

# Exploring NEWSPAPERS

SELF-STUDY  
EDITION

## A case for smokeless

WHEN tobacco clouds from the pipe of a pensive draughtsman activated the smoke detection system in an office of a giant multinational company recently, fire appliances were dispatched from three neighbouring authorities to deal with the imagined danger.

There are those who would argue that in the interests of public health such sensitive detectors might be linked instead to the laboratories of local hospitals, where the far from imaginary perils of nicotine could be monitored.

While medical research has conclusively identified tobacco as a threat to the smoker's own health, the dangers to innocent bystanders of what might be called nicotine fallout have yet to be proved beyond doubt. This has not prevented unilateralists calling for the banning of smoking in an increasing number of offices.

### Nicotine traps

David Simpson, a director of Ash, the anti-tobacco group, says that unsolicited inquiries from the public about workplace policies on smoking are growing apace. 'In the past six months a lot more calls have been coming from the employers' side,' he pointed out.

Indeed, so impressed have he and his colleagues been by this phenomenon that they are planning to set up a management consultancy to advise large companies on formulating no-smoking policies.

Staff in the Normair Garrett product support division at Bournemouth Airport were by enough to welcome the introduction of a no-smoking rule for their newly-opened accommodation, says personnel manager Bralley.

The company manufacturers air conditioning systems for aircraft and employees see at and the nicotine trapped in valves back for service. 'It looks like solid of treacle,' said Mr. Bralley, who mented the new regime. 'Too many employers seem more d with the wellbeing of their staff than of the smokers, ignore the smokers.'

### OFFICE LIFE

ALAN ROAD reports on the new moves to ban smoking in Britain's offices.



they have installed a mainframe computer and readily enforce a smoking ban there.

Nor are trade unions above criticism. One has threatened legal action against a secretary who collated photographic evidence of the nuisance and danger caused by smokers in the office.

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# Exploring Newspapers

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David J. Walker



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*To my parents, with love*

## Foreword

This book has its origins in the *Observer* EFL Service – later the Language Sector News Service – and many of the articles first appeared as part of the monthly packs of language materials distributed to subscribers. For this publication the worksheets have been considerably revised to include a wider range of activities. Notes and suggestions for exploiting the material have also been expanded and are included in the Self-Study edition.



# Introduction

## Who is the book for?

**Exploring Newspapers** is designed for students who have covered the groundwork of English grammar and syntax and who have a vocabulary which enables them to understand everyday conversations and read straightforward texts. It is, in other words, for students who have reached the 'intermediate' plateau and who now need to broaden their horizons.

## What does it consist of?

The book consists of a selection of texts – both news reports and feature articles – taken from the British national press. These are accompanied by a variety of exercises and activities which exploit the material and provide opportunities for language practice. There are 40 units altogether, plus two quizzes – one at the half-way stage and one at the end.

## What kind of topics?

The texts cover a wide range of topics, from fast food to keeping fit, from selling umbrellas in London to cycling holidays in France. In addition, there are a number of human-interest stories as well as articles which touch on issues of social concern. News reports of political events have not been included, however, since they tend quickly to lose their topical interest and become unrealistic for use as working texts.

## What kind of language activities?

The accompanying language activities range from comprehension and vocabulary questions, through grammar and gap-fill exercises, to role-plays, discussions and suggestions for written work. The texts are interspersed with a series of matching exercises and jumbled cartoons – less demanding activities, which provide light relief.

## How authentic are the texts?

The texts are completely authentic and have been reprinted from British newspapers unaltered for this book, apart from some updating of points of detail, such as prices. The articles and reports thus inevitably contain some challenging vocabulary at times, but they are mostly written in a direct and accessible style.

## How are the units arranged?

The units may be done in any order but, for convenience, the slightly easier ones are placed at the beginning of the book and the more demanding ones at the end. The total ability range is not wide, however, and subject matter and exercise type may be a more practical and fruitful basis for selection. These can be readily referred to in the three indexes at the back.

## What can students expect to gain from the book?

By exploring, with the help of the language activities, the range of newspaper texts presented in this book, students can expect to develop their English in a number of ways. They should achieve greater fluency in reading, broaden their vocabulary and understanding, and expand their means of

expression, both in speaking and writing. They should also gain an insight into different styles of journalistic writing and, as a result, be able to approach with greater confidence the reading of newspapers and magazines in English.

