

CONSIDER *THE* ISSUES

Advanced Listening
and Critical Thinking Skills

Second Edition

Carol Numrich

In Cooperation with National Public Radio®

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Critical Thinking Skills

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Longman 

Consider the Issues: Advanced Listening and Critical Thinking Skills, Second Edition

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INTRODUCTION

Consider the Issues: Advanced Listening and Critical Thinking Skills consists of twelve authentic radio interviews and reports from National Public Radio. The broadcasts were taken from “All Things Considered,” “Weekend All Things Considered,” “Living on Earth,” and “Morning Edition.”

Designed for high-intermediate or advanced students of English as a second language, the text presents an integrated approach to developing listening comprehension and critical thinking skills. By using material produced for the native speaker, the listening selections provide content that is interesting, relevant, and educational. At the same time, it exposes the nonnative speaker to unedited language, including the hesitations, redundancies, and various dialectal patterns that occur in everyday speech.

Each unit presents either a dialogue or a discussion of an issue of international appeal. The students gain an understanding of American values and culture as they develop their listening skills. Throughout each unit, students are encouraged to use the language and concepts presented in the listening material and to reevaluate their point of view.

The second edition of ***Consider the Issues*** offers six new units based on broadcasts about compelling contemporary topics. In addition, a new note-taking feature helps students consolidate the ideas from the broadcast in order to apply them in follow-up activities.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

The exercises are designed to stimulate an interest in the material by drawing on students’ previous knowledge and opinions and by aiding comprehension through vocabulary and guided listening exercises. In a variety of discussion activities, the students finally integrate new information with previously held opinions.

1 Predicting

In this exercise, students are asked to read the title of the interview or report and predict the content of the unit. This exercise should take a very short time, two or three minutes.

Some of the titles require an understanding of vocabulary or idiomatic expressions that the teacher may want to explain to the students. The ideas generated by the students could be written on the chalkboard. Once the students have listened to the interview or report, they can then verify their predictions.

2 Think Ahead

Before listening to the tape, students are asked to discuss the issues to be presented in the interview or report. In groups of four or five, the students discuss their answers to general questions or react to statements that include ideas from the broadcast. The students draw on their own knowledge or experience for this activity. It is likely that students will have different opinions, and the discussion, especially with a verbal class, could become quite lengthy. It is recommended that the teacher limit this discussion to ten or fifteen minutes, so as not to exhaust the subject prior to the listening activities.

3 Vocabulary

In this section, three types of exercises are presented to prepare the students for vocabulary and expressions used in the listening selection.

Vocabulary in a reading text. In these exercises, vocabulary is presented in a reading passage that also introduces some of the ideas from the broadcast. The students should read through the text once for global comprehension. Then, as they reread the text, they match the vocabulary items with synonyms or short definitions. The meaning of the new words may be derived from context clues, from general knowledge of the language, or from the dictionary.

Vocabulary in sentences. In these exercises, vocabulary is presented in sentences that relate to the ideas in the listening selection. Context clues are provided in each sentence. The students should first try to guess the meaning of these words by supplying their own definition or another word that they think has similar meaning. Although the students may not be sure of the exact meaning, they should be encouraged to guess. This will lead them to a better understanding of the new words. Once they have tried to determine the meaning of these words through context, they match the words with definitions or synonyms.

Vocabulary in word groups. These exercises focus on the relationship between specific vocabulary items from the listening selection and other words. A set of three words follows a given vocabulary item; in each set, two words have a similar meaning to the vocabulary item. It is suggested that students work together to discuss what they know about these words. Through these discussions, they will begin to recognize roots and prefixes and how these words relate to each other. The students should be encouraged to use their dictionaries for this exercise.

4 Task Listening

This exercise presents the students with a global comprehension task before asking them to focus on more specific information in the listening selection. The “task” is purposely simple to help students focus on an important point in the recorded material. Consequently, most of the students should be able to answer the questions after the first listening.

5 Listening for Main Ideas

The second time students hear the recorded material, they are given questions or key words to guide them in comprehending the main ideas of the listening selection. Each interview or report has between three and five main ideas used to divide the selection into parts. Each part is introduced by a beep on the tape. The students are asked to write complete statements of the main ideas. The teacher should stop the tape at the sound of the beep to allow the students time to write. The students may then compare their statements to see whether they have understood the relevant information. Only one listening is usually required for this exercise; however, some classes may need to listen twice in order to capture all the information. The teacher may want to ask individual students to write the ideas on the chalkboard. From these statements, the class can discuss the ones that represent the best expression of the main points.

6 Listening for Details

In the third listening, the students are asked to focus on detailed information. They are first asked to read either true-and-false statements or multiple-choice questions. The teacher should clarify any items that the students do not understand. Then each part of the recording is played. The students choose the correct answers as they listen, thus evaluating their comprehension. Finally, in pairs, they compare answers. The teacher should encourage the students to defend their answers based on their comprehension. They should also be encouraged to use the language from the tape to convince the other students of the accuracy of their answers. There will certainly be disagreements over some of the answers; the discussions will help focus attention on the information needed to answer the questions correctly. By listening to each part another time, the students generally recognize this information. Once again, they should be asked to agree on their answers. If there are still misunderstandings, the tape should be played a third time, with the teacher verifying the answers and pointing out where the information is heard on the tape.

