery properly; don't start eating until everyone is served.
- Saying "Enjoy your meal" or "Thank you" is polite.

Working and Professional Behaviour

- Punctuality is highly valued; arriving late is considered rude.
- Formal dress codes are often observed in business settings.
- Respect hierarchy and maintain professionalism.

Observing and Adapting to the Hidden Rules

Tips for Observers and Visitors

- Pay attention to body language and social cues.
- Notice how locals handle disagreements or awkward situations.
- Listen to the tone and choice of words in conversations.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Being overly direct or blunt.
- Invading personal space or asking intrusive questions.
- Ignoring social queues or jumping ahead in lines.
- Overreacting to minor inconveniences or delays.

Embracing the Subtleties

- Recognise that many social norms are subtle and context-dependent.
- Practice patience and humility; don't expect immediate mastery.
- Use humour appropriately to connect and demonstrate cultural understanding.

Conclusion: The Value of Watching the English

Watching the English: the hidden rules of English behaviour offers a fascinating window into British culture. By observing these unwritten norms—politeness, humour, patience, and respect for social hierarchies—outsiders can better navigate social interactions and develop a deeper appreciation for the subtlety and richness of English society. Remember, these rules are less about rigid codes and more about shared understandings that foster harmony and mutual respect. Whether you're visiting, working, or living among the English, paying attention to these behavioural cues will enhance your cultural fluency and help you forge genuine connections in the British context.

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watching the english the hidden rules of english behaviour: Watching the English Kate Fox, 2014-07-08 Updated, with new research and over 100 revisions Ten years later, they're still talking about the weather! Kate Fox, the social anthropologist who put the quirks and hidden conditions of the English under a microscope, is back with more biting insights about the nature of Englishness. This updated and revised edition of *Watching the English* - which over the last decade has become the unofficial guidebook to the English national character - features new and fresh insights on the unwritten rules and foibles of squaddies, bikers, horse-riders, and more. Fox revisits a strange and fascinating culture, governed by complex sets of unspoken rules and bizarre codes of behavior. She demystifies the peculiar cultural rules that baffle us: the rules of weather-speak. The ironic-gnome rule. The reflex apology rule. The paranoid pantomime rule. Class anxiety tests. The roots of English self-mockery and many more. An international bestseller, *Watching the English* is a biting, affectionate, insightful and often hilarious look at the English and their society.

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hilarious look English Society. Putting the English national character under her anthropological microscope, Fox finds a strange and fascinating culture, governed by complex sets of unspoken rules and bizarre codes of behavior. Through a mixture of anthropological analysis and her own unorthodox experiments-even using herself as a reluctant guinea-pig-Fox discovers what these unwritten codes tell us about Englishness.

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watching the english the hidden rules of english behaviour: *Pragmatics and the English Language* Jonathan Culpeper, Michael Haugh, 2014-08-15 How do we interpret language and expose its meanings? How does pragmatics describe the English language? Where can we go to acquire a deeper understanding of pragmatics? Pragmatics and the English Language is a bold new textbook that presents an innovative and exciting way of looking at the subject. This new perspective, called integrative pragmatics, steers a course between what have historically been considered irreconcilable perspectives. With an emphasis on empirical data, the book is filled with examples from cartoons, films and historical sources, as well as face-to-face and digitally-mediated interactions, all of which are used to help the reader develop a better understanding of the theory. Pragmatics and the English Language: - Focuses on both the pragmatic aspects of English and how pragmatics is shaped by English - Synthesizes traditional ideas with state-of-the-art pragmatics research - Goes far beyond the coverage found in other pragmatics textbooks Shedding light on the English language in highly original ways, Pragmatics and the English Language is essential reading for advanced students of the English language and linguistics, along with anybody else who wishes to develop a more in-depth knowledge of pragmatics.

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watching the english the hidden rules of english behaviour: Innovations in Evidence and Proof Paul Roberts, Mike Redmayne, 2007-11-14 Innovations in Evidence and Proof brings together fifteen leading scholars and experienced law teachers based in Australia, Canada, Northern Ireland, Scotland, South Africa, the USA and England and Wales to explore and debate the latest developments in Evidence and Proof scholarship. The essays comprising this volume range expansively over questions of disciplinary taxonomy, pedagogical method and computer-assisted learning, doctrinal analysis, fact-finding, techniques of adjudication, the ethics of cross-examination, the implications of behavioural science research for legal procedure, human rights, comparative law and international criminal trials. Communicating the breadth, dynamism and intensity of

contemporary theoretical innovation in their diversity of subject-matter and approach, the authors nonetheless remain united by a common purpose: to indicate how the best interdisciplinary theorising and research might be integrated directly into degree-level Evidence teaching. *Innovations in Evidence and Proof* is published at an exciting time of theoretical renewal and increasing empirical sophistication in legal evidence, proof and procedure scholarship. This groundbreaking collection will be essential reading for Evidence teachers, and will also engage the interest and imagination of scholars, researchers and students investigating issues of evidence and proof in any legal system, municipal, transnational or global.

