

Test Your Speaking & Listening Skills

Are You English? – Quiz 2

Englishness



Discuss each situation with a partner. What would you do or say? What do you think an English person would do or say? Check the answers and discuss whether they match your perception and experience of English people:

Answers:

a) *What would you do when...?* b) *What would an English person do when...?*

An English person would:

1. try to avoid all forms of contact with the strangers around them and preserve the invisible barrier of personal space which surrounds them at all times.
2. work diligently to make it look beautiful, but never enjoy themselves or relax, e.g. sit in a chair. Also, they would take the opportunity to spy on their neighbours as they prune, and inwardly seethe with rage at the slightest unexpected noise, e.g. a barking dog, windchimes, music from a neighbour's house, etc.
3. seethe inwardly, but remain quiet and not complain; they would simply resolve to keep going to them, until they have the opportunity to find a new dentist, even if it takes five years.
4. avoid eye contact and never speak to them, but feel privately reassured that they are there, as if they are really their friends, and secretly make up backstories about them in their head to pass the time.
5. feel close to panic in their head, but maintain a cool and dignified outer appearance, while moving slowly and carefully to avoid touching anybody's body or belongings. They would not, at any time, give up their place in the queue or jump the queue.
6. wave and smile enthusiastically, and mouth "Thank you!" – while almost crashing their car in the process.
7. smile and nod in a friendly, supportive manner, but feel secretly aggrieved, as if a minor injustice has been committed. At no time would they speak to the other customer.
8. let them keep it – it's not worth the awkwardness of mentioning it to them.
9. welcome them effusively, offer them a cup of tea and biscuits (the best they have), and hang around awkwardly while they do the work – but cringe inwardly that they are not practical enough to be able to fix their own sink.
10. join in and enjoy it. Moaning is a national pastime for the English!

a) *What would you say when...?* b) *What would an English person say when...?*

An English person would say:

1. "Never mind. There are plenty more fish in the sea."
2. "It was nothing."
3. "Yeah, it's alright."
4. "Oh, I got a really good deal, actually." i.e. it wasn't too expensive.
5. "Sorry?"
6. "Sorry."
7. "Sorry."
8. "Sorry."
9. "Thank you."
10. "Thank you."