7 Looking at Language

In this exercise, an interesting point of language from the recorded material is presented in isolation, as a further aid to comprehension. The students are asked to listen to a segment from the listening selection and to focus on this use of language in context. Then, through discussions and exercises, the students practice the language in a different context. These exercises are not meant to be exhaustive but rather to point out an interesting use of language. The teacher may want to supplement this exercise.

8 Follow-up Activities

In this section, three activities are presented. The teacher may want to choose only one, or perhaps choose one oral and one writing activity. The students should be encouraged to incorporate in their writing and discussions the vocabulary and concepts that were presented in the interview or report. It is expected that the students will synthesize the information gathered from the broadcast with their own opinions.

Discussion questions. In groups, the students discuss their answers to one or more of the questions. Students will most likely have different points of view, and it is during this discussion that they are given the opportunity to present their views to each other.

Composition questions. These questions give the students the opportunity to react in writing to the interview or report.

Interactive processing activities. Each activity begins with an optional listening and note-taking exercise in which the students listen again to the interview or report for important details. By listening with a particular focus, they will be better prepared to complete the final activities. These final activities consist of debates, case studies, roleplays, values clarification exercises, and other activities in which the students must solve problems or develop ideas that recycle the language and concepts in the interviews and reports. During these activities, the students will have an opportunity to creatively examine their beliefs about the issues presented.

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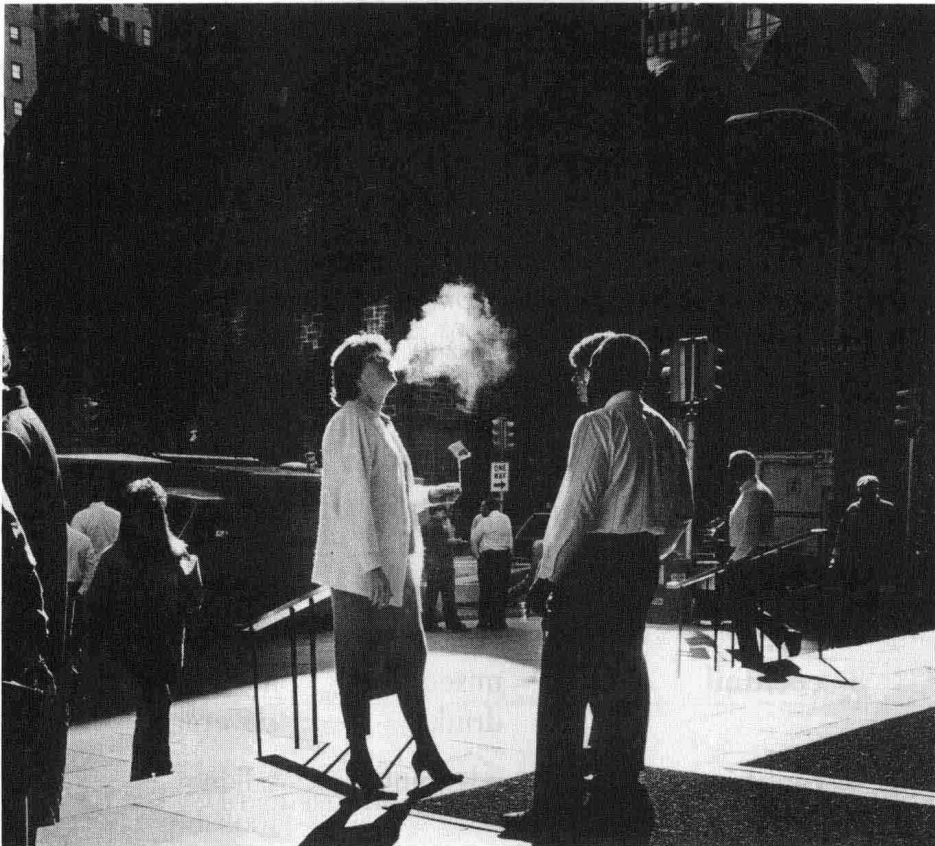
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GIVE ME MY PLACE TO SMOKE!

1



1

PREDICTING

From the title, discuss what you think the interview is about.

2

THINK AHEAD

In groups, discuss your answers to the following questions:

1. Is smoking common in your country? Describe a typical smoker there.
2. Is the number of women smokers increasing in your country? Why or why not?
3. Is smoking permitted in most public places in your country? Where is smoking restricted?

3

VOCABULARY

The following words will help you understand the interview. Try to guess the meaning of these words from your knowledge of English, or use your dictionary. In each set of words, cross out the word that does not have a similar meaning. Then compare your answers with those of another student. Discuss the relationship between the words in each set. The first one has been done for you.

