

In-Sessional English Language Programme Listening and Speaking Open Sessions



- My name is Bob Gilmour. I am an English teacher. I am not an expert in current affairs.
- Please write your name and student number on one of the registers during the session or at the end.
- This is a mixed level session. Please be patient. Give respect and help to fellow students.

Mixed Groups

- You have 3 minutes
 - Stand up!
 - Organise yourselves into groups of 3
 - Your group should be together in the same row
 - Each group of 3 must contain 3 different nationalities
 - Each group should contain people who do not already know each other
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- Introduce yourselves, tell people in your group where you are from and what you are studying.
 - Tell people how you communicate with your family and friends in your home country and how often.



Extract 1: Vocabulary and Prediction

- Is it a noun phrase or a verb phrase?
 - What does it mean? Can you think of an example?
 - What is the news story about?
1. a strike
 2. to avert a strike
 3. a picket line
 4. to reach a settlement
 5. to renege on an agreement
 6. to down tools and walk out
 7. an industrial dispute
 8. to intervene in sth. / to interfere with sth.
 9. to get round the table
 10. to escalate

[Play Extract 1](#)

Extract 1: Cultural Information – People and Institutions

- Make a note of the names and job titles of the four people who are interviewed (where information is given).
- Discuss. Why were they interviewed for this story?

[Play Extract 1](#)

1. Paul Tolhurst, Royal Mail Operations Director
2. Dave Ward, CWU (Communication Workers Union)
Deputy General Secretary
3. Lord Mandelson, Business Secretary (Labour party)
4. Ken Clarke (MP), Shadow Business Secretary
(Conservative / Tory party)

Royal Mail / Post Office

ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)

Extract 1: Listening for the Main Ideas / Summarising

- Can you summarise each person's point of view in one sentence?

[Play Extract 1](#)

1. Paul Tolhurst, Royal Mail Operations Director

We have an agreement which we would like to sign to end the strike.

2. Dave Ward, CWU (Communication Workers Union)
Deputy General Secretary

We want to go to ACAS to reach a settlement to the dispute.

3. Lord Mandelson, Business Secretary (Labour party)

I – and the Government - want this to be resolved by the Royal Mail.

4. Ken Clarke (MP), Shadow Business Secretary
(Conservative / Tory party)

I think the Government should have resolved this with policy.

Discussion

In your groups discuss the following:

- Have there ever been any major strikes or industrial disputes in your country? Give examples.
- What is the general public's view of strikes in your country?
- Does the government usually intervene if there is large scale industrial dispute?



Extract 2: Prediction and Background Cultural Knowledge

- What are these five things/names/people and why are they in the same news story this week?



Nick Griffin



David Dimbleby

Extract 1: Listen for Main Ideas

- The BNP leader's (Nick Griffin) appearance on Question Time is a hugely controversial issue. Can you watch and summarise the main arguments for and against?

[Play Extract 2](#)

Against the appearance on QT

- Racist views mean that the BNP should not be given a platform
- Evidence shows that BNP leads to increase in racial problems.
- The appearance has given them public recognition and made them part of the mainstream
- It's a boost for racist and fascist politics
- The BNP is illegally constituted (not mentioned)

For the appearance on QT

- It would be censorship
- BBC is independent and non-partial
- If a group has public support, the BBC has an obligation to give them a voice and allow them to be scrutinised.
- Decision is for the BBC
- It should expose their views.

Discussion: Your Opinion

In your groups discuss the following:

- Do you think Nick Griffin should be allowed to appear on Question Time?

Useful language for expressing strong feeling:

It's really shocking that...

I find it unbelievable that...

It's incredible that....

It's astonishing that....

I really can't see any problem with (+ noun phrase)

I can't see what all the fuss is about.

This is a fuss about nothing.

Extract 1: Glossary

- a picket line
- a strike
- to be solidly supported
- grim determination
- to take strike action
- to avert a strike
- to renege on an agreement
- to bring an end to a strike
- to reach a settlement
- to walk out
- to down tools
- an industrial dispute / a bitter dispute
- to undermine progress
- to intervene / to interfere
- to implement a policy
- to get round the table
- to escalate



Extract 1: Background Information about the Royal Mail

1. Royal Mail is the national postal service of the UK and first started in 1516.
2. It became available to the public as a service in 1635.
3. Historically it was a government department which included a delivery business but in 1969, it became a national company.
4. The old post office was dissolved in 2007 and it became Royal Mail Holdings plc.
[(1) Royal Mail, delivering letters / (2) Parcelforce, delivering parcels / (3) Post Office Limited, managing the nationwide network of post office branches]
5. It is now a public limited company owned by the government.
6. It delivers 84 million items every day.
7. Deliveries are made every day except Sundays and Bank Holidays.
8. In 2007, Royal Mail Holdings plc made an annual loss of £279m.
9. As the first country to issue stamps, British stamps are the only stamps that do not bear the name of the country of issue on them, nor the currency in which they are issued.
10. From January 1, 2006, the Royal Mail lost its 350-year monopoly and the UK postal market became fully open to competition.

Extract 2: Glossary

- political legitimacy
- racial purity
- to challenge something in the courts
- the implications of a decision
- to robustly defend something
- political censorship
- to fulfil one's obligations
- fair and non-partial
- to give sn. a voice
- to be scrutinised
- bigotted positions
- to expose sth.
- public recognition
- to be part of the mainstream
- a huge boost