watching the english the hidden rules of english behaviour: Sport and English National Identity in a 'Disunited Kingdom' Tom Gibbons, Dominic Malcolm, 2017-02-17 Given sport's centrality in English society, what role does it play in symbolising contemporary English national identity? This comprehensive study explores the complex set of relationships between sport and what it means to be English in the twenty-first century. The bond between sport and nationalism has long been recognised, but with increasingly vociferous separatist nationalisms threatening the dismantling of the United Kingdom, a closer analysis is timely. Part one addresses key debates regarding English national identity within the specific sporting contexts of association football, cricket, tennis, cycling and rugby. Part two discusses the complex relationship between religion, sport and English national identity as well as the attitudes and experiences of traditionally marginalized groups, including women, minority ethnic groups and disabled people. Part three considers the perspectives of the other UK nations on the link between sport and English national identity. *Sport and English National Identity in a 'Disunited Kingdom'* is fascinating reading for all those with an interest in the sociology, politics and history of sport, and the study of nations, nationalism and national identity.

watching the english the hidden rules of english behaviour: A History of Drink and the English, 1500-2000 Paul Jennings, 2016-02-05 A 2017 CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title award winner ***** This book is an introduction to the history of alcoholic drink in England from the end of the Middle Ages to the present day. Treating the subject thematically, it covers who drank, what they drank, how much, who produced and sold drink, the places where it was enjoyed and the meanings which drinking had for people. It also looks at the varied opposition to drinking and the ways in which it has been regulated and policed. As a social and cultural history, it examines the place of drink in society and how social developments have affected its history and what it meant to individuals and groups as a cultural practice. Covering an extended period in time, this book takes in the important changes brought about by the Reformation and the processes of industrialization and urbanization. This volume also focuses on drink in relation to class and gender and the importance of global developments, along with the significance of regional and local difference. Whilst a work of history, it draws upon the insights of a range of other disciplines which have together advanced our understanding of alcohol. The focus is England, but it acknowledges the importance of comparison with the experience of other countries in furthering our understanding of England's particular experience. This book argues for the centrality of drink in English society throughout the period under consideration, whilst emphasizing the ways in which its use, abuse and how they have been experienced and perceived have changed at different historical moments. It is the first scholarly work which covers the history of drink in England in all its aspects over such an extended period of time. Written in a lively and approachable style, this book is suitable for those who study social and cultural history, as well as those with an interest in the history of drink in England.

watching the english the hidden rules of english behaviour: An ethnography of English football fans Geoff Pearson, 2024-07-30 This book, available in paperback due to popular demand, is an ethnographic account of English football fans, based upon sixteen years' participant observation. The author identifies a distinct sub-culture of supporter – the 'carnival fan' – who dominated the travelling support of the three teams observed – Manchester United, Blackpool and the England national team. This accessible account follows these groups at home and abroad,

describing their interpretations, motivations and behaviour and challenging a number of the myths about 'hooliganism' and crowd control. The text will be of value to anyone studying, researching or interested in ethnographic modes of enquiry or the behaviour of football fans. In particular it will be of value to anyone involved in the academic disciplines of policing, criminal justice, sociology, criminology, sports studies and research methods. It also makes recommendations for the management of football crowds that will be of use to practitioners involved in policing, crowd control and event management.

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Relationships Richard Templar, Linda Elder, Richard Paul, Mark Woods, Trapper Woods, Merrick Rosenberg, Daniel Silvert, 2013-04-27 A brand new collection of 4 expert guides to building better personal relationships, connections, and careers! A breakthrough personal skills book collection: improve all your relationships, and become more successful at everything you do! You can learn to be more efficient, more productive, more engaging, more rational, more emotionally intelligent, and happier! This extraordinary collection of books is packed with all the learnable skills, techniques, and attitudes you'll need. First, in *The Rules of Life, Expanded Edition*, Richard Templar uncovers 106 practical rules that happy, successful people follow, even if they've never thought about it. These are realistic, commonsense things you can do differently, starting today... small things that will make you happier... make you a better friend, partner, and parent... help you leave the world a better place. Next, in *30 Days to Better Thinking and Better Living Through Critical Thinking, Revised and Expanded Edition*, Drs. Linda Elder and Richard Paul teach specific, easy-to-learn critical thinking techniques that help you cut through lies, gain insight, and make smarter choices about everything from money to intimate relationships. They'll help you overcome poor thinking habits caused by self-delusion or out-of-control emotions... clarify what you want... recognize what you don't know... resist brainwashing, manipulation, and hypocrisy... critically evaluate what you're told by advertisers, politicians, your boss, and your family... avoid worrying, conformism, and blame! Then, in *Attack Your Day*, Mark and Trapper Woods present crucial "activity management" skills and 101 productivity strategies for achieving unprecedented effectiveness, and moving relentlessly towards your greatest life goals. Dramatically improve the way you prioritize activities... organize inherently more productive days... overcome procrastination forever... know how to "turn on a dime" without sacrificing focus ... learn how and when to say NO to interruptions! Finally, in *Taking Flight!*, Merrill Rosenberg and Daniel Silvert reveal profound hidden patterns of human behavioral style. You'll learn to use the proven DISC model of human behavior to become a more effective leader, salesperson, or teacher; revitalize your career; and build deeper relationships. Then, you'll create your own personal action plan for making the most of your strengths, working around weaknesses, and supercharging your personal performance! From world-renowned personal performance experts Richard Templar, Linda Elder, Richard Paul, Mark Woods, Trapper Woods, Merrick Rosenberg, and Daniel Silvert

