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**Callum:** Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm Callum and with me today is Jennifer. Hello Jennifer.

**Jennifer:** Hello Callum.

**Callum:** Jennifer, did you go to a **finishing school**?

**Jennifer:** You mean one of those schools where young ladies learn how to behave in high society?

**Callum:** Yes, did you go to one?

**Jennifer:** What do you think?

**Callum:** Well, your manners and behaviour are so impeccable that I would not be surprised if you had.

**Jennifer:** Well, I don't know about finishing school, but it sounds like you've graduated from charm school!

**Callum:** In days gone by, social **etiquette**, or the way to behave in polite society, was something that well-to-do young ladies were tutored in. Today's programme is all about a course being run now for teenage boys in an English school. Before we learn more about this, here's today's question. A question about etiquette. In a fancy restaurant, either side of your place setting there are different knives and forks for the different courses of your meal. Maybe there are three different forks on the left and three knives on the right. The question is, which should you use first? The knife and fork furthest from your plate, the set closest to your plate or the set in the middle? Jennifer, what do you think?

**Jennifer:** Well, I think I know the answer to this one. I think it's outside-in. So I think the set furthest from your plate is the one you use first.

**Callum:** OK. We'll find out if you're right at the end of the programme. Fowey School in England has begun offering etiquette lessons to teenage boys. So whose idea was this? Here's their Headmaster, John Parry, talking to our colleagues from BBC Radio.

**Headmaster of Fowey School, John Parry:**

*The way it **came about** was that a group of girls actually wanted a course to prepare them for the Year 11 Leavers' **Ball** which is, which is something which most schools do these days. They're pretty sophisticated events, and the boys said, actually you know what, we **want a piece of that** as well.*

**Callum:** Jennifer, whose idea was it?

**Jennifer:** It was the boys' idea. John Parry said it 'came about' because, after the girls had asked for a course to prepare them for a special social event, the boys wanted one too. Or as he put it, the boys said, "We want a piece of that as well". Which simply means, they wanted to be included as well.

**Callum:** And what special event are they all preparing for?

**Jennifer:** The Year 11 Leavers' Ball. A 'ball' is big formal party and a leavers' ball is held at the end of the school year, when students are leaving the school. John describes them as being 'sophisticated events'.

**Callum:** Have you ever been to one of these?

**Jennifer:** Yes actually. When I left school we were one of the first years to have a leavers' ball and it was a very glamorous event and quite sophisticated too.

**Callum:** Let's listen to John Parry again.

**Headmaster of Fowey School, John Parry:**

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**Callum:** Who is helping with the etiquette lessons? What are the kinds of things they are learning, and how do the boys feel about it? Here's John Parry again.

**Headmaster of Fowey School, John Parry:**

*We work very closely with a, with a local hotel who are teaching the boys, you know, all about etiquette, all about how to dress, how to act with confidence and so on. It's **gone down** extremely **well** with the boys.*

**Callum:** Jennifer, who is helping the lessons and what are they learning?

**Jennifer:** A local hotel is helping them out and teaching them things like how to dress and how to act with confidence.

**Callum:** Has it been popular?

**Jennifer:** Yes, John said that it's 'gone down extremely well' with the boys. If something 'goes down well' it means that it's been liked.

**Callum:** So what do you think of this Jennifer, do you think these are useful things for school boys to learn or does it seem maybe a bit old-fashioned?

**Jennifer:** I don't think it's old-fashioned. I think it's useful for school boys and perhaps school girls to learn these manners and etiquette. It's really nice when people hold doors open for you. It's a very polite thing to do so I think everybody could do with a bit of education.

**Callum:** Yes, I completely agree. I'm just being polite there, you know. In the case of this school though, it's not all about impressing girls at parties. Headmaster John Parry also believes there is a strong practical reason for learning etiquette. He thinks it can help overcome some of the problems that universities and employers have with young people. He explains more:

**Headmaster of Fowey School, John Parry:**

*One of the criticisms they make of students is that they know a lot of knowledge, they're very*

*good in their exams but sometimes their social skills let them down. And we wanted our students to, you know, walk with confidence, you know, **hold their head up high** in any given social situation; whether that's, you know a ball, as we're doing, or whether that's going for a university interview, a job interview.*

**Callum:** So Jennifer, how can these classes help, apart from helping them with girls?

**Jennifer:** Well, by helping to build their confidence it can give them a better chance when applying for jobs or university places. He mentioned that even though students may be good at exams, they also need to have good social skills, they need to be confident. That could make the difference between their getting a job or not.

**Callum:** Yes, as he put it, he wants the students to be able to 'hold their heads up high.' An expression which means to be proud and confident. Let's listen again.

**Headmaster of Fowey School, John Parry:**

*One of the criticisms they make of students is that they know a lot of knowledge, they're very good in their exams but sometimes their social skills let them down. And we wanted our students to, you know, walk with confidence, you know, hold their head up high in any given social situation; whether that's, you know a ball, as we're doing, or whether that's going for a university interview, a job interview.*

**Callum:** Well that's just about all we have time for today. Before we finish, the answer to today's question. When faced with a number of different knives and forks at a formal meal, which ones do you start with? Jennifer, you said?

**Jennifer:** Outside-in, the ones furthest from your plate.

**Callum:** That's exactly right, yes.

**Jennifer:** Hooray!

**Callum:** Well done, well done. So thank you very much Jennifer and goodbye.

**Jennifer:** Goodbye.

## Vocabulary and definitions

<b>a finishing school</b>	a place where young women are taught how to behave in high society
<b>etiquette</b>	the accepted rules for behaviour in particular situations
<b>to come about</b>	to happen, to begin
<b>a ball</b>	a formal party often held to celebrate a special event
<b>to want a piece of something</b>	to want to be involved with or take part in something
<b>to go down well</b>	to be successful and popular
<b>to hold your head up high</b>	to be confident and proud

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