### **Classroom use or private study?**

The book is primarily intended for use in the classroom, many of the language activities being best performed in the context of discussion and the exchange of ideas. However, students working alone or with a private teacher will find much of practical linguistic value in the texts and the accompanying exercises, even if some of the activities, such as the role-plays and discussions, are precluded. The Self-Study edition contains general notes on the various exercise types as well as complete answers to all the questions and exercises. Practical teaching suggestions for exploiting each of the units are also given.

# Note to the Student

As a general rule, try to read the text of each unit right through once, to get an overall idea of the content, before attempting to answer the detailed comprehension and vocabulary questions.

When answering the comprehension questions, try to avoid copying out sentences directly from the text. This does not really show how much you have understood, and will often miss the particular point of the question. Use the structure (especially the tense) of the question to frame your answer, but try to give the information in your own words. Remember that lengthy answers sometimes hide more than they reveal: short answers are often the best!

A number of the exercises refer to the use of a dictionary. You will find a good English–English dictionary not only useful for these particular activities, but also an invaluable companion as you read and work on the texts. As a general rule, however, try to deduce the meaning of a new word from its context before looking it up. Confirm (or, perhaps, correct) your impression by using the dictionary, and note other examples of the use of the word, as well as its definition. Check the pronunciation, too, and the position of the stress, if there is one.

I hope that, whether working with a group or studying privately, you will find this book useful in developing and expanding your English, and that you will enjoy using it. I hope, too, that you will realise that newspaper articles are not always quite as difficult as they may at first appear, and that you will be stimulated to explore for yourself the wide variety of newspapers and periodicals that are published in English.



# General Notes for the Teacher

While it is hoped that the following general notes will be of some help and interest to all teachers using this book, they have been written with the less experienced teacher particularly in mind. They should, of course, be read in conjunction with the more detailed notes on each unit.

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## A 'Special' Units

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### 1 Matching Headlines

There are three Matching Headlines units, all involving items of news-in-brief and two-word headlines. Even headlines as comparatively simple as these show some of the techniques of the sub-editor – the blocking of nouns and the use of the pun, for example – and help to prepare students for the more demanding types of headline encountered in all shades of the British press.

### 2 Matching Titles

These units require some careful reading of the texts as well as interpreting of the titles, but they are not difficult and can be used as light relief or 'fillers'. If time permits they could lead to discussions on television, radio and the cinema.

### 3 Cartoons

If possible, make photocopies of the cartoon, cut up the individual pictures and distribute to students in pairs. The students have half the pictures each and should then describe what they have to their partner, including reading out the text in the 'bubbles'. This is rather more difficult than simply laying the pictures down and moving them around, but it is more productive of language. Otherwise you find that students simply practise saying 'This one goes here' and 'That one goes there!' Don't forget to include the numbers, or else write them on the back.

### 4 Quizzes

It is not necessary to have covered all the units in class to do the quizzes. The unit numbers from which the questions are taken are given with the answers and so teachers can easily select questions relating to units that have been covered.

However, as the quizzes are not designed as memory tests – the information asked for is deliberately obscure – but rather as scanning exercises, the fact that a unit has not been covered need not preclude a question about it being asked: students can use the Contents List to try and identify the source – another scanning exercise en route! The most difficult questions to identify are those taken from the Headlines and Titles matching exercises, but teachers can guide appropriately or give page references in these cases.

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## B General Language Activities

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There are notes and suggestions for most of the exercises and activities in the Teacher's Notes for each unit. If there are no notes for a particular exercise, it means that the exercise either is self-explanatory, or has clear instructions on the student pages.

## 1 Comprehension Questions

These are of various kinds, but they are not generally intended to be exercises in language manipulation, e.g. *The fire was caused by an electrical fault.* Question: *What caused the fire?* Their purpose is to help students towards a fuller and clearer understanding of the text – sometimes by asking about the general ideas or views being expressed, at other times by focusing attention on points of detail or the meaning that lies behind the words. If a text is straightforward, with little in the way of unusual syntax or indirectness of expression, there may be only a handful of questions, or sometimes none at all. In these cases the text is exploited in other ways – perhaps by using it as the basis for a role-play or as the starting point for a discussion.

