

1 SPEAKING

- a** Work in pairs and answer the questions.
- 1 Read the title and subtitles of the article on page 47, and look at the photos. What trouble do you think users of the underground may experience?
 - 2 Read the main part of the article quickly. Were you correct?
 - 3 What about you? Have you had similar experiences?

2 VOCABULARY: Words connected with cultural differences

- a** Complete sentences 1–5 using the words from the box.

impolite behaviour queues inconsiderate unspoken

- 1 Different cultures often have different expectations of _____ on public transport.
 - 2 Some commuters expect people to stand on the right of an escalator. It's an _____ rule.
 - 3 I hate waiting in _____ to get past the ticket barrier.
 - 4 It is _____ to leave your bag on a seat when the train is full and people are standing.
 - 5 If someone helps, it would be _____ not to say *thanks*.
- b** Work with a partner. Find the words in exercise 2a in the article on page 47. Check your sentences make sense.
- c** Find two other words you think are connected to the topic *cultural differences* in the comments section of the article. Guess the meaning and check in a dictionary.



BETTER READING: USING PARTS OF A WORD TO UNDERSTAND ITS MEANING

Many English words are formed by taking the root or base of the word and adding parts to make a new word. You can understand the meaning of a word by identifying the root and thinking about the other parts. You change roots by adding:

- a prefix
- a suffix
- an 's' or 'es' to make a word plural
- 'ed' or 'ing' to change the grammar of a verb

Sometime a small spelling change is needed.

For example, in the word *impolite*, the base or root word is *polite* and the prefix *im* has been placed before it. This makes the root word *polite* negative.

Look at the other words in exercise 2 and answer these questions for each one with a partner.

- a What's the root or base of the word?
- b What change or changes have been made to the root word?
- c Have there been any spelling changes?

3 READING 1

- a** Read the six main paragraphs of the article on page 47 and answer questions 1–6.
- 1 Why does the writer decide to focus on trouble on trains and not somewhere else?
 - 2 Who doesn't stand on one side of the escalators?
 - 3 What should people who are queuing do?
 - 4 What should people do if they can't find their ticket at the ticket barrier?
 - 5 What should people with suitcases on wheels say if they bump into another person?
 - 6 Why are some metro passengers like cowboys?
- b** What are the unspoken rules of travelling by underground? Discuss with a partner and write five rules.
- Example:
Stand to the side on the escalators so that people in a hurry can pass.
- c** Why do you think the author wrote the article? Discuss with your partner.
- 1 to tell amusing stories
 - 2 to report the results of a survey
 - 3 to complain about tourists

4 READING 2

- a** Read the readers' comments below the article on page 47 and decide who made the following points.
- Who ... ?
- 1 thinks underground travellers should be more patient
 - 2 made the mistake of trying to be friendly
 - 3 thinks that people shouldn't expect everybody to know the 'rules'
 - 4 got no thanks for being considerate
 - 5 thinks people should use the space in the train more efficiently

5 SPEAKING

- a** Put the problems in the main part of the article in order of seriousness from 1–5, where 1 is the worst and 5 is the least problematic. Make a note of your reasons.
- b** Find somebody who shares your opinion.
- c** Have you ever had similar experiences when travelling on an underground or other forms of public transport? Exchange your stories.



Trouble on trains

Home Advice Community

In an increasingly urban world, more and more of us are living in big cities, and it's not always easy to get along with one another. Inevitably there are problems from time to time, and many of these seem to take place on the underground. Maybe it's because this is the part of the city where people, residents and visitors alike are forced together in the tightest space. The tunnels are narrow, and it's a place where everybody seems to be in a hurry, so there is bound to be friction. Here are some of the main trouble spots we've discovered from a survey in five cities.



Escalator obstacles

Blocking the escalator is a sin in many countries. The unspoken rule is that you should stand to the side so that people in a hurry can pass. One angry passenger on the London Underground commented, 'People who stand on the left should be banned from using the underground!' There's more tolerance in Mexico City, however. 'People here don't stand on one side,' said one passenger. 'Maybe that's because people here aren't in such a hurry.'

Blind lines

There are rules about not pushing into queues, but there were also complaints about people in line blocking the way so that you can't get from one side to the other. 'People standing in lines should keep their eyes open,' said one New Yorker. 'If somebody wants to get past, they need to leave a gap which is big enough to walk through!'

Ticket barrier blockers

People stopping in front of the ticket barriers is another problem we often heard about. 'I hate it when people stop in front of the ticket barrier and spend ages searching in their bags for their ticket or card, stopping anybody else from getting past. Why don't they stand aside?' was a complaint we heard from one Madrid commuter.



Suitcase rudeness

People pulling their suitcases along on wheels are also seen as a nuisance on the underground. Crashes are difficult to avoid, but what makes it worse is when the person responsible is impolite – they say nothing. 'People should say *excuse me* if they want to go past and *sorry* if they accidentally bump into you,' said one London commuter.

Metro seat cowboys

Some passengers commented on the behaviour of inconsiderate people inside the train carriages. As one Tokyo commuter commented, 'I hate it when some passengers, usually men, sit with their legs apart as if they were riding a horse. They take the space of the passengers on either side of them.'



Over to you. Is there anything that you find really annoying or strange on the underground in any cities you've been to?

Comments below please!

Comments

Likes Shares Comments



23 posts

No friendly chat

People on the London Underground generally don't want to chat to strangers on the trains. They don't even want to make eye contact. I offered my seat to an elderly woman on the tube, but she refused it. So I said 'I'll stand too, and we can have a nice chat.' The woman went white with shock and I realised you aren't supposed to do that here!

Janaina, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



5 posts

On and off

I hate it when people try to get on the train as soon as the doors open. They should let people get off first. Also, I think people should move along inside the carriage when they get on the train and not just stand by the door. I know they do it because they want to be able to get off quickly, but it means there isn't space for some people to get on.

Oleg, Moscow, Russia



187 posts

More tolerance please!

I was surprised to read about all the complaints in this article. It's alright if you live in a big city, but what if you are from a small village? How can you know what you're supposed to do on the underground? I think people should be a bit more relaxed and tolerant!

Miguel, Extremadura, Spain