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ABSTRACT

To assist the learner of English as a second language in dealing with the etiquette of dining in someone else's home, a series of dialogs, comprehension questions, readings, and points of discussion are presented. The text is illustrated. (JB)

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STUDENT LESSON #19

DINNER AT  
AN AMERICAN FRIEND'S HOUSE

English for Living

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## PART 1 — DINNER AT AN AMERICAN FRIEND'S HOUSE

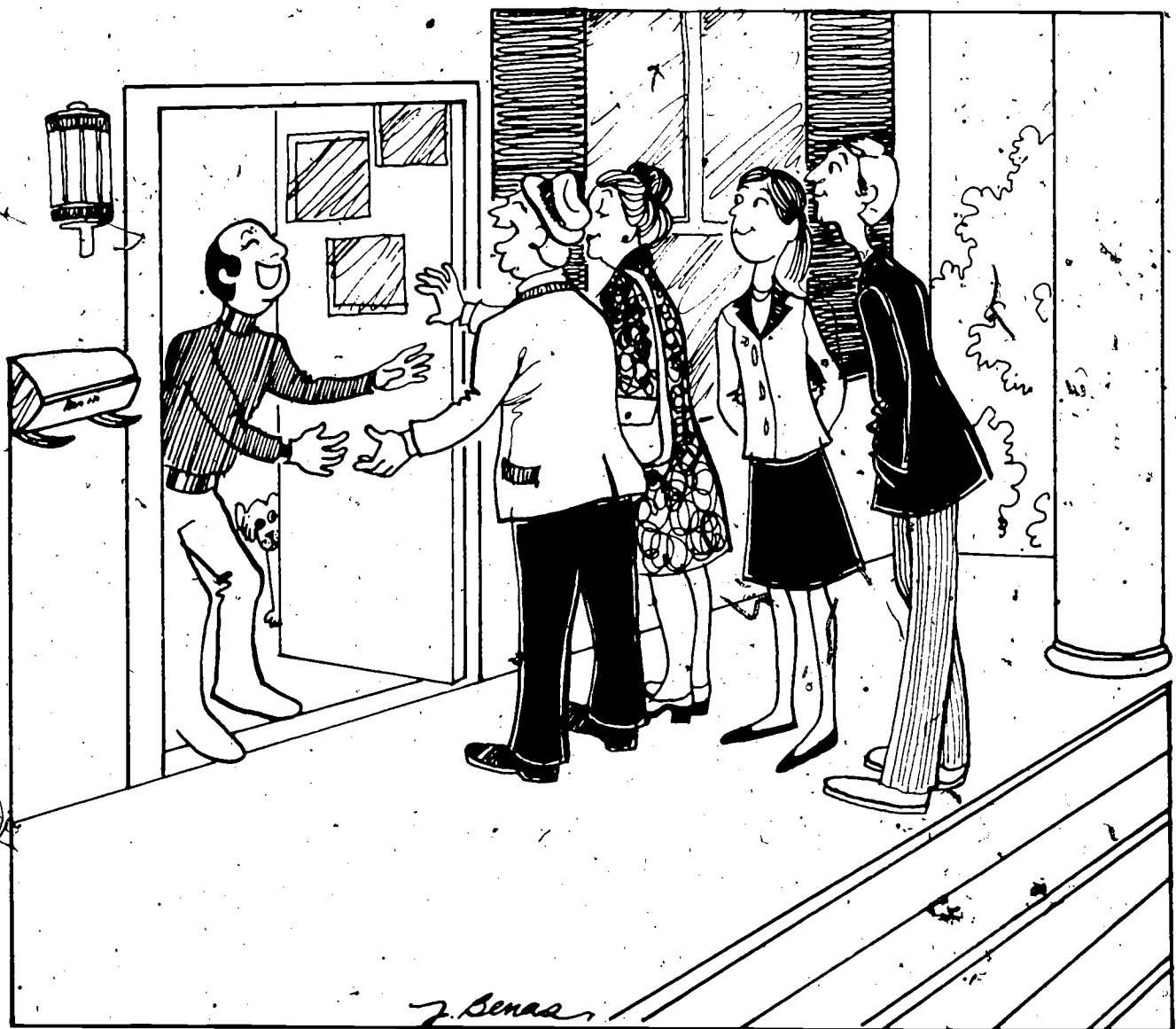
### OBJECTIVES

When you finish this module you will:

1. Know what to do when eating dinner at an American's house.
2. Be able to use some of the common expressions used in this social situation.

