



BIG BROTHER

IS WATCHING

ALL OF US

**A TALKING POINTS
LESSON FOR ENGLISH
SPEAKING & LISTENING**

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Introduction

Are there CCTV cameras in your neighbourhood?

What are these cameras used for? Are they for the common good or not?

What is facial recognition software? Is it a good thing? Why/why not?

Big Brother is Watching All of Us

Look above your head any time you are outside and you will see them.

Dozens of cameras peering down, observing our every move.

These days, we cannot do anything without being seen. We are under constant observation.

For some, this is a good thing. It means that we are safe and criminals are less likely to commit a crime.

But for others, this is just a gross breach of privacy. People now believe they can't even walk down the street without being watched and recorded.

And it's not just in the street.

In banks, in hotels, in every shopping mall... There are dozens of tiny cameras gazing down upon us and witnessing everything we do.

This has been around for many years, but now there is something new added — **Facial Recognition Technology.**

This is an advanced piece of AI that can recognise a person's face and immediately identify them. Anyone checking the software can then locate the person's entire history of where

they have lived, worked, and any other activity they have done.

So, for example, you are in your car and you break the speed limit as you cross a busy junction. The speed limit is 40km/hr, but you were travelling at 45 km/hr. to be fair.

In the past, a police officer may have seen you, stopped you and given you a warning.

Be mindful of others on the road, he might say.

And that would be the end of it. But now, via a complex computer system, your face is recognised, and the fine is already sent to your current home address.

Or maybe they email it to you. Just as you go past the junction, you hear a small beep on your phone and that is the fine already sent by email.

There are fears that companies are demanding to know all this information about their employees. They feel they have a right to know what little crimes their staff commits.

And anyway, if you contest the fine, maybe the court can just send it to the accounts department of your place of work. You arrive at work the next day and HR calls you into the office.

It appears you have an outstanding traffic violation. The police demand payment.

Your company accounts department pays the fine. And then next time you receive your paycheck, it is minus the fine you received for a minor speeding offence.

There is no escape. Wherever we go, we are under constant observation and scrutiny.

The question is — *is it just the police that is watching us?*

Maybe big corporations are observing us too. To watch our daily habits and create clever advertising to manipulate us online.

There seems no limit to the invasion of our privacy.

Thirty years ago, people walked the streets. They went in and out of shops and buildings. And no one knew where they had been.

Today, people's every move is traced, tracked and recorded.

Reading Comprehension Questions

What can people see above their heads?

Do people think we are safe because of cameras?

Do people think it is an invasion of privacy?

Name three places we can see cameras.

What technology is also used with cameras today?

What can this technology do?

What example does the article give to describe this technology?

What did policemen do in the past before this technology?

What happens today?

How is the fine sent to people?

Do companies want to know about the crimes their staff may have committed?

If you don't pay the fine, what could happen?

What other organisations are watching us?

What advantage does it give them?

In the past, what could people do outside?

What happens to people today?

Essential Vocabulary

dozens
our every move
criminals
privacy
gazing down

advanced
to identify
activity

a minor
misdemeanour
complex
to contest
HR
paycheck
scrutiny
invasion

to peer down
constant
to commit a crime
recorded
to witness

AI
software
to break the speed
limit
warning

beep
the court
outstanding
minus
corporations
traced

to observe
observation
a gross breach
tiny
Facial Recognition
Technology
recognise
to locate
a busy junction
be mindful
employees
accounts department
traffic violation
no escape
manipulate
tracked

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Notebook—*a small book with pages of blank paper that students use to make notes when studying.*

“I left my notebook at home so I was unable to make any notes in my English class.”

Discussion Questions

Are there any cameras in your city? Where are they mostly?
Why are they there, do you think?

Are we losing our privacy? What do you think about this?

In terms of crime, cameras are a good thing. Do you agree or disagree? Tell the class your thoughts.

In what places is it illegal to have cameras? Why is it illegal to have cameras in these places?

With the class, make a list of places where we should have cameras. Why should we have cameras in these places? Try to think of three reasons for each example.

Should there be cameras in your English class? Why/why not?

What do you think of facial recognition technology? Do you think it is acceptable or not? Give your reasons.

Do you think facial recognition technology and cameras make people behave more responsibly in public? Why/why not? Do you think it is good or bad we need this to make us behave in a responsible manner?

Are the police doing enough on the streets? Isn't it better to have real police in our neighbourhoods as part of the community?

What changes will we see in the future with security surveillance?

Credits

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