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## How to Speak, Eighteenth-Century Style

Use contractions for *it is*, *it was*, and *it will*.

Say:

*'Tis* a fine, warm day.

*'Twas* a very trifling rain.

*'Twill* be an honor, Sir.

Not:

It's a fine, warm day.

It was a very trifling rain.

It'll be an honor, Sir.

Call men *Sir* and Women *Madam* or *Mistress*. Use *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, or *Mistress*, and *Miss* along with the person's last name.

Address people according to their relationship to you:

Husband

Neighbor

Brother

Sister

Wife

Friend

Cousin

Uncle/Aunt

Say:

To be sure, Husband, you know these matters better than I.

I am glad to see you, Cousin.

If you are a young child, call your parents *Papa* and *Mama*.

An older daughter may call her father *Daddy* or *Papa*, and a boy or man should say *Father*.

Greet people with *How do you do?* Ask about the person's family or express pleasure at seeing the other person.

Examples:

How do you do, Mr. Harrison? I'm glad to see you.

How do you do? How does all at home?

Gentlemen may say, *Your servant*, *Your humble servant*, or *Your most obedient servant*, as part of a greeting.

Example:

Sir, I am your most obedient servant. I am heartily glad to see you.

*Good morning*, *good afternoon*, *good evening*, and *good day* are appropriate greetings.

Use *you was* instead of *you were*. . "You were" was used when speaking to more than one person.

Use some of these good eighteenth-century verbs:

to amuse  
to astonish  
to conclude  
to endeavor  
to expect  
to propose (as "to propose a scheme")  
to protest  
to repent (as "to repent of an action")  
to retire (meaning "to leave the room")  
to want (meaning "to lack" as well as "to desire")  
to weep

Use some folk expressions in your speech:

to put on (or give oneself) airs  
to make the best of a bad bargain  
to beat about the bush  
not worth a button  
poor as a church mouse  
to be in the dark  
to fit like a glove  
to be true blue  
as clear as day  
to be in a pickle  
to forgive and forget

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