### SITUATION SETTER

Americans entertain in many different ways. Inviting their friends to dinner is one of the ways in which they entertain.



## DIALOG 1

The Romanovski family has been invited to Rita and Andrew Smith's house for Sunday dinner and to spend the afternoon. They arrive at about 1:00 p.m. Mr. Smith answers the door.

**Andrew:** Hi everybody. Come on in. Let me take your coats.

**Stan:** Thank you.

**Andrew:** It's good to see you again. How have you all been?

**Stan:** Just fine, Andrew, and you?

**Andrew:** Not bad. Won't you have a seat in the living room? The children are downstairs.



## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who are the host and hostess?
2. Who are the guests?
3. Have they been invited for dinner?
4. What time do they arrive?
5. Who answers the door?
6. What does Andrew take from the guests?
7. Where does Andrew ask the guests to sit?
8. Where are the Smith's children?

## MICROCONVERSATION 1: Practice these conversations with another student.

Student A: Let me take your  
coat.  
hat.  
gloves.  
scarf.  
packages.  
umbrella.

Student B: Thank you.

## MICROCONVERSATION 2

Student A: How have you been?

Student B: Fine, thank you.

Just fine.

Not bad.

O. K.

## DIALOG 2

In the United States, people often ask their guests if they would like a drink before dinner.

Andrew: Can I get you a drink?

Stan: Yes, please.

Andrew: What would you like?

Stan: Anything you have will be fine.

Andrew: Would the children like a root beer?

Stan: Yes, they would.

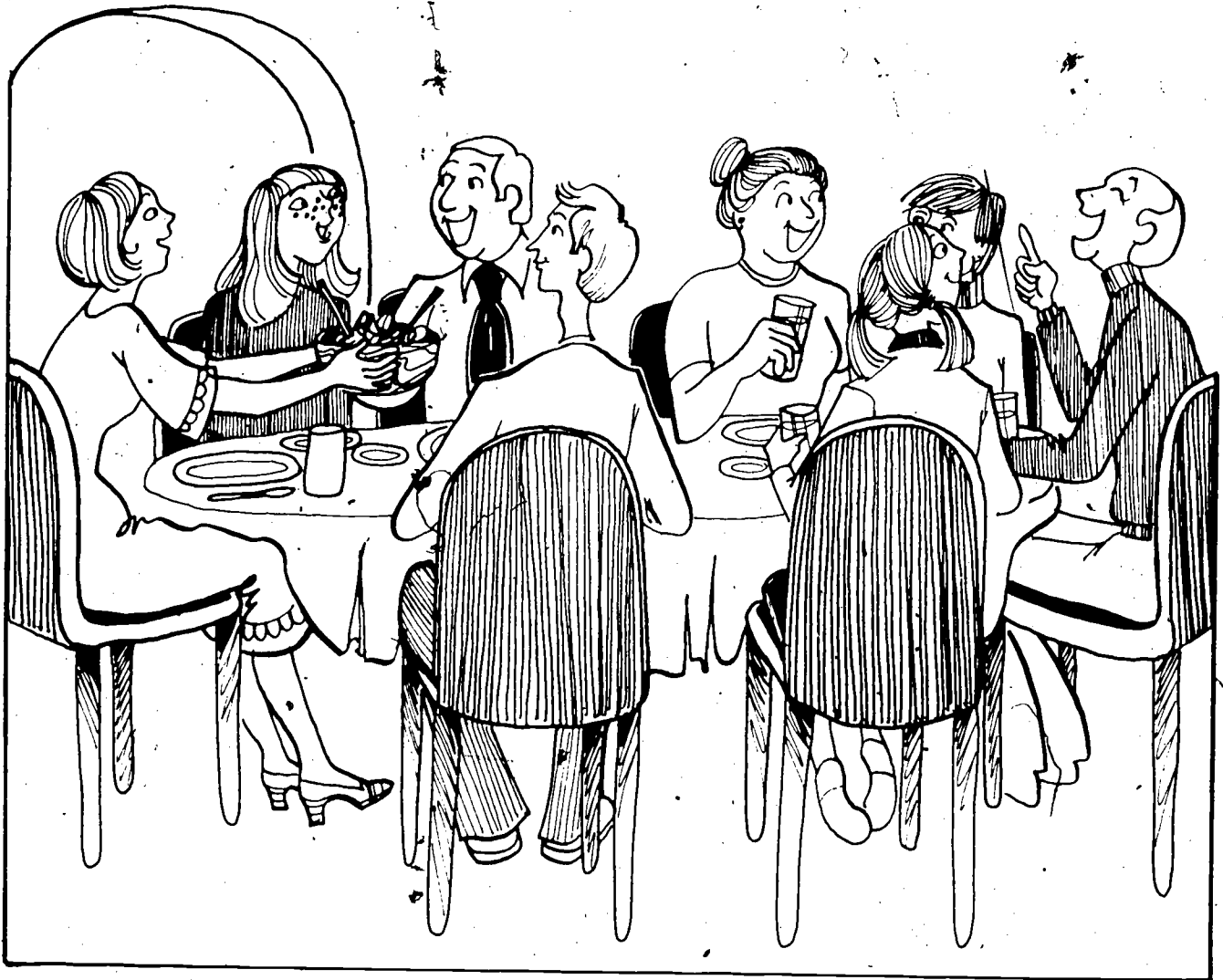
## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What do people often ask their guests?
2. What else do they ask them?
3. Does Stan want something special?
4. What would the children like?

