

Etymology



Protocol is derived from the Greek *proto kollen*, or "first glue," and in its earliest English form referred to a sheet of paper glued to the front of a notarized document as verification of its authenticity. In its official sense, it has come to refer to a system of universally accepted etiquette used when representatives of different nations deal with one another. It also applies to official dealings on the national, state, and local levels.

Today

Protocol is the glue that holds official life together--the observance of precedence and rank in such aspects of official life as using proper forms of address, participating in ceremonies, and entertaining dignitaries.

Many of these "official" manners are observed by ordinary citizens on occasion.

You follow protocol when...

- you write a letter to a member of Congress
- are introduced to a member of the clergy or military
- display or handle the American flag
- you are present during a rendition of the national anthem