

### 1.29 Lesson 4A, Exercise 2

Most British teenagers aren't very interested in politics. Very few have taken part in a demonstration or written a letter of protest, let alone joined a political party. But with the advent of the Internet, a new way of launching a campaign or influencing government policy has emerged: e-petitions. Any British citizen can start a petition on the British government website. If more than 100,000 people sign the petition, it could be debated in the House of Commons. Recent popular petitions have called for a referendum on British membership of the EU, or demanded action to tackle problems like drug addiction and homelessness. But could a petition ever lead the Government to actually change the law? Or is it just a cynical way for the Government to gauge public opinion or, worse, to fool voters into thinking that the Government is actually listening to them? Time will tell.

## 1.30 Lesson 4A, Exercises 4 and 5

1

I'm old enough to marry, have children, work, own a house, join the army – which could mean dying for my country – but I'm not old enough to vote. I think we need to reform the electoral system so that anyone over the age of sixteen can vote in a general election. The government spends a lot of money on education, but school students have no say in how that money is spent. I think we should. Many teenagers have thought about things and have opinions on how politicians should tackle the important issues. People sometimes say we aren't responsible enough and wouldn't take it seriously. But a lot of young people get involved in single-issue politics, like animals rights and so on. And if you gave them the vote, they'd take the trouble to find out what the other more general issues are.

2

Imagine what it would be like if you couldn't vote at all! Many young people in the West can't imagine what that would be like. Being female, I think it's especially important to vote. It took a long time before women were allowed into politics – which, frankly, I think is shocking – and there are still countries in the world where women can't vote. So if you want to change the world, you have to use your vote. Otherwise we may lose our freedoms and end up living under a dictatorship. There are so many countries where you can't vote, where your opinion doesn't count. OK, so politicians here sometimes don't listen, but you have to appreciate the political system that we have. We should value our democracy and not take it for granted. And remember, democracy only works if people take part. When I'm eighteen next year, I'll be first at the polling station!

3

I just switch off when I hear politicians droning on on the telly. I don't know who's left-wing or who's right-wing. I'm not even sure I know the name of the Prime Minister. And I probably wouldn't remember to vote even if the Government passed a law allowing me to at sixteen. I think a lot of teens just wouldn't bother to vote. They aren't interested in politics. They think it's boring and that it doesn't affect them. None of my friends have taken part in a demonstration or even signed a petition. And also, it seems that those

people at school who are interested in politics just have the same political opinions as their parents. If they are going to get into politics and stand for public office, they need to think for themselves. Having said all that, maybe when I'm eighteen and able to vote, I'll change my mind.

4

It seems to me that whether people vote or not, things never change. All political parties seem interchangeable and say the same things. I don't think politicians pay any attention to what the general public think about government policy. They are far more interested in arguing amongst themselves. They just say what people want to hear when they want the public's votes in order to get elected. But when they're in government they're not interested in public opinion any more. When I get the vote, I hope someone different will come along with a new attitude and new approach to politics. I'm not sure I'll care if they're left-wing or right-wing, as long as I can believe that they mean what they say. My mum says that not all politicians are the same and that I should take an interest in politics. Perhaps she's right.

5

I admire people who go into politics and put themselves up for election. They mostly do it because they want to change things and make things better. I don't think they're in it for the money or the fame. Having said that, I'm pretty fed up with politics in general. I think the main problem is the electoral system. We don't have proportional representation in this country, so the political party that wins isn't necessarily the one that gets the most votes in the general election. That's why I think a lot of people have become disillusioned with mainstream politics and get involved with single-issue politics, like climate change, gun control, things like that.

### 1.31 Lesson 4B, Exercise 1

- Boy** Hey, Sandy! Move it! Hurry up! Grab a placard and some water. Chances are we'll be out all day.
- Sandy** OK. Where are we off to?
- Boy** The university library. Thousands of students will be heading there right now. Hurry!
- Sandy** OK, OK. Blimey, there are loads of us! People must be wondering what's going on.
- Boy** That's the idea! Come on!
- Sandy** What's the plan, then?
- Boy** Well, at least a hundred students are likely to occupy the library. The rest of us could march to the Town Hall, or it might be better to stay in the centre of town to protest there. Either way, people are bound to sit up and take notice.
- Group** No to student fees! No to student fees!
- Boy** And the TV cameras should be here today as well! The Government can't ignore us any longer. Come on! No to student fees! No to student fees!

### 1.32 Lesson 4C, Exercise 3

#### Northern Ireland

When Ireland gained its independence in 1922, the North, where two thirds of the population were Protestants, remained part of the UK. For decades after, the minority Catholic population in the North felt badly treated. They were less well off and were often excluded from public office. Most of them wanted an end to British rule in Northern Ireland.

