

David Peaty

**SOMETHING  
TO TALK  
ABOUT**

Teacher's book

INCL.

Nelson.

David Peaty

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TO TALK  
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# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1</b> Cars or People?	<b>5</b>
<b>2</b> Noise	<b>7</b>
<b>3</b> Smoking	<b>10</b>
<b>4</b> Slum Clearance	<b>12</b>
<b>5</b> Exams	<b>15</b>
<b>6</b> Women's Liberation	<b>18</b>
<b>7</b> Too much to drink	<b>21</b>
<b>8</b> Salesmen	<b>24</b>
<b>9</b> A New Airport	<b>27</b>
<b>10</b> Pollution	<b>30</b>
<b>11</b> The Strike	<b>33</b>
<b>12</b> Men and Machines	<b>36</b>
<b>13</b> Litter	<b>39</b>
<b>14</b> Nuclear Power	<b>42</b>
<b>15</b> Aid to Developing Countries	<b>45</b>
<b>16</b> The Death Penalty	<b>48</b>
<b>17</b> Child Trespassers	<b>50</b>
<b>18</b> Television	<b>52</b>
<b>19</b> Hotel Fire	<b>55</b>
<b>20</b> Mercy Killing	<b>58</b>

# Introduction

**Something to talk about** aims to help students develop their powers of self-expression through discussion. Each of the twenty units covers a topic of general interest and consists of an outline of the situation, a brief introduction to the interviewees and an edited transcript of each interview.

The outline of the situation and the interviews are recorded on the accompanying cassettes.

## How to use the book and the cassette

- \* Listen to the entire unit and try to understand the general meaning of what each speaker says. You may look at the first page of the unit which gives the outline of the situation and introduces the interviewees, but you must not look at the text.
- \* Listen again to the entire unit and try to understand exactly what each speaker says, *without looking at the text*.
- \* Listen to the first interview again. The teacher will ask you questions to check that you have understood it. Answer the questions without looking at the text.
- \* Listen to each interview in turn, answering the comprehension check questions. *Do not look at the text*.
- \* Read the text and make a note of all the words and phrases which you did not know.
- \* Listen to the entire unit again, without looking at the text.

## Discussion

To prepare for the discussion:

- \* Gather as much information as you can on the topic of the discussion, from newspaper and magazine articles for example, before the class.
- \* Make notes of necessary vocabulary.
- \* Make an outline for your main arguments.

During the discussion:

- \* Don't be hesitant and afraid of making mistakes.
- \* Don't let more articulate students dominate the discussion.
- \* Listen to what other students have to say and try not to interrupt them.
- \* Take plenty of notes. Write down words and phrases in your own language which you are unable to express in English and then check these after the class. Note any unfamiliar structures or new expressions used by the teacher or other students during the discussion.
- \* Remember to address all your opinions and comments to your fellow students, not to the teacher.

**Some useful expressions**

- 1 **Agreement** – I quite agree.  
That's just what I think.  
e.g. A: Taxes are too high.  
B: I quite agree.
- 2 **Disagreement** – I'm afraid I don't agree.  
e.g. A: Studying English is a waste of time.  
B: I'm afraid I don't agree.
- 3 **Polite disagreement** – That may be true, but. . .  
You may be right, but. . .  
e.g. A: Cars are necessary.  
B: That may be true, but they cause so many problems.
- 4 **Strong disagreement** – Rubbish! Nonsense!  
That's ridiculous!  
e.g. A: Jogging is bad for your health.  
B: Rubbish!
- 5 **Disputing facts** – I'm afraid you must be mistaken.  
e.g. A: London is the world's biggest city.  
B: I'm afraid you must be mistaken. Tokyo is bigger than London.
- 6 **Questioning facts** – Are you sure of that?  
– I find that hard to believe.  
e.g. A: America was discovered by the Romans.  
B: Are you sure of that? I thought that Columbus discovered America.