### MICROCONVERSATION 3

**Student A:** Can I get you a drink?  
Would you like a drink?  
How about a drink?  
Would you care for a drink?

**Student B:** Yes, please.  
No, thank you.



### DIALOG 3

#### BACKGROUND TO THE DIALOG

It's time for dinner. Everyone is sitting at the dinner table.

Rita: Would anyone care for some wine?

Andrew: Yes, I would, please. Stan?

Stan: Yes, thank you, I would, too.

Andrew: Kristyna?

Kristyna: None for me, thank you.

Rita: Andrew, please pass the vegetables.

Andrew: Certainly. Here you are.

Rita: Stan, would you care for more potatoes?

Stan: No, thank you. I have plenty.

Kristyna: Everything is delicious, Rita.

Rita: Thank you, Kristyna.

**MICROCONVERSATIONS: Practice these conversations with another student.**

#### MICROCONVERSATION 1

Student A: Would anyone care for some wine?  
soda?  
water?  
milk?  
coffee?  
tea?  
beer?

Student B: Yes, please.  
No, thank you.

#### MICROCONVERSATION 2

Student A: Please pass the salt and pepper.  
meat.  
potatoes.  
vegetables.  
bread.  
salad.

Student B: Certainly. Here you are.

#### MICROCONVERSATION 3

Student A: Would anyone care for some more meat?  
vegetables?  
potatoes?  
salad?  
dessert?

Student B: Yes, I'd like some.  
No, thank you. It's very good, but I can't eat another thing!

## ROLE PLAY

1. You are the host or hostess. Other students are your guests. Your guests have just arrived. Take their coats, ask them to sit down and ask them if they would like a drink.
2. You are the host or hostess. Other students are the guests. You are sitting at the dinner table. The host offers some food to the guests. One guest asks for the butter. Another guest tells the hostess that the dinner is very good. One guest has had enough to eat and doesn't care for any more.

## DIALOG 4

Stan, Kristyna and their children have been visiting Rita and Andrew for the afternoon. Now it's time to leave, and Kristyna wants to thank Andrew and Rita for a very nice time.

