

Manners at a Performance



Today, there's a wealth of entertainment offered in widely differing settings, but the following fundamentals of good audience behavior are adaptable to virtually any situation:

No talking, unless audience participation is requested by the performers. If something must be said, whisper it quickly. Excessively shushing a talkative neighbor can be just as disturbing.

Use good posture. Auditorium seating is often arranged so that the person in the seat behind can see between the two seats in front, so slumping sideways or lounging on a partner's shoulder blocks the view.

Remove hats. Ladies, if your hat is part of your outfit, you can keep it on as long as it doesn't block anyone's view.

Noises off. Turn off cell phones, beepers, audible watches, and any other sound-making gadgets before any performance.

Lights out. Don't forget, the screen on your mobile device can be a distraction too.

Audience Etiquette

Snap, crackle, pop. No rattling of candy boxes or ice in cups, shaking popcorn containers, or slurping drinks.

Control coughing. Muffle coughs and sneezes with a handkerchief. Cough drops and mints may be helpful, but leave if you can't stop the attack.

Avoid other sounds that can disturb the people around you and the performers. Munching noisily, smacking or cracking gum, rattling the pages of programs, tapping feet or drumming fingers, humming or singing along, rummaging in purses--these are just a few of the things that can annoy those around you.

Smoke only in designated areas. Leave and find a place outside if you must smoke.

Don't take flash photos or shoot video during live performances. The point is to do nothing that will distract the performers or disturb others in the audience.

Dispose of trash, including chewed gum, in waste containers. Tell an usher or attendant if anything was spilled, as a courtesy to the next person who has your seat.

Outdoor Etiquette

Many outdoor performances have a relaxed atmosphere, but a little consideration will make the experience enjoyable for all.

Keep it down please. Unless the performers encourage you to, don't sing along or repeat dialogue.

Keep charge of children and pets (if they're allowed). Know where they are at all times. Sit

near the edge of the crowd in case you need to take your daughter or your dog for a walk.

Use common sense about outdoor seating. Seating and accessories that can block others' view or cause congestion should be placed as far from the center of the crowd as possible.

Be careful with food and drinks. Wipe up spills, especially on surfaces where others may sit or eat.

Smoke away from the crowd. Head for the fringes where the smoke is less bothersome and you're unlikely to bump a lighted cigarette into someone.

Clean up. Obviously, it's disrespectful to leave a mess.