- 7 **Asking for clarification** – What exactly do you mean?  
 – Would you mind explaining that?  
 e.g. A: Journalists are irresponsible.  
 B: What exactly do you mean by 'irresponsible'?
- 8 **Pointing out illogicalities** – Just because ...  
 that doesn't mean ...  
 e.g. A: Smoking isn't harmful. I've been smoking for years and I'm perfectly healthy.  
 B: Just because it hasn't affected you, that doesn't mean it has no effect on other people.
- 9 **Pointing out irrelevance** – That's beside the point.  
 – That has nothing to do with it.  
 e.g. A: You can't be a pilot – you're a woman.  
 B: That's beside the point.
- 10 **Conceding a point** – That's a good point.  
 I hadn't thought of that. I suppose you're right.  
 e.g. A: Teachers are overpaid. They only work a few hours a day.  
 B: In addition to teaching, they have to mark assignments, prepare exams, counsel their students, write reports and study new developments. They have to work very hard.  
 A: That's a good point. I hadn't thought of that.



# Unit 1 **Cars or People?**



## **Outline**

Sharon Bream does her shopping every day in Thornchurch, a busy market town. Yesterday, as she was crossing High Street, she was hit by a car. Now she's in hospital.

## **Characters**

**Sharon Bream**  
**Jack Boardman**  
**Joe Dixon**  
**George Bragge**  
**Lesley Forest**  
**Herbert Rawlins**

the driver of the car which hit Mrs Bream.  
a traffic policeman.

a car salesman.  
an art student.

an employee of Thornchurch town planning department.

**1 Sharon Bream** "The driver was going much too fast. High Street is a shopping centre, not a race course. There are old people and children crossing the road all the time. Cars should not be allowed into the shopping centre. Why should everybody suffer because a few selfish people are too lazy to walk to the shops?"

**2 Jack Boardman** "She stepped straight out in front of me without looking. What could I do? She's lucky to be alive. She should've used the pedestrian crossing. The police should stop people from walking on the road. Roads are for cars, not for people."

**3 Joe Dixon** "Accidents like this happen all the time. When people are shopping, they think about nothing else. They forget about road safety. The drivers are just as bad. They become frustrated with traffic jams and parking problems and get careless and impatient. There's only one way to prevent accidents here, and that's by banning cars from using High Street."

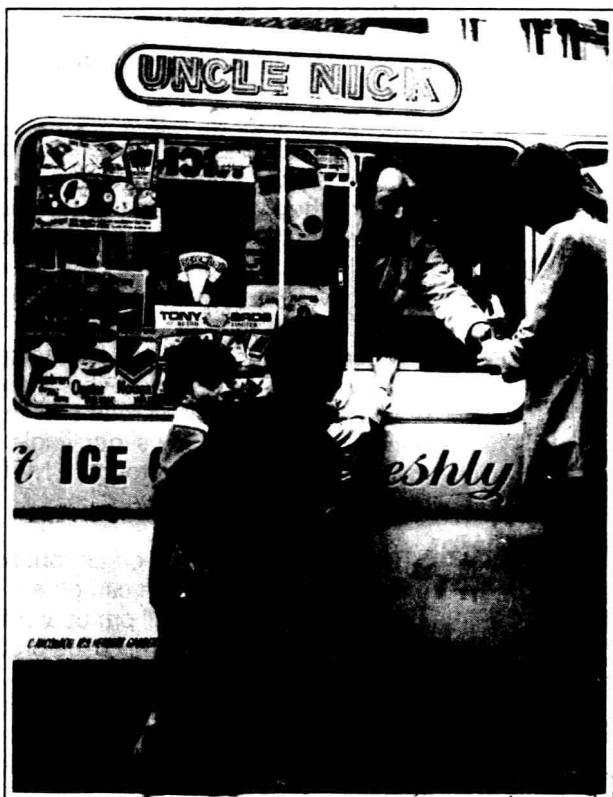
**4 George Bragge** "These days everyone needs a car. It's the cheapest, fastest, most comfortable way to get around. It's especially convenient for shopping. Why wait hours in the rain for crowded buses and struggle with heavy parcels? Go by car. Of course there are traffic problems. That's not because there are too many cars but because there are too few roads. The Government should spend a little of our tax money on widening High Street and building new car parks."