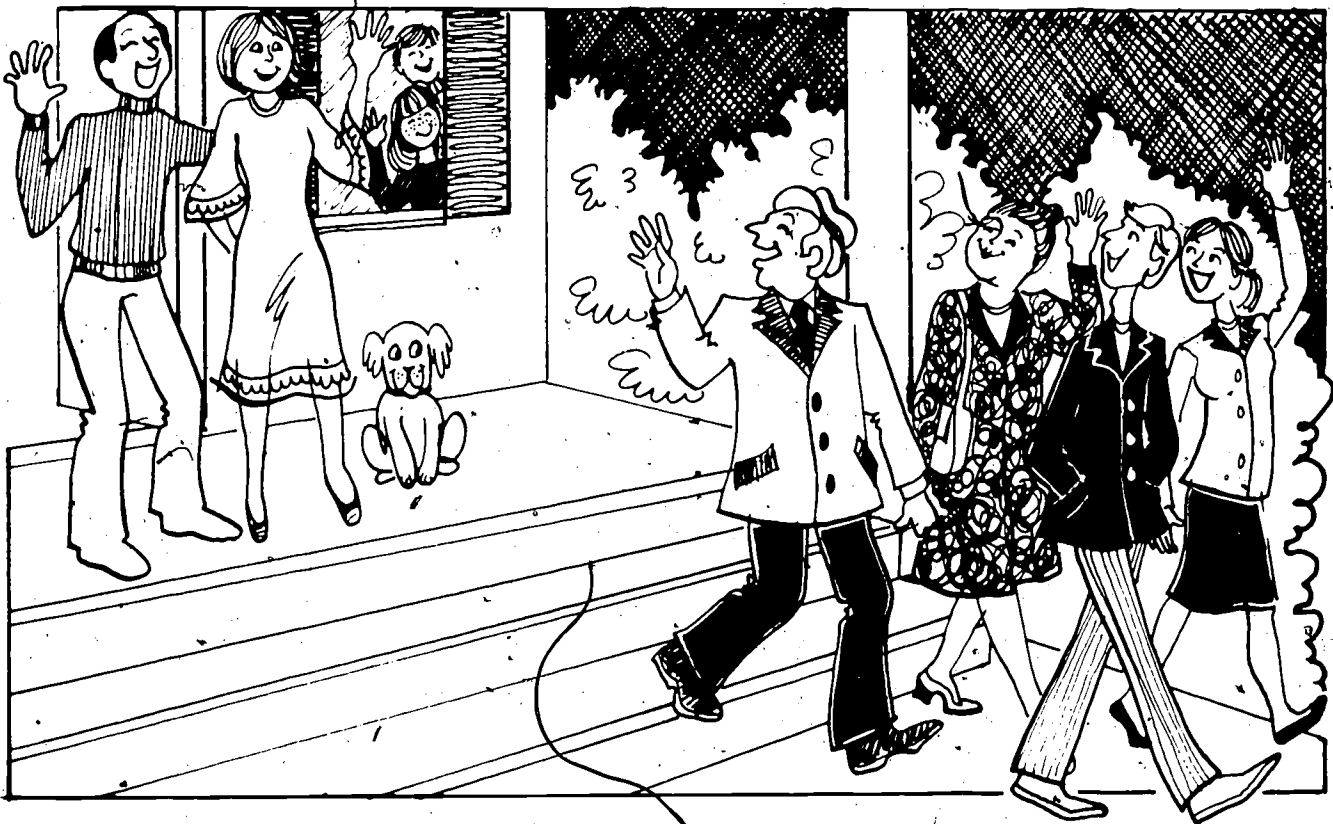
**Kristyna:** We'd better leave now. It's getting late and there's school tomorrow.

**Rita:** It was very nice having you at our house. We really enjoyed it.

**Kristyna:** Thanks. We had a nice time.

**Rita:** Come again soon...

**Kristyna:** Thanks, we will. Kids, you'd better say good-bye to Barbara and Joe.





## **DIALOG 5**

Bonnie and Paul Romanovski are saying good-bye to the Smith's kids, Barbara and Joe.