In the 1960s, some Protestants reacted violently to Catholic demands for equality and civil rights, and police used force to break up Catholic demonstrations. Rioting and civil unrest followed, and in 1969, the British Army was sent in to restore law and order. Catholic and Protestant paramilitary groups started planting bombs and murdering people, claiming that they were 'protecting their communities'. One of these groups, the Provisional IRA (Irish Republican Army), wanted Ireland to be united again and started killing British soldiers. The British government acknowledged the Catholics' grievances, but insisted that Northern Ireland would remain part of the UK as long as that was what the majority of its people wanted.

The British government was unable to stop the violence, which lasted for nearly 30 years. This period saw a number of failed peace initiatives, an attempt by the IRA in 1985 to murder Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and the deaths of over 3,500 people, including 1,100 British soldiers.

But people in both communities were tiring of the spiral of violence, and in 1998, the IRA agreed to give up its armed struggle and seek to achieve its goal by peaceful means. Northern Ireland is still part of the UK, but now has its own government made up of Catholics and Protestants.

### 1.33 Lesson 4C, Exercises 6 and 7

**William** I remember going on Protestant marches when I was a little kid, and watching the bands and waving a Union Jack. It was a lot of fun. My grandad, who died a few years back, was a police officer and so was my uncle. But he was killed back in the 80s by Republican terrorists. That was a terrible time for my mum and dad. My parents think that Northern Ireland should remain part of the UK, and I'm of the same opinion. But you know, as I grew up I realised that the labels we give each other do a lot of harm. I can see now that dividing people into those who want Ireland to be united and those who want Northern Ireland to stay part of the UK isn't helpful. It divides the two communities and stops us from getting to know and understand each other. I've decided that I don't want to be part of religious intolerance any more. We need to break out of the mindset where we view people from the other community as the enemy. It isn't easy, though, and it'll take a long time.

**Niamh** I'm glad that the IRA have given up their weapons because you get nowhere by shooting and bombing. But I come from a nationalist family, and I'd like to see a united Ireland. The island of Ireland should never have been divided into two parts. But I think we should try to achieve reunification by peaceful means. The other thing that really needs to change in Northern Ireland is the education system, because most Protestants and Catholics go to separate schools. They don't mix. About nine out of ten children in Northern Ireland go to faith schools. You can spend your entire childhood without having

a conversation with someone from the other faith community. Until that changes it'll be very difficult to heal the divisions in our society. I'm going to send my kids to an integrated school – one that both Protestants and Catholics go to – for sure.

### 2.02 Lesson 4D, Exercise 2

Freedom of speech and information – how much should we have?

#### Simon Wilson – libertarian

We libertarians believe that the Government should interfere in people's lives as little as possible. That means that people's right to free speech should not be restricted by law unless what they are saying is certain to incite violence. I believe that extreme right-wing or left-wing views and extreme religious views should all be allowed, even though most people find them abhorrent. This is the essence of a free society. Extreme views should be expressed and challenged. That is the only way to defeat them.

#### Jason Romford – comedian

It's difficult to be polite in comedy because you're usually making fun of people. So you're bound to offend somebody at some point. But just because somebody is offended, doesn't mean they're right. I believe that I have the right to offend you, and if you're offended, that's not a problem. That doesn't mean that I try to be offensive; I don't. I try to be funny, I try to be honest and I try to make people think. If someone feels offended at something I say, that's too bad. That's their problem.

#### Jane Simmons – politician

Governments have the right to censor information and restrict free speech in the interests of national security, for preserving public safety, or for the prevention of disorder or crime. For example, it's a crime to incite people to carry out acts of terrorism. Most people agree that this is sensible. However, there is a danger that governments will use 'the defence of national security' as an excuse to silence legitimate protests and stifle opposition to their policies. It's important therefore that people are able to challenge the limits of free speech in a court of law.

#### Peter Greenwood – civil rights activist

There's a danger that people can use free speech to undermine the human rights of others. Liberalism is a good thing, but we should limit people's rights to express racist, sexist, ageist or homophobic views. There are lessons we must learn from history. If there had been no free speech for the Nazi party in Germany during the early 20s, it is possible that fascism may not have grown in power and influence. The lesson is: be intolerant of intolerance.

#### Sarah Matthews – online activist

I contribute to a website called Wikileaks, where anonymous volunteers leak confidential government information or hack into government computer files worldwide and put them on the Internet. Governments say our actions are dangerous. I think they just want to conceal their wrongdoings from us. I want to expose the truth. People have the right to know everything that their government is doing. I'm absolutely opposed to censorship of the press.

