

Vertices Assignment: The Date
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(PLEASE CITE WHEN USING)

Your assignment is to go on an actual date, a real date, a date that would fall into the category of “old fashioned” if that helps at all. Here are the rules:

Step 1: Planning and Asking

- You must ask someone out *in person* (i.e., not in a text message, Facebook, or IM). Arrange the date within three days of asking. Waiting longer creates unnecessary anxiety, invites drama, and sets the stage for unsolicited opinions and advice.
- This person must be someone who is a legitimate romantic interest (i.e., not just a friend). It does not have to be a person you’ve had a crush on for months or years...in fact, it probably shouldn’t be that person, since that might be a bit intense.
- You must plan the date yourself...do not leave it up to the other person.
- Do not go to a movie on the first date. A movie is at odds with the aim of a first date, which is to get to know the other person through conversation. Choose movies for a second or third date, but choose wisely ...beware of foreign films that might have explicit sex scenes that can make you or the other person feel very uncomfortable!
- You must be willing to report about the date back in class.
- This should not be a date with a person whom you have already dated.
- Tell **no more than** three or four people about the date. Having 83 people weighing in with opinions is disastrous.
- The date may be a daytime or nighttime date, but the date must occur before 10:00p.m. A walk around the reservoir at midnight or later is not a date, it’s sketchy. Or it’s the beginning of a hook-up.

Step 2: The Date

- The date should be a Level-1 date (details given in class); it should be between 45 and 90 minutes long. It is important that the date be no longer than 90 minutes, even if it is going well (especially if it is going well!).
- The date might be at an on-campus location, but an off campus location is preferable. Keep it close to campus, though, so that the time limit is observed (no long transportation time).
- You should pay for the date, no matter how vigorously the other person offers to pay, and regardless of your instincts on traditional gender roles.
- The date must involve **no alcohol**. Going for coffee or lunch, or just dessert is a good idea. There is too much at stake in long, intense dates like a romantic dinner downtown.
- There shall be no physical interaction during the date, with the possible exception of a friendly, “A-Frame” hug at the end.
- The date must involve only the two of you, alone. No “third wheels” allowed. No double dates (going on a date with another couple).

- Prior to the date, plan at least three or four questions about the other person and one or two topics so that if you hit a lull, you can go to those. Don't be afraid of lulls in the conversation though...that's natural. During the date, try to make the conversation a two-way conversation... interrogating the other person is just as bad as giving a monologue.
- Understand and give signals at the end of a date. Signaling that you would like to go out again might include saying things like, "This was fun, maybe we can do this again next week," or, regarding paying the bill, "I would like to get this, maybe you can get it the next time." When someone says "This was fun, thanks," it might mean they are not sure they want to go out again. Give them a chance to back out gracefully.

Step 3: After the Date

- Email the person within 48 hours of the date, thanking the person for going out with you. Keep the message very short if you don't want to go out with the person again. If you're open to another date (note that a second or third date does NOT mean you are necessarily open or committing to a relationship), make the message a line or two longer, mentioning specifically what you enjoyed about the date.
- If a person doesn't seem to want to go out again, drop it and move on. Don't waste time pining.
- Withhold judgment about the date until you've had a chance to go back over the conversation the next day or even two days later. DO NOT analyze the date with friends.
- Remember that going on a second date doesn't mean you really, really like the person. It might take several dates to know if you're really interested in moving toward a second level date or even toward a relationship. On the other hand, if you're still not sure by the third date, chances are, you're not interested and in fairness, you should not go out again. Know that the other person is free to do the same. The first few dates are about information gathering.
- Deal with rejection intelligently and responsibly. Pay attention to how your fears and desires are really at work in your feelings about refusing a date with someone or in getting a refusal.
- Know how to say no to a second or third date with grace and honesty (not brutal honesty though), respecting the dignity of yourself and the other person. Keep a refusal short and kind. **Always** give a refusal in person or on the phone (never in a voicemail message, text, email, or Facebook). Memorize these words: "It has been really nice to get to know you and I had a good time. But I think I just don't feel this 'clicking' or heading in a romantic direction." End of story. No really, don't say more...you'll just be digging yourself in beyond that point.