1. secondhand	used	double	old
2. ^(ə) apolitical	politically involved	politically detached	politically disinterested
3. cocktail	mixed drink	alcoholic beverage	after-dinner drink
4. blabbing	gossiping	talking foolishly	lecturing
5. furtively	openly	secretively	covertly
6. cognizant	conscious	intelligent	aware
7. take a drag	puff at	pull	inhale
8. defiance	relief	resistance	refusal
9. inflict	force	impose	soften
10. patrol	guard	patron	police
11. knuckle under	fight	yield	submit

4

TASK LISTENING

Listen to the interview. Find the answer to the following question:

Who is more tolerant of nonsmokers' attitudes, Peggy or Michael?

5

LISTENING FOR MAIN IDEAS

Listen to the interview again. The interview has been divided into five parts, each expressing a main idea. You will hear a beep at the end of each part. Answer the question for each part in a complete sentence. You should have five statements that make a summary of the report. Compare your summary with that of another student.

PART 1 What has changed over the years?

people's attitudes has changed about smoking

PART 2 How has the behavior of smokers changed in people's homes?

Don't want others to smoke in people's homes

PART 3 How have the smoking habits of smokers changed?

More cigarettes

PART 4 In what situations do the smokers feel defiant?

when

PART 5 How do Michael and Peggy react differently toward people's feelings about smoking?

6

LISTENING FOR DETAILS

*Read the statements for Part 1. Then listen to Part 1 again and decide whether the statements are true or false. As you listen, write **T** or **F** next to each statement. Compare your answers with those of another student. If you disagree, listen again to Part 1.*

PART 1

- ~~F~~ 1. Peggy has smoked for over thirty-five years.
- T 2. Peggy and Michael feel comfortable smoking in their neighborhood bar in Washington, D.C.
- T 3. The EPA¹ report on secondhand smoke² will restrict smoking in public places.
- ~~F~~ 4. Peggy used to give more thought to her smoking thirty-five years ago.
- ~~F~~ 5. Peggy thinks the nonsmoking movement is political.
- ~~F~~ 6. Peggy thinks today's attitude toward smoking is similar to other attitudes toward freedom.

Repeat the same procedure for Parts 2–5.

PART 2

- ~~T~~ 7. Fifteen years ago, people offered you an ashtray when you went to their house.
- ~~F~~ 8. Today, Michael finds it awkward to ask for an ashtray.

¹ *Environmental Protection Agency*: This means that the report was government funded.

² *secondhand smoke*: smoke, exhaled by a smoker, that is inhaled by another person

- ___ 9. People used to drink, smoke, and talk at the same time at parties.
- ___ 10. Smokers at parties now have to stand at the window or outside the house to smoke.

PART 3

- ___ 11. Peggy never lights up a cigarette in someone's office or home.
- ___ 12. Michael now blows his smoke straight into the group of people he's with.
- ___ 13. Michael looks like a factory when he smokes.

PART 4

- ___ 14. Michael has sometimes felt a desire to inflict his habit on others.
- ___ 15. Michael feels defiant when someone doesn't want him to smoke in a smoking area.
- ___ 16. Michael understood that the man behind him was really uncomfortable with his smoking.
- ___ 17. Peggy feels defiant toward anyone who wants to judge her behavior.

PART 5

- ___ 18. Michael can understand people who don't want to be around smoke.
- ___ 19. Michael lives according to the antismoking rules.
- ___ 20. Peggy would only consider going to restaurants that don't allow smoking.
- ___ 21. Peggy feels smokers should be given equity.

7

LOOKING AT LANGUAGE

PRESENT PERFECT, PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS, AND SIMPLE PAST

Listen to the following statements from the interview. They describe events that started in the past and continued into the present.

Present perfect continuous:

My name is Michael, and ***I've been smoking*** for fifteen years.

My name's Peggy, and ***I've been smoking*** for probably thirty to thirty-five years.

Present perfect:

I've developed a whole body language about smoking in groups and in places where it is permissible to smoke.

I've never felt a desire to inflict my habit on someone else.

The verb forms used in these sentences are the present perfect continuous and present perfect. Unlike the past tense, which describes a completed action at a specific time in the past, these tenses are used to describe a state, activity, or repeated action that began in the past and continues into the present time.

Sometimes, however, a present perfect action is finished. By using the present perfect tense, the result of the action is emphasized.

Although the two tenses can often be used interchangeably, the present perfect continuous is often used when the continuation of an action is stressed. It often shows that an activity or state ~~is~~ unfinished.

Notice the form of the present perfect continuous and the present perfect:

Present perfect continuous:

have + been + (verb) -ing

Present perfect:

have + past participle

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

■ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In groups, discuss your answers to the following questions:

1. Should cigarette smoking be permitted in public places? If so, in which places?
2. Do you think smoking will eventually be made illegal? Are the smoking restrictions in the United States a sign of what will happen in other countries, or are Americans unique in their current reaction to smoking?
3. Do you think tobacco should be classified as a drug?

■ COMPOSITION TOPICS

Choose one of the following topics:

1. Should smokers have the right to smoke in public, and if so, should there be any limits? Write an essay in which you express your opinion.
2. Peggy suggests that there are more “freedoms” that are being limited today in addition to smoking. Do you agree with her? Write an essay in which you discuss those freedoms that are being limited in today’s society.