**Bonnie:** Barbara, I've got to go now. I'll call you tomorrow.

**Barbara:** Okay.

**Bonnie:** I'm going to go say good-bye and thank you to your mother. Her dinner was great.

## **COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why does Kristyna want to leave?
2. What things does Rita say to her guests when they leave?
3. What does Kristyna tell the children to do?
4. What is Bonnie going to do?

## **MICROCONVERSATION 1: Practice these conversations with another student.**

**Student A:** Thank you for a lovely dinner.  
evening.  
afternoon.  
time.

**Student B:** We enjoyed having you.

## **MICROCONVERSATION 2**

**Student A:** We really enjoyed ourselves.  
We had a wonderful time.  
We had a very nice evening.

**Student B:** I'm so glad you could come.

## PART 2 — ENTERTAINING

(Some questions and answers)

### SITUATION SETTER

Bonnie and Paul Romanovski are very interested in the social customs of their new country. They have found out that they can learn about the customs by reading a special column in the newspaper. The column is called "Ursula Stevens Answers."



Dear U.S.A.,

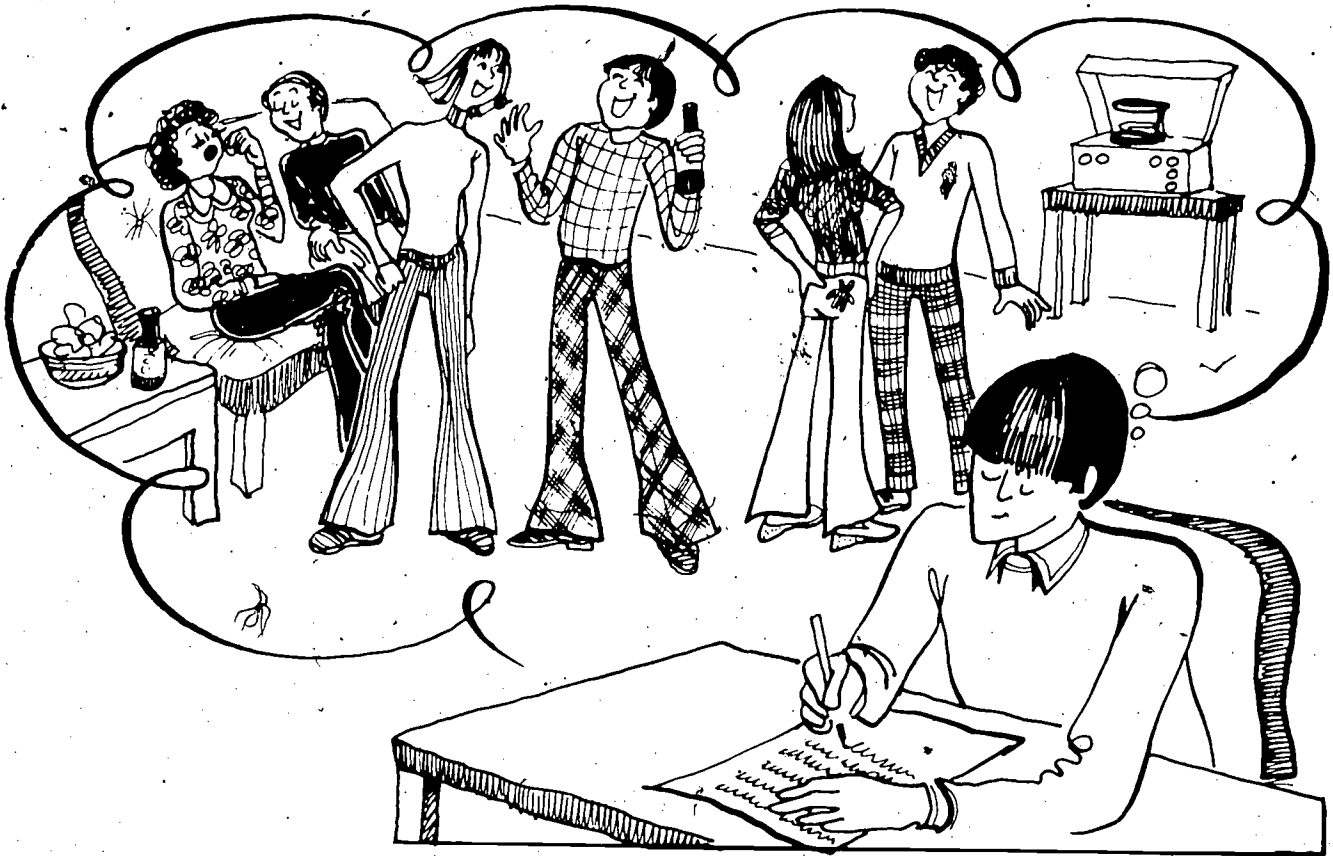
My American friend had invited me to come over and visit him for the evening. He told me to come at 8:00. Does that mean he has invited me for dinner?

