When you set the table, you put the dishes, glasses, and flatware (knives, forks, spoons) in the same place each time. This is called a **Table Settings** or **Place Settings**. Table settings can have a few pieces and be very simple, for casual dining, or they can have a lot of pieces and be very fancy, for formal dining.

The informal or casual place setting is used for regular meals like eating at home on a Saturday afternoon or for Tuesday night dinner at home. The formal place setting is used for special meals such as Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner or a meal in a fine restaurant.

In order to know how to set a table properly, you must first learn the names and uses of the different utensils used in setting a table.

**REMEMBER:** In order to set a table properly you have to know what the menu will be, so you can put the proper utensils needed for the meal.

We always begin eating with the flatware furthest from the plate, so when setting the table you need to know what foods will be served first and also what type of dessert flatware to put on the table.

**PLATES**
Put the dinner plate in the center of the setting, one inch from the edge of the table, with any picture or design facing the diner. If placemats are used, the place setting is centered on them, although they need not be large enough to accommodate everything in the place setting.

The bread and butter plate is placed on the left side, slightly above the plate. The butter knife may be on this plate, and if it is you should leave it there after you use it.

The salad plate is also placed to the left of the dinner plate, slightly below the bread and butter plate.

**FLATWARE** (knives, forks, and spoons)
Flatware (also called silverware) is used from the outside to the inside, with the first outside fork on the left being used first and the first outside spoon on the right being used first. A spoon or fork placed over your dinner plates is used for dessert.

**GLASSES**
Use the glass to the right of your plate. Large stemmed glasses are called goblets. Hold by the bowl, not the stem, to avoid spills. A glass without a stem is held in the middle, not at the rim. If you need to pass a glass or cup to someone, you do not touch the rim with your fingers.

**NAPKINS**
Napkins are usually placed to the left of the place setting. Occasionally it will be folded on your plate or in your glass to give a decorative look. **NEVER** place you napkin under your flatware! Reason: The first thing you should do when you sit at the table is to place your napkin in your lap. If the napkin is under your flatware then you have to move the flatware to get your napkin.....it doesn't make sense to have to do that!

A large dinner napkin is opened in half with the fold on top. The open bottom half may be used to blot your mouth. A small luncheon napkin may be opened all the way.

* Remember, a napkin isn’t meant to be a bib, towel, or handkerchief. You never blow your nose in a napkin. You use napkins to blot or wipe your mouth.