

C1-C2 Worksheet: The Dinner Party Disaster - 30 June 2026

Article

A new comedy film, *The Invite*, turns an ordinary dinner into a social minefield. Reuters reported that the A24 release stars Olivia Wilde and Seth Rogen as a married couple whose evening with upstairs neighbours, played by Penelope Cruz and Edward Norton, spirals into a dinner party disaster. The premise is simple: four adults sit down to eat, drink and keep up appearances, only for old tensions and uncomfortable truths to come to the surface.

That is why dinner parties remain such useful material for comedy and drama. They are supposed to be civilised, but they often force people to walk on eggshells. Guests bite their tongue, hosts pretend everything is fine, and one careless remark can overstep the mark. A shared meal can reveal who wants attention, who controls the conversation and who is quietly fed up. The table becomes a stage where manners, class, friendship and insecurity all compete for space.

The appeal is not just that things fall apart. Viewers recognise the pressure to be charming in someone else's home, especially when alcohol, neighbours or long-term couples are involved. People often sweep problems under the carpet in daily life, but a tense evening can let off steam in spectacular fashion. A bad dinner party is funny because it is familiar: almost everyone knows how quickly polite conversation can become a test of honesty, patience and social survival.

True/False

Decide if each statement is True (T) or False (F).

1. The article says *The Invite* turns an ordinary dinner into a socially risky situation.
2. The film is described as being about a large outdoor wedding.
3. The article says the dinner involves a married couple and upstairs neighbours.
4. The writer argues that dinner parties are useless material for comedy and drama.
5. The second paragraph suggests that politeness can hide tension.
6. The article says a shared meal never reveals anything about people.
7. The final paragraph connects the appeal of bad dinner parties to familiar social pressure.
8. The article suggests that polite conversation can become a test of honesty and patience.

Phrase Match

Match the phrases (1-10) to the correct definitions (A-J).

Phrases (1-10)	Definitions (A-J)
1. social minefield	A. avoid saying what you really think
2. spirals into	B. become visible or known
3. keep up appearances	C. annoyed, tired or frustrated
4. come to the surface	D. quickly becomes something worse
5. walk on eggshells	E. release strong feelings or frustration
6. bite their tongue	F. behave very carefully to avoid upsetting people
7. overstep the mark	G. hide problems instead of dealing with them
8. fed up	H. a situation full of hidden social risks
9. sweep problems under the carpet	I. go too far or behave inappropriately
10. let off steam	J. pretend that everything is fine

Synonym Match

Match the words (1-10) to the correct synonyms (A-J).

Words (1-10)	Synonyms (A-J)
1. ordinary	A. thoughtless
2. premise	B. dramatic
3. civilised	C. normal
4. careless	D. attraction
5. insecurity	E. strained
6. appeal	F. polite
7. recognise	G. idea
8. tense	H. identify
9. spectacular	I. recognisable
10. familiar	J. self-doubt

Use the new language

Please choose 5 words or phrases and make your own sentence using the new word or phrase.

Discussion Questions

Student A

1. Do you enjoy dinner parties, or do you prefer meeting people in restaurants?
2. What makes someone a good host?
3. What makes someone a difficult guest?
4. Have you ever been at a meal where the atmosphere suddenly changed?
5. Which topics should people avoid at dinner with people they do not know well?
6. Would you rather cook for guests or let someone else host?
7. Are neighbours good people to socialise with, or is it better to keep some distance?
8. What is the most awkward thing that can happen at a dinner party?

Student B

1. Why do dinner parties create such good comedy and drama?
2. Are manners mostly about kindness, status or hiding what people really feel?
3. Is honesty always valuable in social situations, or are small lies necessary?
4. Why do long-term couples sometimes reveal tension in front of other people?
5. Do people behave differently when they are guests in someone else's home?
6. Can class, money or taste make dinner parties more uncomfortable?
7. Why do audiences enjoy watching polite situations fall apart?
8. What does a bad dinner party reveal about friendship, marriage or social performance?

Answer Key

True/False: 1=T, 2=F, 3=T, 4=F, 5=T, 6=F, 7=T, 8=T

Phrase Match: 1=H, 2=D, 3=J, 4=B, 5=F, 6=A, 7=I, 8=C, 9=G, 10=E

Synonym Match: 1=C, 2=G, 3=F, 4=A, 5=J, 6=D, 7=H, 8=E, 9=B, 10=I

Example sentences with the phrases

1. A dinner with strangers can quickly become a social minefield.
2. A small disagreement sometimes spirals into a serious argument.
3. Many couples try to keep up appearances in front of guests.
4. Hidden resentment can come to the surface during a long evening.
5. Guests may walk on eggshells when the hosts are arguing.
6. People often bite their tongue to keep a meal peaceful.
7. A rude joke can overstep the mark.
8. After two hours of small talk, everyone was fed up.
9. Some families sweep problems under the carpet for years.
10. A heated conversation can help people let off steam.