**5 Lesley Forest** "Motorists are so selfish. They only think about their own comfort and forget about the suffering they cause other people. They poison our air with exhaust, shatter our ears with noise and wreck our nerves with dangerous driving. Beautiful old buildings are torn down to make room for car parks and the countryside is scarred with new highways. This society sacrifices too much for the motor car. Who actually benefits? Nobody. Not even the drivers themselves, because they suffer poor health through lack of exercise and nervous tension."

**6 Herbert Rawlins** "This town was built before the age of motor cars, so most of its streets are too narrow for heavy traffic. We

must build a by-pass around Thornchurch in order to divert through-traffic away from the town centre. The situation in High Street calls for a special solution. Up until now, drivers have been allowed to come and go as they please. But every town needs traffic-free areas where people can relax in peace and safety. Parks and shopping centres should be entirely closed to all motor vehicles."

## Unit 2 **Noise**



**Outline** Richard Doe lives in a peaceful suburb. Last week an ice-cream van stopped outside his home for about twenty minutes. It was playing a loud commercial jingle through loudspeakers. Mr Doe complained to the police.

### **Characters**

<b>Richard Doe</b>	the policeman who received the complaint.
<b>Jack Gardner</b>	the driver of the van
<b>Bert Loakes</b>	the owner of a local fruit shop.
<b>Mabel Green</b>	the owner of the ice-cream company which operates the van.
<b>Gordon Bean</b>	
<b>Elaine Ram</b>	a professor involved in the study of noise and its effects on human health.

- 1 Richard Doe** "It was so loud, I couldn't hear my own voice. I had a terrible headache and couldn't sleep at all that night. But the police said they couldn't do anything about it. Why not? Don't I have a right to silence inside my own home? Next time that van comes, I'm going to smash its windows."
- 2 Jack Gardner** "Making a noise isn't a crime and so I can't prevent it. Mr Doe should complain to the ice-cream company; I'm sure they would agree to turn down the volume a little, for the sake of good public relations. If he starts smashing windows I will have to arrest him, however much I sympathize with him."
- 3 Bert Loakes** "Of course we have to make a noise. If we didn't, the kids wouldn't know we were here, and then they wouldn't get their ice-creams. We have to make a living. Everybody knows our jingle – it's one of the most popular sounds in town. If Mr Doe doesn't like it, he can close his windows."
- 4 Mabel Green** "There are plenty of ice-cream shops in town. Anyone who wants an ice-cream can go and buy one from the shop. Why should we all put up with that terrible noise just so a few people can buy ice-creams without going to the shop? What would happen if I sold my fruit the same way? Or all the other shopkeepers? The noise would be unbearable. We'd all go deaf. The ice-cream company's making money at everyone else's expense."
- 5 Gordon Bean** "We're following a very old tradition. For thousands of years merchants have identified themselves with individual noises: bells, whistles, shouts and so on. We've chosen a nice tune which children can remember. Our jingle is one of many natural neighbourhood sounds: for example churchbells, school singing, cheering at football matches and so on. It isn't noisy and it's not unpleasant. If making a noise were a crime, then car horns, washing machines and road drills would all be forbidden."
- 6 Professor Elaine Ram** "Loud noises are painful and cause headaches. Very loud noises, such as the sound of a jet aircraft taking off or a big loudspeaker at full volume, can cause brain damage and nervous diseases, and should be prohi-

bited as far as possible. Causing unnecessary pain is a crime. Does it matter whether the weapon used is a knife or a loudspeaker? The noise made by ice-cream vans could be dangerous to the health of the driver and little children and all the other people that come within close range ..."

## Unit 3 **Smoking**



### **Outline**

Recent medical evidence suggests that smoking causes cancer.

### **Characters**

<b>Maurice Potter</b>	a Member of Parliament.
<b>Peter Stone</b>	a tobacco manufacturer.
<b>Mary Jones</b>	a librarian.
<b>Joanna Wilson</b>	an advertising executive.
<b>Richard Carr</b>	a taxi driver.
<b>William Johnstone</b>	a lawyer.