Paul

Dear Paul,

Since he did not say "come for dinner," you can expect that when you get there he will probably ask you if you want something to drink, and there will be snacks. You will probably sit and talk, and maybe listen to records or watch television. Enjoy your evening!

Sincerely,  
U.S.A.



### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is Paul's question?
2. How did he find the answer?
3. What was the answer?
4. What kinds of things will they eat?
5. What will Paul and his friends do?

Dear U.S.A.,

I've been invited to a friend's house for dinner. Should I bring a gift?

Bonnie

Dear Bonnie,

Usually when an American is invited to dinner, he or she will bring a small gift of some kind to the hostess. This is not necessary when you are invited just to visit. The usual gifts are some fresh flowers, a box of candy or maybe a bottle of wine. Nowadays, everyone is so "plant-crazy," that a small plant is a nice gift. Have fun!

Sincerely,  
U.S.A.



### COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Bonnie want to know?
2. What kinds of things are brought as a gift?
3. Do you do this in your country?
4. If not, do you do something else?

Dear U.S.A.,

My American friend has invited me to a picnic on Saturday. She said that we are going to "chip in" \$2.00 each and each one is going to bring something. She told me to bring a carton of soda. I understand that, but what does she mean by "chip in"?

Paul



Dear Paul,

Picnics can be expensive! Your friend means that each guest will give her \$2.00 to help buy the hamburgers, hot dogs, and rolls. Since everyone is going to help by bringing drinks, salads, and other snacks, the picnic will not be too expensive for your friend. This way, everyone has a good time and shares the cost.

Sincerely,  
U.S.A.

### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where is Paul going?
2. What does he have to do?
3. What does "chip in" mean?
4. What is the money for?
5. Why do teenagers ask their friends to "chip in"?

Dear U.S.A.,

One of the girls in my class has invited me to spend the weekend at her house. Is there anything special I should know?

Bonnie



Dear Bonnie.

There are some things it would be nice to remember. First of all, you should bring a small gift to your classmate's mother. Because her mother will have more to do, ask if you can help at mealtimes. Be sure to make your own bed, and don't leave a mess in the bedroom or bathroom. After you get home, write a thank-you note to her mother. Enjoy your visit.

Sincerely,  
U.S.A.

### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where is Bonnie going?
2. What does she want to know?
3. What are some of the things she should do?
4. What should she do when she gets home?

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you entertain dinner guests in your country? How do you entertain guests for the evening?
2. Do you have a lot of parties? Do your friends ever "chip in" for parties?
3. In your country: What things are polite when you are invited to dinner? When you invite guests to dinner?
4. What things are impolite?
5. How do your guests know when it's time to go home?
6. How do you feel about the way Americans entertain?
7. In your country, do children entertain other children?
8. What kinds of parties do children have?
9. What kinds of parties do teenagers have? Adults?
10. Do adults always bring their children when they visit?

### EXERCISE

Write your own letters to U.S.A. Ask things you want to know more about. Your teacher will help you with the answers.