

Chivvy

Ask yourself as well as your partner: Do you like to be always told what to do or not to do? Do grown-ups do this, in your experience?

When Michael was five years old, his mother took him to a nearby school for admission. The teacher asked, "What does your mother call you at home, child?" "Michael Don't," came the confident reply.

Note: To chivvy is to nag, "to continuously urge someone to do something, often in an annoying way", according to the dictionary.

Read the poem now.

Grown-ups say things like:
Speak up
Don't talk with your mouth full
Don't stare
Don't point
Don't pick your nose

Sit up
Say please
Less noise
Shut the door behind you
Don't drag your feet
Haven't you got a hankie?
Take your hands out of
your pockets





Pull your socks up
Stand up straight
Say thank you
Don't interrupt
No one thinks you're funny
Take your elbows off the table

Can't you make your own
mind up about anything ?

MICHAEL ROSEN

Working with the Poem

1. Discuss these questions in small groups before you answer them.
 - (i) When is a grown-up likely to say this?
Don't talk with your mouth full.
 - (ii) When are you likely to be told this?
Say thank you.
 - (iii) When do you think an adult would say this?
No one thinks you are funny.
2. The last two lines of the poem are not prohibitions or instructions. What is the adult now asking the child to do? Do you think the poet is suggesting that this is unreasonable? Why?
3. Why do you think grown-ups say the kind of things mentioned in the poem? Is it important that they teach children good manners, and how to behave in public?
4. If you had to make some rules for grown-ups to follow, what would you say? Make at least five such rules. Arrange the lines as in a poem.