watching the english the hidden rules of english behaviour: *Descent into Paradise* Daniel Bosley, 2023-09-13 'Rich and valuable' ANJAN SUNDARAM 'Honest ... written in sharp, rippling prose' ANDREW FIDEL FERNANDO 'A brave and timely effort' JASON BURKE 'Immersive and eye-opening' HASSAN UGAIL 'A moving, personal and heartfelt tale of the real Maldives: far deeper and more sinister waters than the azure lagoons of the resorts for which it is famed' JJ ROBINSON In the autumn of 2011, the postman-turned-journalist Daniel Bosley embarked on an unexpected adventure which started as an internship in London's Maldives High Commission - the diplomatic mission of the Indian Ocean tourism hotspot. Little did he know that he would soon set off on an odyssey through an imperilled island nation undergoing one of the most tumultuous periods in its history. Over the next seven years, Bosley worked as a journalist in the Maldives, reporting on its volatile political landscape and shattering the picture-perfect view of this supposed paradise. Taking us into a nation of a thousand isles, he reveals a shaded past of sultans, imperialists and Western explorers before a modern-day dictatorship was finally overturned by a democracy that immediately plunged into turmoil. While dissenters and intrepid reporters faced abduction, imprisonment, and even death, the climate crisis and Islamist zealots posed ever greater threats to the country's vulnerable environment and its ancient culture. As the editor of the Maldives' main English-language news website, Bosley witnessed some of these events first-hand, his personal distress assuaged only by the love and hope he would come to find - against all odds - within these isolated atoll communities. Richly observed and infused with empathy and essential humour, *Descent into Paradise* thoroughly alters our understanding of the Maldives, a place where magical waters and surreal skies hide unthinkable dangers even as the struggle for justice risks submersion.

watching the english the hidden rules of english behaviour: Jerusalem Jason Whittaker, 2022-06-16 The stanzas beginning, 'And did those feet' are among the most famous works written by the Romantic poet and artist, William Blake. Set to music by Hubert Parry in 1916 and renamed, 'Jerusalem', this hymn has become an emblem of Englishness in the past century, and is regularly invoked at sporting events, public and private ceremonies, and, of course, as part of Last Night of the Proms. Yet when Blake first engraved his lines in his epic work, Milton a Poem, he had been tried for sedition. Likewise, although Parry was commissioned to compose his music as part of the war effort by the organization Fight for Right, he soon removed permission for that group to perform his hymn and instead gave the copyright to the women's suffrage movement. 'Jerusalem', then, is a much more contested vision of England's green and pleasant land than is often assumed. This book traces the history of the poem and the music from Blake's original verses, written in Felpham, via the turmoil of the First and Second World Wars, its recording history in the late twentieth century, and its use in political controversies such as the 2016 Brexit vote. An anthem for both the left and the right, Blake's own vision of what it meant to build Jerusalem in England is both strange and familiar to many who invoke it. As such, this book explores the deep complexities of what Englishness means into the twenty-first century.

watching the english the hidden rules of english behaviour: The Pragmatics of Politeness Geoffrey N. Leech, 2014 This readable book presents a new general theoretical understanding of politeness. It offers an account of a wide range of politeness phenomena in English, illustrated by hundreds of examples of actual language use taken largely from authentic British and American sources. Building on his earlier pioneering work on politeness, Geoffrey Leech takes a pragmatic approach that is based on the controversial notion that politeness is communicative altruism. Leech's 1983 book, *Principles of Pragmatics*, introduced the now widely-accepted distinction between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of politeness; this book returns to the pragmalinguistic side, somewhat neglected in recent work. Drawing on neo-Gricean thinking, Leech rejects the prevalent view that it is impossible to apply the terms 'polite' or 'impolite' to linguistic phenomena. Leech covers all major speech acts that are either positively or negatively associated with politeness, such as requests, apologies, compliments, offers, criticisms, good wishes, condolences, congratulations, agreement, and disagreement. Additional chapters deal with impoliteness and the related phenomena of irony (mock politeness) and banter (mock impoliteness), and with the role of politeness in the learning of English as a second language. A final chapter takes a fascinating look at more than a thousand years of history of politeness in the English language.

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