Students should generally be encouraged and, if necessary, helped, to deduce meaning wherever possible. If you have doubts about using a text because you think the class may find it too difficult, try getting them to read the questions through first. This will often give students an overall feel of the content of the passage as well as provide them with key points to look for.

Students should always try to answer questions using their own words as far as possible. Copying out sentences wholesale from the text tends to make genuine comprehension difficult to assess, since it will often miss the particular focus of the question. Encourage students, however, to use the structure and tense of the question as a grammatical framework for their answer.

## 2 Vocabulary

In the vocabulary exercises, the selected words are those which the average intermediate student is unlikely to have come across but which have a certain frequency and are therefore of some practical value. This does not always mean that they should become part of their active vocabulary, but that students should at least add them to their stock of 'passive' words. Esoteric words which are not fundamental to the overall understanding of the text have not been included in the exercises. These can be ignored, guessed at or looked up by students at will.

## 3 Role-plays

There are eight set role-plays contained in the units. In the interview-type ones (Units 12, 17, 21, 25 and 28), begin by dividing the class into two groups, interviewers and interviewees, keeping them separate as far as possible at this stage.

The interviewers should prepare a list of questions, based on the information contained in the text. They can work in pairs or small groups and pool their ideas.

At the same time, the interviewees can study the text and prepare to be questioned. They should try to absorb the main facts and memorise them as far as possible. They, too, can work together, discussing any doubtful points, and test each other informally. Stress that they will not be able to look at the text during the role-play (this concentrates the mind wonderfully).

This preparation time (allow about 20–25 minutes) provides an invaluable opportunity for you to monitor students' progress and answer any queries. You should, of course, check that the interviewers' questions are accurately phrased and also that they are capable of being answered!

For the role-play itself, the students come together in pairs (they should not, ideally, know until this point who their opposite number is going to be). Encourage the interviewers to listen to the answers and to ask follow-up questions where appropriate – not just go through their list of questions! Interviewees should answer as freely and spontaneously as possible, and not refer to the text (brief notes of their own would be a compromise, but far better without). If students get stuck, they can always make up a (reasonable) answer. The interviewers should also be prepared to help out, by rephrasing the question, suggesting the answer, or moving on to another question.

In this kind of simultaneous role-play, monitoring everyone obviously becomes a problem, but, if possible, record one or two of the interviews on a cassette and play back to the class for general

feedback and follow-up. It adds greatly to the atmosphere of the recording and to students' performance if you record a brief sentence to set the scene, e.g. '*... and now we go over to our studio in London, where our reporter, 'X', is waiting to interview Mr 'Y'.*' Alternatively, get one or two pairs to perform in front of the class; monitor, and give appropriate feedback.

A number of the suggestions outlined above also apply to the other three role-plays (Units 4, 6 and 35), but more specific notes can be found in the Teaching Notes to these units.

#### **4 Discussions and Talking Points**

During these speaking activities, encourage students to use any relevant new vocabulary and phrases encountered in the unit, perhaps by writing them on the board. In order to give more people a chance to contribute, a large class could divide into groups, each under its own chairperson; there could then be a general feedback session at the end. Further ideas for class discussions can be found in the 'warm-up' notes for each unit.

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### **C Pair- and Group-work**

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Many of the suggested exercises and activities lend themselves to students working together in class. Students can obviously gain much in this way, since they work in the language while in the process of exploring it and thus gain in confidence and fluency. Remember, however, that students need feedback, and that they do actually like to be taught from time to time! They need and like to improve their accuracy – in pronunciation and intonation as well as in structural usage and vocabulary – and they cannot expect (nor do they always particularly want) to get this from their peers. So, monitor groups as closely as possible and allow suitable time for feedback sessions.

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### **D Headlines and Predicting**

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Headlines in newspapers are designed to be eye-catching. This often involves an unusual or striking use of language, with the result that a headline may be more puzzling than informative – for native speakers as much as for the foreign learner. For this reason headlines are not always suitable for 'predicting' activities. They are often understood only after reading the article, when the play on words or special use of language becomes apparent and the sub-editor's wit can be appreciated.

The 'clever' headline is a feature of all shades of the British press and a number of examples are to be found in the units; attention is drawn to them in the Teaching Notes. Note that sometimes they form the basis of a comprehension question (after the passage has been read!).

