

## **ABC'S of P.E.O. ETIQUETTE**

Etiquette, a French word, came about at the time the gardens of Versailles were designed and planted during the reign of Louis XIV. The king's gardener, incensed that courtiers would not keep off the grass, first put up warning signs of 'etiquettes', directing those strolling on the grounds to the paths along which they should walk. When they ignored the etiquettes, he complained to the king. King Louis promptly issued an edict that commanded everyone to 'keep within the etiquettes'. Through time, the term came to mean that which legislated all the rules for correct deportment in court circles. Eventually it became the singular word that carries with it the definition of courteous, thoughtful behavior, impeccable manners, dignity and civility.

ETIQUETTE is a code of behavior that helps people get along with each other. Many people think of etiquette as a list of rigid rules for certain events like weddings or a formal dinners. But etiquette includes more than strict rules. Etiquette simply means good manners. Its most important function is to provide general guidelines for courteous, considerate behavior in all of our relationships with others in everyday life.

Good manners, like good taste, derive from sensibility and common sense. Manners give us guidelines about the how, what, where, when and why in social graces. If learning about manners and etiquette makes us feel secure in our movements, if it prevents us from feeling awkward or doing something silly, then it has great value. Etiquette is being people conscious, aware of how nice it feels to be considerate of all those with whom we are in touch. It is urgent that rather than 'I' and 'me' - we start to think about 'you' and 'they' and about 'us'. The entire philosophy of etiquette can easily be summarized by the Golden Rule

*Do unto others, as you would have others do unto you.*

### **A - ACTIVE**

Being a member and wearing our star makes you a P.E.O. in name -  
Only by becoming active can you appreciate our Objects and Aims.

Accept new challenges when they ensue - But the first responsibility expected of you -  
Is to attend all meetings so you'll comprehend and know the full import of P.E.O.

### **B - BE ON TIME**

P.E.O. is a previous date - Attend to the time please don't be late  
Let's keep the meeting orderly don't make your sisters wait.

### **C - CLOSING**

Stand, at the close of the meeting when the gavel tap is given.  
For the benediction, your head is bowed - for the closing statement, risen.

## **D - DEVOTIONS**

As the chaplain conducts devotions we stay seated in our chair -  
With 'let us pray' - our heads are bowed - while she reads the chaplain's prayer.

This moment of devotion can be reverently closed  
With the recitation of the Lord's Prayer and let it be known

From the version of King James - remember 'debts and debtors'  
and although it means the same not, trespasses & trespassers!

## **E - EMBLEM**

Our P.E.O. emblem a tiny work of art –  
Is worn on the left side always above the heart

It's worn to every meeting, and when other occasions rule,  
On a dress or suit jacket, above all other emblematic jewels

It is the property of our sisterhood lent to members who are active -  
But returned to the president if one becomes inactive.

The chapter should be apprised of the emblem's final disposition –  
For with a sister, it may be buried or returned to our organization.

## **F - FIRST NAMES**

We were all taught to respect our elders - And call them Miss or Mrs.  
But in P.E.O., we use first names - because we all are sisters.

## **G - GAVEL**

The president's first tap of the gavel calls the meeting to order & silences the rabble;  
The second tap signals the member to rise to recite our pledge we have memorized.  
After the Objects & Aims are repeated, the third tap signals the members to be seated.

## **H – HISTORY**

We honor our Founders in a personal way , make it your responsibility to attend Founders' Day.

## **I – INVITATION**

Extended by request is a membership invitation - By the entire local chapter without reservation.

## **J - JOINING**

P.E.O. is a lifelong sisterhood-not a club to join  
We take our vows seriously - our virtues keep us going.

As we strive for high ideals - And as every sister knows  
Only though love and loyalty Do we become P.E.O.'s.

## **K - KNOWLEDGE**

With knowledge comes wisdom - so please be apprised -  
That with non-members - discussion of private P.E.O. matters is *never* advised.

## **L - LOVING CONCERN**

Have loving concern for each sister - and when the situation deems  
It is the charge of every member to attend to sisters in need.

## **M – MEETINGS**

Be mindful of your own attendance -- A previous engagement is P.E.O.  
And the business meeting procedures stay the same wherever you go.

## **N - NEW MEMBERS**

If you vouched for a member, your first obligation  
Is to acquaint our new sister with our rules and traditions.  
Take her under your wing -- her mentor be --  
Don't expect her to grasp Immediately.

What it's taken us years to digest and know.  
She needs guidance and direction to help her grow.

## **O -- OBJECTS & AIMS**

Think about the Objects and Aims - They're not just words to recite.  
Make them your personal guideposts - A foundation for the principles of life.

## **P – PASSWORD**

The password of which our Founders' were fond  
Was established by them to serve as a bond  
Of sisterhood and access to meetings: no longer used to signal our seatings.

The password—though not taken at meetings—remains in our hearts,  
And in our Ceremony of Initiation, it remains a part.

## **Q – QUIET**

When the meeting is called to order, cease all neighborly chatter,  
So the president can efficiently conduct P.E.O. chapter matters.

## **R - ROLL CALL**

When the treasurer calls the roll don't answer 'here' or 'aye'  
Using P.E.O. decorum 'present' - is the correct reply.

## **S – STAND**

Protocol says when you address the chair:  
Stand and be recognized before speaking loud and clear.

Whether a committee report, or a topic of discussion  
Follow Robert's Rule of Order where standing is the custom.

## **T - TIMELESS TRADITION**

It has been said that in the vocabulary of a P.E.O.  
You never (well, almost never) hear the word 'NO.'

## **U – UNABLE**

If unable to attend a meeting, mind the Golden Rule:  
Unto other hostesses do, as you would have them do to you.

The hostess, to her home has issued a welcoming invitation -  
Call ahead, if you can't attend - it's not only mannerly - but your obligation!

## **V – VOTE**

When business deems action and you are given a choice  
Remember to respond 'pro' or 'con' whether voting by hand, ballot or voice.

## **W - WELL ACQUAINTED**

When a name is presented for membership, be your own counsel and before you sign:  
Be well acquainted with the candidate before putting your name on the line

## **X - X-EMPLIFICATION**

The exemplification of our initiation is an occasion for us all;  
typically conducted at Official Visits in the Fall  
The means by which we welcome members, new. A chance for our lessons and vows to review.

### **Y - YEARBOOK**

If you can't be a hostess--or plan a program to share  
Give your time and talents—it's only fair.  
The yearbook committee's job will be easier to plan  
if everyone offers to lending her hand

### **Z – ZEST**

By exercising any talent we possess,  
We bring to our chapters our measure of zest.  
As we go through life, we reap what we sow; and this is true in our P.E.O.  
The loyalty to each sister we show, helps us grow into loving P.E.O.s  
We've gone through the alphabet from A to Z: highlighting P.E.O. etiquette and courtesy.

Source:

Joyce L. Wilkins, Chapter AC, Montana, January 24, 2001

R Peery Moran, Chapter AI, Georgia, January 24, 2024 (revised)