

Tone

Consider:

Proper Presents for the Wedding Party

DEAR MISS MANNERS:

What are the proper presents to give bridesmaids and my fiancé's ushers? Is something so untraditional as a good book – different books for each, of course, according to their tastes – all right instead of things like bracelets and cuff links they may never use?

GENTLE READER:

Are you trying to give these people something they might enjoy, or are you trying to do the proper thing by them? Books, at best, are only read, but useless, monogrammed silver objects that cannot be returned serve to remind one of the occasion of their presentation every time one sees them tarnishing away, unused. Cuff links and bracelets are all right, since everyone has too many of them, but silver golf tees or toothpaste tube squeezers are idéal.

— Judith Martin, *Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behavior*

Discuss:

1. What is Miss Manners' attitude toward gifts for bridesmaids and ushers? What is her attitude toward gifts in general?
2. What is the tone of the passage? Note that the attitude toward gifts does not determine the tone of this passage. What attitude does determine the tone? Circle and discuss the details, images, and diction that reveal the tone.

Apply:

Write an answer to the following request for advice. The tone of your reply should be critical and condescending. Express your attitude through details, images, and diction; do not be openly critical. Share your reply with the class.

DEAR ADVICE PERSON:

I like to go to school, but I hate homework. My parents and teachers say I have to do my homework. But it takes way too much of my time. I would rather watch T.V. Most of my friends hate homework too. What should I do?