U and Non-U: How to be upper class in 2019



By [Matthew Bell](https://www.tatler.com/profile/matthew-bell) - 5 December 2018, <https://www.tatler.com/article/nancy-mitford-u-and-non-u-language>

If your goal for the new year is to become a member of the upper class, [Tatler](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tatler) has revealed all of the society dos and don'ts for 2019.

A complicating factor in modern U-usage is that for years it has been cool not to be U. Sixty years of rock stars and Hollywood actors dominating the scene means nobody wants to seem upper class, even if they are. So being U has evolved to mean other things. It is about taste, and style, and culture. About being aware of the myriad nuances detectable in how people speak and interact and behave. That’s not always easy; to be a member of the 'U' (upper class) or non-U, one should look at all aspects of their life - as class is dependent on everything from what you drink to how you engage in conversation.

Perhaps the single greatest indicator of being U is the degree to which you care at all – the truly U would never think themselves to be anything other than entirely correct. For the rest of us, every sphere of life is a potential source of neurosis, particularly now there are no clearly delineated rules. Should you write a thank-you letter after every engagement, or will an email do? Are dress codes really binding? Can you smoke in the street? Is it really all right to put towelling dressing gowns in guests’ bedrooms? Did you even know that mattered?

Here, to put your mind at ease, or send you into further paroxysms, we set out the new rules for being new-U in 2019.

New-U

Eating bread

Having a job

Drinking at lunch

Pepto-Bismol

Champagne

Loving your parents

Buying newspapers

Eating sweets

Politeness

Xanax

Taking a centrist view

EasyJet

The North

Athens

Having a driver

Turning at a dinner party

Being faithful

Living in central London

Audiobooks

Having a much older best friend

Reading books

Gout

Astrology

SodaStreams

Yorkshire Tea

Fried eggs

Sweden

Knowing about plants

Nicknames

Perudo

Asking questions during a conversation

Saying no

Non–U

Dietary requirements

The word ‘posh’

Public displays of abstinence

Mouthwash

Most white wine

Being friends with your parents

Facebook

Elaborate gin and tonics

Talking about yourself

Tissues

Jacob Rees-Mogg

British Airways

The South-East

France (except Paris)

Wearing make-up outside London

Dips

Trophy spouses

Windsor

Tinder

Social climbing

iPads

Cryogenic freezing

Supplements

Soho Farmhouse

Air freshener

Cortados

Fruit in plastic

Knowing about yachts

Three-day weddings in Burma

Athleisure wear

Wet wipes

Saying, ‘I’m all right thanks’ when offered a drink