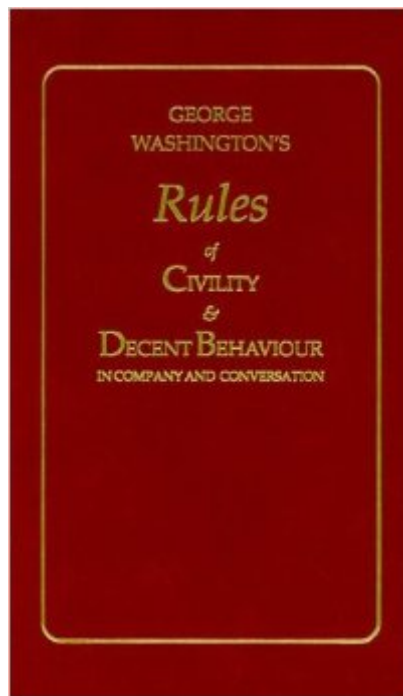


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# George Washington's Rules Of Civility & Decent Behavior In Company And Conversation (Little Books Of Wisdom)



## Synopsis

Copied out by hand as a young man aspiring to the status of Gentleman, George Washington's 110 rules were based on a set of rules composed by French Jesuits in 1595. The first English edition of these rules was available in Francis Hawkins' *Youths Behavior, or Decency in Conversation Amongst Men*, which appeared in 1640, and it is from work that Washington seems to have copied. The rules as Washington wrote them out are a simplified version of this text. However much he may have simplified them, these precepts had a strong influence on Washington, who aimed to always live by them. The rules focus on self-respect and respect for others through details of etiquette. The rules offer pointers on such issues as how to dress, walk, eat in public, and address one's superiors.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This collection of rules of civility was copied from a larger volume by George Washington as a small boy. The larger volume was used throughout the 18th century for the character development of upperclass gentlemen. While a few of these rules are more amusing than helpful, the overall work serves to provide the interested person a means by which to refine their conduct. Drop the self help books and adopt these rules into habit for a no-nonsense approach to better public living.

This great little book will help any new graduate start in the job market. Precise, quaint and right to the point. Fits in your briefcase perfectly. And, it is hard to believe that a boy of 14 would be so insightful. Perfect for the upcoming young adults!

Let me first say that I'm a George Washington fan. I've read a few biographies of "the first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen," and was excited to find this work was available in .com. Not only would I own the only book Washington ever wrote (although it was written at age 14 and was supposed to be a personal list of do's and do not's, not a book), but I would gain valuable insight into Washington's personal mannerisms as he consulted his old list frequently. I suppose it's my fault for not carefully reading the info that .com posted. The book is a whopping 30 pages and has 110 Rules, many of which consist of only one sentence. Furthermore, most of the Rules are things that we do without thinking. One rule advises the reader not to speak "with meat in your mouth" or "Put not off your clothes in the presence of others, nor go out of your chamber half dressed." If you regularly discuss current events while a chicken leg is dangling from your teeth or serve a cold beer in your underware (unless, of course, you work at a gentleman's club), you might benefit from this book. But I weakly attempt humor. Most of the rules, while they are common sense, remind us of how we, over 225 years later, should interact with people. Other rules advise us not to give medical advice to friends if we're not a doctor, you frustrate the sick. Don't be too hasty to spread news of someone else's misfortunes. In a business relationship, make conversation quick and to the point, yet not cold or unpleasant. While I admit that a few (five, maybe) are very outdated, many of these rules are very useful. The small size of the book allows for it to be carried in a purse or briefcase easily so that you can frequently look at it. In sum, if you have the money to burn, I say, get the book. It's helpful and insightful. If I could do it all over again, I wouldn't get it as I don't think it's worth the money.

Note: has grouped together reviews of several different editions of this book; this review is for George Washington's Rules of Civility & Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation (Little Books of Wisdom). Debunkers are correct to point out that this book is not the original work of a 14-year-old child prodigy, as is sometimes claimed, but rather, as this edition reveals, something he copied down from an English translation of the original French, presumably as part of his school work. However, these debunkers go too far when they conclude from this that the work is meaningless because George Washington has too often been described as a self-made man who from an early age carefully, through hard practice acquired the manners and self-control for which all who ever knew him praised him. He rather obviously took these rules to heart, which may well explain their survival in his handwriting. The language is archaic, a few rules are obsolete, and several more about respecting one's betters have much less application in our more egalitarian

world, but in general most of these still apply. Of course if you had even a half way decent upbringing, you were taught most of these already, but it never hurts to be reminded of what still constitutes good manners. Admirers of Washington might also be interested in the uniform edition of something a lot less questionably the product of his genius:Â George Washington's Farewell Address. Note: Some reviewers have complained that this book is available online for free. Well, yes, what part of in the public domain do you not understand? However, trying to get away with giving someone a printout as a gift will earn you the nickname of cheapskate. If all you want to do is read it yourself, then by all means stick to the free sites. However, if you are looking for a way to get through to someone else, you are better off buying a copy, and a solitary sawbuck for this sturdy pocket-sized reprint is going to be tough to beat. The chief virtue of it being online is your ability to read it first and make sure that this is the book you want to give before ordering it. Note: Applewood Books has produced a nice looking inexpensive series of sturdy pocket-sized reprints of important American books, documents, speeches, pamphlets, and poems, the Little Books of Wisdom, uniform with this volume, that are ideal for gifting to doctors, lawyers, teachers, business professionals, and students of same:Â The Way to Wealth, The Constitution of the United States of America, On the Art of Teaching, The Poems of Abraham Lincoln, The Strenuous Life, The Bill of Rights with Writings That Formed Its Foundation, The Path of the Law, The Constitution of the Confederate States of America, The Jefferson Bible: The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth, A Message to Garcia, A Declaration of Sentiments,Â Robert's Rules of Order, Good Citizenship, On Being Human, A Discourse upon the Duties of a Physician, The Declaration of Independence with Short Biographies of Its Signers, Teamwork, Stick-To-Itiveness, Opportunity, & You, The Wants of Man, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The Speech of Chief Seattle, Common Sense, The Articles of Confederation, The Emancipation Proclamation, andÂ The Gospel of Wealth. Some selected volumes are also available in boxed sets:Â Books of American Wisdom Boxed Set, CEO's Gift Box of Wisdom, Doctor's Gift Box of Wisdom, Lawyer's Gift Box of Wisdom, New Citizen's Gift Box of Wisdom, andÂ Teacher's Gift Box of Wisdom. And some have been published in Spanish:Â Un Mensaje a GarciaÂ andÂ Constitucion de Los Estados Unidos.

Whether this little 30 page book is worth the price or whether George Washington copied these as a penmanship exercise from an English translation of some 16th century French Jesuit writings is immaterial. After you read these "Rules of Civility" you will feel like carrying this little red book around with you and handing it to rude people to read Rule # 1 "Every action done in company ought to be with some sign of respect to those that are present." How can our kids and grandkids get exposed to

this kind of thinking?

This work is a bit "dated" due to the style of writing and speaking they had at the time, but none-the-less I think most of these lessons would be clear enough for most readers. Most of the lessons are just a few sentences in length. I was able to read it while I was having the dealer rotate my tires, and that took less than an hour! In my opinion, every child should have to read and be tested on this work! It offers general insight on manners and conduct in decent society, and gees do we need that in this country today! Although the writing style might be a bit dated, the concepts and lessons within it are as important as ever!

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