Other headlines are more straightforward. Some, indeed, are quite long, reflecting the original layout of the article – maybe over a number of columns or across the top of a picture. These may well provide the opportunity for a prediction exercise, something which is left to the discretion of the teacher. However, as suggested above, care should be taken to avoid implying that the content of newspaper articles can always be deduced by studying the headlines.

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### **E Warm-ups**

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As headlines themselves do not always provide a suitable lead-in to an article, ideas for introducing the lesson from 'cold' can be found in the warm-up paragraphs at the beginning of the Teaching Notes



to each unit. These are simply suggestions, and teachers may well find they can integrate some of the units into current class topics or themes. The warm-up period should be kept quite brief – it's only supposed to be an appetizer!

### **Note**

In the Teaching Notes which accompany each unit in this Self-Study edition, I have tried to take into consideration the needs of the non-native teacher and the student working alone as well as the native teacher. For this reason, I have included explanations of some cultural and other references contained in the texts, including headlines, which might otherwise be obscure. By the same token, the suggestions in the warm-up notes and some of the discussions are given as much for the language they contain as for the ideas themselves, which claim no special originality.

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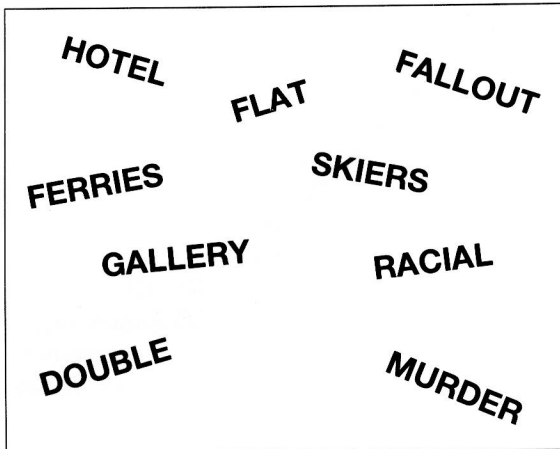
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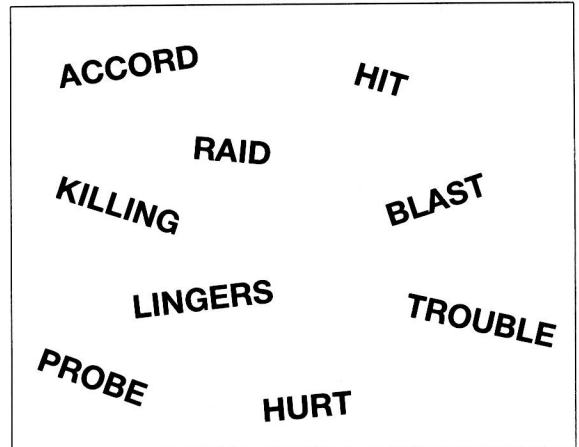
## Matching Headlines

Each of the nine news stories printed below should have a two-word headline – a word from Group A followed by a word from Group B. Study the news stories and then write the appropriate headline above each one, as in the example.

A



B



### RACIAL ACCORD

**Black and white leaders in South Africa agreed a blueprint for power-sharing talks.**

1

Sheffield police are hunting the killer of Tina Marie Fletcher, 19, whose body was found at a flat near the city centre.

2

Three Post-Impressionist paintings worth £70,000 by Adrien, Foubert and Marchand were stolen from an art gallery in the West End of London.

3

Two cable cars at the French Alps ski resort of Les Orres fell 40ft, injuring 31 people, after the top of a pylon broke.

4

Brittany Ferries cancelled services for St Malo and Caen after strikes threats by French seamen.

5

Radiation at more than twice the recommended safety limit still affects 288,000 sheep on 407 Welsh farms, more than five years after the Chernobyl disaster.

6

A John Major lookalike, who tricked a nine-year-old Malvern girl of £32, was being sought by police.

7

At least three people were killed and 20 injured when an explosion believed to have been caused by gas tore through a hotel at Garmisch-Partenkirchen, a ski resort in the Bavarian Alps.

8

Detectives investigating the death of British seaman David Moon, 37, aboard ship off Brunei, fly to the Gulf today.

