Good manners

Activity 2A & 2B (CD 3 Tracks 3 & 4, 2 minutes 30 seconds)

Amy: So, Jean-Pierre, is this your first visit to the United States?

Jean-Pierre: Yes, it is. It's all a bit confusing. You know, some friends invited me to their home for dinner next week. What should I take...uh...as a gift?

Amy: Oh, well, it's probably best to take some flowers—or maybe a small gift, like something typical from your country.

Jean-Pierre: Yes. Well, in France, flowers are a good idea, too. Or a...a box of chocolates. And in France, it's polite to arrive a little early. Is it the same here?

Amy: Well, in the U.S., we don't arrive exactly on time, but you should arrive no more than 15 minutes late. If you're going to be later than that, you really should call so they don't think you've gotten lost—or forgotten to come.

Jean-Pierre: Oh, I wouldn't want that!

Amy: No. Now, in France, how do you greet your host or hostess when you arrive?

Jean-Pierre: Well, when you get there, it's normal to kiss your hostess on both cheeks. If you're a man, you shake hands with the host—we...you don't kiss him.

Amy: OK, well, here we sometimes kiss our hostess on one cheek, not both. Generally, we don't kiss our host. It kind of depends on how well you know your host and hostess.

Jean-Pierre: Oh, another thing: In France, you shake hands with all the other guests. If you don't, it's not polite. What about here?

Amy: Well, here it's usually OK just to say hello. Oh, it's also important to look people in the eye when you talk to them. People may think you're unfriendly if you don't. And use their first names.

Jean-Pierre: In the past, people were formal, too, in France—uh...they...they didn't use first names. Now, we generally use first names, too. You know, if someone is close enough to you and, you know, you've met them before...