#### Annie Thatcher – journalist

The press must not invade people's privacy, nor can it say things which hurt a person's reputation without clear evidence that they are true. But is it fair to investigate the private lives of public figures? Journalists tend to justify their intrusion into the lives of famous people by claiming that certain information is 'in the public interest' – as opposed to something the public is interested in. For example, they argue, if the captain of the England football team is having an affair, then the public should know about it, as he is in a position of authority and respect and a role model for young boys. Ultimately, though, some of the press will print anything that sells newspapers – if they can get away with it.

### 2.03 Lesson 4D, Exercise 7

#### *Imagine*

Imagine there's no heaven.

It's easy if you try.

No hell below us,

Above us only sky.

Imagine all the people living for today.

Imagine there's no countries.

It isn't hard to do.

Nothing to kill or die for

And no religion too.

Imagine all the people living life in peace.

You may say

I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one.

I hope some day you'll join us

And the world will live as one.

Imagine no possessions.

I wonder if you can.

No need for greed or hunger,

A brotherhood of man.

Imagine all the people sharing all the world.

You may say

I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one.

I hope some day you'll join us

And the world will live as one.

### 2.04 Lesson 4E, Exercises 6 and 7

- Dad** Hello, Sam.
- Sam** Oh, Dad. Where are you? It's five o'clock.  
You were supposed to be here hours ago.
- Dad** I'm still on the train.
- Sam** Oh, no. Really?
- Dad** Yes, the train was 40 minutes late, then we  
were delayed for two hours outside Leeds.
- Sam** Oh, dear. I'm really sorry.
- Dad** Anyway, we'll be arriving in Birmingham  
soon.
- Sam** Birmingham? But you must have been on  
the train for hours!
- Dad** Yes, about five hours. By the time I arrive  
home I'll have been travelling for eight  
hours.
- Sam** Will you be wanting something to eat when  
you arrive?
- Dad** No, don't worry. I won't be hungry. I'll have  
eaten.
- Sam** Can you get something to eat on the train?
- Dad** Yes, I'll go to the buffet car.
- Sam** OK ... I hope you won't be too tired for  
tomorrow.
- Dad** Me too. But don't worry; by tomorrow  
afternoon the wedding will be over. By five  
o'clock, we'll be sitting down to a lovely  
meal.
- Sam** I'm very nervous.
- Dad** Sam, everyone gets nervous about their own  
wedding. Everything's going to be fine.
- Sam** OK, but hurry up and get here. I need my  
dad!



### 2.05 Lesson 4F, Exercises 3 and 4

**Emma** Have you seen this article in the paper, Ollie? They're going to build a massive car park in the town centre.

**Ollie** Really?

**Emma** Don't you think it's awful?

**Ollie** Um, well, ... Why?

**Emma** The town centre is already congested enough. We don't want even more cars coming in.

**Ollie** No, I suppose you're right.

**Emma** And it'll just cause more pollution. They should be encouraging people to use public transport.

**Ollie** Where are they going to build it?

**Emma** Next to the school.

**Ollie** That isn't very sensible, is it? It'll make the roads around the school even more dangerous.

**Emma** It says here it's going to be four storeys high!

**Ollie** Four storeys! That's massive. It'll look awful.

**Emma** Yes, it'll be an eyesore. It says here they expect a lot of objections from residents. We should object.

**Ollie** Yes, I agree.

**Emma** The council meets in a month's time so we need to move quickly. Let's meet up this evening and work out a plan of action.

**Ollie** I can't. I'm going out this evening.

**Emma** What about tomorrow evening?

**Ollie** Fine.

**Emma** I'll ring Jane and get her involved.

**Ollie** Good idea. She's great at this sort of thing.

### 2.06 Lesson 4F, Exercises 6 and 7

**Emma** OK, we need a plan of action. What do you suggest we do?

**Jane** Well, first of all, I think we should write letters of protest.

**Ollie** Who to?

**Jane** To the town council. They are the ones who will give permission for the car park to go ahead. And to the local newspaper.