9



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3 Zombie on the road	A short piece about the tiring effects of driving long distances on motorways	Matching exercise, vocabulary,* discussion*	5
4 Some people love it – some people don't!	Three prominent people describe their attitudes to keeping fit	Matching exercise, grammar,* pronunciation, pair work, role-play, dialogue, writing activity	6
5 110-year-old tourist	Britain's oldest man leaves his home in Wales to visit London for the first time	Comprehension (memory test), vocabulary, project, general knowledge	9
9 Jailed umbrella man refused to fold up his brollies and go	A news report about a London street trader who gets into trouble with the police	Comprehension, vocabulary, writing activity, pair work,* role-play	11
7 Sayings of the famous	Remarks and observations by famous people	Matching exercise, speaking activity, writing activity	13
8 Get to work on a summer job	An article about the different kinds of summer jobs available to young people	Scanning exercise, vocabulary, talking points, speaking activity, writing activity	15
9 'Brain trains' give commuters chance to learn Japanese	A short article about study classes on British Rail trains	Comprehension (memory test), talking points	19

10	<b>Cartoon</b>			21
11	<b>The Great Hurricane (1): battle against the disaster in the night</b>	A brief account of the damage caused in the UK by the Great Storm of October 1987	Matching vocabulary (passive forms), comprehension,* scanning exercise*	22
12	<b>The Great Hurricane (2): nearest to nuclear war</b>	One man's experience of the days immediately following the Great Storm – a follow-up to the previous article	Comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, role-play	24
13	<b>Matching Titles: TV programmes</b>			27
14	<b>Why the stars of rock who sing of their pain might actually mean it</b>	The problems faced by rock singers in preserving their voices	Comprehension, vocabulary, pronunciation, writing activity	28
15	<b>Soothe away care</b>	The writer describes her experience of staying at a traditional Japanese inn, a 'ryokan'	Comprehension, vocabulary, speaking activity, writing activity	30
16	<b>Fishy tale that spans the Atlantic</b>	A short piece about a mysterious metal tag found on a Scottish island	Jumbled paragraphs	33
17	<b>Memoirs of a secretary . . .</b>	An old lady in her nineties recalls her life as a secretary in the early years of the century	Comprehension, mathematical questions, vocabulary, role-play	35
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19	<b>On foot to the roof of the world</b>	A travel article about trekking in Nepal	Vocabulary (gap-fill exercise), pronunciation	39
20	<b>Chairborne aces of the hard court</b>	An article about how the rules of tennis have been successfully adapted for wheelchair players	Comprehension, vocabulary, negative prefixes, numbers	42
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21	<b>Triumph of kidnap Jenny</b>	The story of the kidnapping, and eventual release, of Mrs Jennifer Guinness, a member of the famous Guinness family	Vocabulary and comprehension, role-play	47



22	<b>Dry days on the lake</b>	A travel feature about canoeing on one of Ontario's many lakes	Memory exercise (multiple choice), comprehension, vocabulary, writing activity	50
23	<b>Cartoon</b>			53
24	<b>Drugs gang held after £51 million cocaine seizure</b>	A news item about how alert Customs officers caught an international drugs gang	Vocabulary (gap-fill exercise), comprehension, grammar	54
25	<b>Pat takes good care of them</b>	An article about an airline stewardess who has become involved with helping poor children at an orphanage in Bangladesh	Vocabulary, structure, role-play	57
26	<b>A case for smokeless zones</b>	A fairly serious article about the dangers of 'passive smoking'	Comprehension, vocabulary, discussion	60
27	<b>Matching Titles: radio programmes</b>			64
28	<b>Wheels of fortune</b>	A short article about a successful business idea: cycling holidays in France	Comprehension, vocabulary, role-play, writing activity	65
29	<b>Red Arrows jet crashes into row of houses</b>	A short news story about an accident in the air	Comprehension, grammar writing activity	67
30	<b>Deep in domesticity</b>	A humorous article by one of the best-known weekly columnists in Britain today	Vocabulary (multiple choice), discussion	70
31	<b>Garden cities hit the heights</b>	An article about a revolutionary kind of skyscraper	Comprehension, vocabulary, talking points, speaking activity	73
32	<b>Teaching scientists to see with the eyes of a journalist</b>	A scientist discovers the art of reporting on science by becoming, for a few weeks, a journalist himself	Comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, writing and speaking activities	76
33	<b>Wizard Wilsons lift Blues</b>	A brief report of a first division football match	Comprehension, talking about football, dialogue	80