

hension, interrogation of words that are used by your opponent, development of persuasive language use, and so forth.

Debaters should experiment with the foreign language, especially with linguistic tricks that might help their debate strategy. However, they should avoid speaking quickly and using slang. Do not sacrifice clarity of diction for speed! Speaking too quickly may make a debater's accent more pronounced and, therefore, more difficult to understand. As a result, arguments may be missed, and the speaker may lose points. Debaters should also avoid using slang because it might not be familiar to other participants.

Those debating in their primary language should be mindful of the challenges facing foreign speakers. They should have more patience, speak more slowly, and ignore mispronunciations. They can also offer to help, but they must not appear patronizing or condescending. They should always ask the other debaters if they want assistance before giving it. International debates not only allow debaters to learn and practice a foreign language, but also encourage tolerance of people speaking other languages as well as people with different skills in speaking specific languages.

## **ETIQUETTE AND CUSTOMS**

To avoid being rude or discourteous, learn all you can about differences in etiquette and customs. Etiquette is a formal way of acting that can reduce uncertainty and disrespect among cultures. Problems occur because cultures have different forms of etiquette. For instance, most cultures expect some form of greeting when people first encounter each other. The complication occurs when you do not know what type of salutation is expected. For some, a simple handshake is sufficient. Others may expect a bow or kisses on the cheek. For some, any form of physical touch is inappropriate. Whatever the case may be, knowing the etiquette can mean the difference between being respectful or being rude.

Debating has created its own form of etiquette. For instance, debaters usually shake hands at the conclusion of a debate. In addition, we expect people to listen quietly when a debater is speaking. These forms of behavior transcend cultures. Nevertheless, it is important to be conscious of expected behavior inside and outside of debate rounds.

In a related issue, you must also be aware of different cultural customs. Etiquette concerns formal cultural behavior; customs relate to cultural practices in general. For example, it is customary in some cultures to avoid eye contact, whereas in other cultures, eye contact is essential to avoid disrespect. Debaters and debate educators should always attempt to inform themselves about cultural customs to reduce the risk of insult. In an international setting, debaters should not be discouraged or punished for using culturally specific customs or etiquette (unless it becomes offensive to other members of debate). Although debaters generally believe that maintaining eye contact is essential to persuasive communication, they must be sensitive and respectful to debaters from cultures where keeping eye contact is considered to be rude.