**Emma** Yes, and we could always write to our Member of Parliament too.

**Ollie** OK. Good plan. Shall we all write?

**Jane** Yes, the more letters they get, the better.

**Ollie** I know, why don't we organise a march?

**Jane** I'm not sure about that. It would be difficult to organise.

**Ollie** The big advantage of a march is that it would involve hundreds of people and attract a lot of attention.

**Jane** I see what you're saying, but it would be a huge amount of work and it would involve the police.

**Emma** Here's an idea. What about a rally? That'd be much easier to organise and we could hold it outside the school.

**Ollie** OK, let's agree on that. Emma, can you start thinking about that, then?

**Emma** Sure. We'll need to make placards for the rally, and also hand out leaflets.

**Jane** OK. I'll get started on those.

**Ollie** What else can we do?

**Jane** Well, we could draw up a petition.

**Emma** That's not a bad idea, but I don't think there's time for that.

**Ollie** Wouldn't it be better to put a petition on the Internet? We could set up a website.

**Emma** Maybe, but I still think there won't be time.

**Jane** And it'd be a lot of work.

**Ollie** I guess you could be right.

**Jane** The other thing we should do is contact the media.

**Emma** Yes, absolutely. We need to fix a date and time for the rally, and let the local paper and radio station know so that they send reporters and photographers along on the day.

**Ollie** Shall I do that, then?

**Emma** Yes, please.

**Ollie** Good. That's decided, then.

### 2.07 Vocabulary Builder 4.4, Exercise 1

- 1 conflict
- 2 import
- 3 permit
- 4 increase
- 5 produce
- 6 protest
- 7 record
- 8 suspect

## 2.08 Skills Round-up 1–4, Exercises 2 and 3

**Group** Say no to Wesley's! Stop the superstore!

**Daisy** I wonder if I could give you this leaflet.

**Stefan** Yes, sure.

**Daisy** It's about the plans for a new superstore on this site.

**Stefan** OK. I'll read it later. Thanks.

**Daisy** Do you know about the plans?

**Stefan** Er ... no, I wasn't aware of them. But I haven't been living in this area for long.

**Daisy** Really? Where have you moved here from?

**Stefan** Lublin.

**Daisy** Dublin?

**Stefan** No, Lublin. It's in Poland. I'm Polish.

**Daisy** Your English is better than mine!

**Stefan** Thanks. Where are you from, then?

**Daisy** London. I'm English.

**Stefan** Oh. Sorry! I thought ... well, you don't look English. Your hair's very dark, and your eyes ... you could be Italian or Spanish.

**Daisy** My mum is Spanish. I guess I take after her quite a lot ...

**Spikey** Hello, it's you. Our friendly banker ...

**Stefan** Well, I'm not exactly a banker ...

**Spikey** What was the name again?

**Stefan** Stefan.

**Spikey** That's right. Stefan.

**Daisy** You two know each other then, do you?

**Spikey** Kind of. We met once.

**Stefan** Yes, outside the newsagent's. You're Spikey.

**Spikey** So, did you find a place to rent?

**Stefan** Yes, I did. It's a two-bedroom flat on Western Avenue. By this time next week, I'll have moved in.

**Daisy** That's just down the road from us!

**Stefan** You're one of the squashers, are you?

**Daisy** Pardon?

**Spikey** He means squatters.

**Stefan** Oh, yes. Sorry – I always get that wrong.

**Daisy** Yes, I live in the same squat as Spikey. My name's Daisy.

**Stefan** Hi, Daisy. Pleased to ...

**Spikey** A two-bed flat in Western Avenue. Wow! How much does that cost you a month?

**Stefan** Oh, quite a bit ...

**Spikey** Were you passing? Or going into the shop?

**Stefan** Going in. I just want to buy some bananas.

**Spikey** That's the worst thing you can buy!

**Stefan** No, it isn't. I like bananas.

**Spikey** I mean, you know why bananas are so cheap, don't you?

**Stefan** Not really ...

**Spikey** They're cheap because the poor people who actually grow the bananas are paid almost nothing. Less than £1 a day.

**Stefan** That's wrong.

**Daisy** No, he's right. Look it up on the Internet.

**Stefan** I mean, it's wrong that people can work hard and earn less than £1 a day.

**Daisy** Oh, I see.

**Stefan** But if I don't buy bananas, how would that help them?

**Daisy** Well, one person can't make much difference. But what if everyone did the same? What if everyone stopped buying bananas?

**Stefan** I don't see how that would help them either.

**Spikey** Forget it, Daisy. You're talking to a banker. He's bound to disagree with you!

**Daisy** Oh, I don't know. I've won over harder cases than him before. My dad is a director of Wesley's supermarket, remember!

**Spikey** You didn't exactly win him over though, did you? In fact, he kicked you out of his house. That's why you're living in the squat!

**Daisy** True. But Stefan is more sympathetic to our cause, aren't you? Just give me a bit more time!

**Stefan** Well, I know where you live. Maybe I'll drop round after all – just to say hello.

**Daisy** Sure, whenever you like. Before you know it, you'll be joining us on our demonstrations!

**Stefan** Maybe. Anyway, I'd better go and buy those bananas now. See you around.

**Daisy** Bye.

**Spikey** Capitalist.