**1 Maurice  
Potter**

"I propose to ban tobacco. It would be done in three stages. First, tobacco taxes would be sharply increased and tobacco commercials would be banned. Then smoking in public places would be forbidden, and all the tobacco companies would be nationalized by the Government. Finally, all the factories would be closed and the sale of tobacco would be a crime."

**2 Peter Stone**

Let's look at this from an economic point of view. Mr Potter's plan to nationalize the tobacco companies would cost the taxpayers a lot of money. If the factories were closed, all that money would be wasted and thousands of people would lose their jobs. The Government would lose all their tobacco taxes. That's too high a price to pay to make a few non-smokers happy."

**3 Mary Jones**

"Smoking is a very bad habit. It should be banned. Thousands of people die of cancer while the big tobacco companies are spending a fortune on advertising. Money should be spent on improving people's lives instead of ruining them. And smokers are very selfish people. There's a 'no smoking' sign in our library but a lot of people ignore it. How can normal people enjoy reading when their eyes are full of smoke?"

**4 Joanna  
Wilson**

"I smoke about fifty cigarettes a day. I'm not ashamed of it. In my job there's a lot of nervous tension. Smoking helps me to relax. People talk about cancer. Life's full of risks. I might die in a car accident tomorrow. People should enjoy the present instead of worrying about the future."

**5 Richard  
Carr**

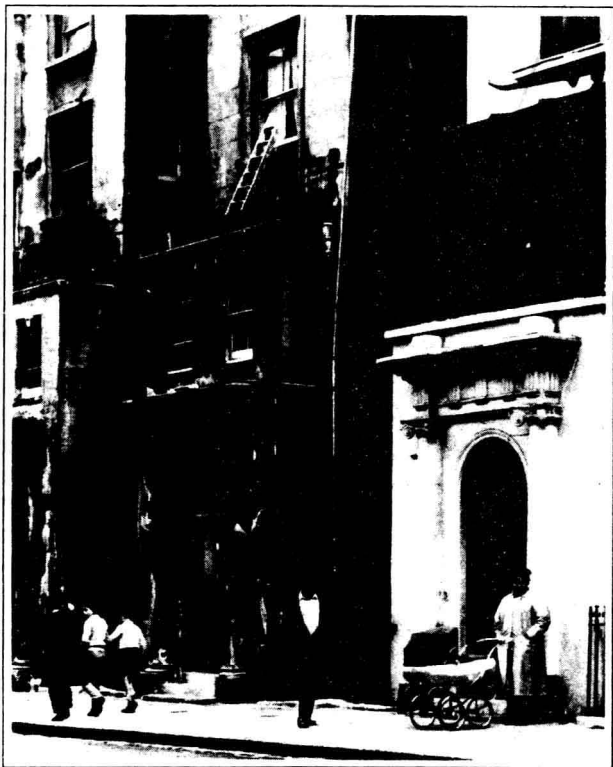
"I gave up smoking last year, but it wasn't easy. It seems I can't refuse a cigarette without making some excuse. Yet most of the smokers I know wish they could give it up. Few of them really enjoy it; they only do it for the image."

**6 William  
Johnstone**

"Doctors say there might be a link between excessive smoking and cancer. They also say overeating causes heart disease and overwork causes stomach ulcers. Will the Government ban eating and working? Of course not. People must be free to make their own decisions. The Government already interferes far too much in our private lives."



## Unit 4 **Slum Clearance**



**Outline** Wilkington is a large country town. It is quite picturesque, and in the summer it attracts many tourists. But not far from the town centre, there is a slum district known as Ashmoor. In this area, several hundred families are crowded together in dirty old houses. The Town Council is planning to pull the houses down and build a number of modern apartment blocks in their place.

### **Characters**

<b>Pauline Robbins</b>	a town councillor
<b>John Summers</b>	a town councillor.
<b>Charles Rush</b>	an architect.
<b>George Wells</b>	a resident of Ashmoor slum district.
<b>Hannah Wilkes</b>	a woman living in a new house near Ashmoor.
<b>Joseph Grey</b>	a police officer.