

SELFISH BEHAVIOUR

A TALKING POINTS ENGLISH LESSON
PLAN FOR READING AND SPEAKING

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Introduction

Are people more selfish today? Or less so?

What do you think?

Were people more considerate in the past?

Have you seen any examples of selfish behaviour in your life?

Why Are People Like This?

Read Joy's account below:

Maybe it's because I am from a different generation, I don't know.

But it seems to me that people are just becoming more and more selfish than before.

People have this overbearing sense of personal entitlement these days.

For example, I was on the train the other day, and there was a young guy listening to music on his phone. But he was not using earphones.

He was just blasting the music out of the speaker on his phone.

Everybody could hear this music whether they wanted to or not.

I looked around, and I could see people were annoyed

about this. But no one said anything.

But eventually, a man piped up.

He was polite, but pretty firm. He just asked the young guy if he could turn the music off. Or use headphones.

But this young guy turned to the man and flew into an instant rage.

He started yelling and screaming at him.

How dare you talk to me like that? Who the hell do you think you are?

Other people joined in and the young man refused to listen to anyone.

He absolutely believed he had the right to listen to his music as loud as he wanted to. And no one else could tell him not to.

I just don't understand why people think this is perfectly acceptable behaviour. When I was younger, I wouldn't dream of doing anything like that.

Another time, I was waiting in line at the post office. I had to send a parcel and there were a few people waiting patiently in the line.

Then a woman came in and just marched to the front.

She barged right in front of everyone.

The man behind her tapped her on the shoulder and said:

Excuse me, there's a line. We have been waiting before you.

And she just looked at him with total contempt.

I don't have time to wait for all of you, she snapped.

And then she just refused to move.

Luckily, one of the staff called a security guard, and he told the woman to leave.

She put up a bit of a fight, but by then everyone was staring at her and she just walked out.

On her way out, she gave all of us a few choice words as she left!

I really don't know why people are like this. It seems to be a totally modern-day phenomenon.

Maybe it's a result of modern life. The pressure of work, the pressure of everyday life and people just snap.

I am pretty certain that we did not see this kind of selfish behaviour on the same scale in the past.

It would be a good idea for schools and parents to pay

attention to this. Because if this is how it is now.

How will it be in the next ten years or so?

As for me, I always make a point of trying to be civil when I am outside. There are cameras everywhere.

I don't want to be seen on social media doing something unspeakably rude.

Reading Comprehension Questions

Who is the person talking in the article?

What is she talking about?

What were the two examples she provides?

What did the young guy on the train do that annoyed the other passengers?

How did one of the passengers on the train react to the young guy playing music so loudly?

What did the man ask the young guy to do?

How did the young guy react to this?

What did he say in response to being asked to turn his music down?

How did Joy say she behaved when she was younger?

Describe the behaviour of the woman who cut in line at the post office.

Who talked to the woman about jumping the line?

What did this person say to the woman?

What did the woman say in response?

What did a staff member do to deal with the situation?

Was the woman happy when she left the post office?

What two reasons does Joy give for people behaving in this way in modern life?

In Joy's opinion, did people behave like this when she was younger?

Which organisations or groups of people does Joy think should pay attention to this modern-day phenomenon?

How does Joy behave when she is outside?

What two kinds of technology does Joy mention that may force her to be civil when she is outside?

True or False?

Look at the statements below.

Say whether each statement is true or false.

If it is false, correct it and make it true.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan!

Joy believes people are generally becoming less considerate of others.

The young guy on the train was listening to music with headphones.

The man who asked the young guy to turn off his music was met with immediate agreement.

The young guy responded angrily to the man's request.

The woman who cut the line at the post office was apologetic when confronted.

The staff at the post office did not intervene when the woman cut the line.

Joy suggests that modern-day pressures like work and daily life might contribute to people's behaviour.

Joy believes that selfish behaviour was less prevalent in the past.

Joy recommends that schools and parents should ignore this behaviour.

Joy mentions the prevalence of cameras in public spaces as a deterrent to rude behaviour.

Joy thinks it's acceptable to behave rudely if it's not recorded on social media.

Joy tries to maintain civility when in public, to avoid negative attention.

Essential Vocabulary

Different generation	Waiting patiently	For example
Becoming more selfish	Marched	Everybody could hear
Overbearing sense	Front	Looked around
Personal entitlement	Behind	Piped up
Young guy	Shoulder	Flew into a rage
Listening to music	Line	Who the hell
Phone	Waiting before you	Absolutely believed
Earphones	Contempt	Perfectly acceptable behaviour
Blasting the music	Snap	Another time
Speaker	Modern life	Barged
Annoyed	Pressure of work	Tapped on the shoulder
Polite	Pressure of everyday life	Total contempt

Firm	Pretty certain	Snapped
Asked	Schools and parents	Staff
Turn the music off	Pay attention	Security guard
Use headphones	Next ten years	Bit of a fight
Instant rage	Make a point	By then
Yelling and screaming	Civil	Choice words
Other people	Outside	Modern-day phenomenon
Right	Cameras	Result of modern life
Loud	Social media	On the same scale
Waiting in line	Account	Be civil
Post office	Seems to me	Unspeakably rude
Parcel		

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:

Different Generation – *People who were born in different time periods, usually separated by about 20-30 years. For example, your grandparents, parents, and you all belong to different generations.*

Marched – *Past tense of the verb to march. To walk in a steady, rhythmic manner, often in a group, especially as part of a parade or a military exercise. For example, soldiers often march in unison.*

Then write a sentence of your own that uses the new word or phrase correctly.

I often find myself in disagreement with my grandfather about some issues because he is from a different generation to me.

Every morning, the students marched to the playground for their physical training session.

Do this with all the vocabulary and, over time, this will help improve all your English skills – reading, writing, speaking and listening.

What is the Correct Synonym?

Table 1

Look at the table below.

Match the words on the left with the correct synonyms on the right.

A synonym is a word of similar meaning.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan!

generation	blaring
selfish	privilege
overbearing	completely
entitlement	courteous
blasting	shouting
piped up	age group
polite	domineering
rage	permissible
yelling	irritated
annoyed	self-centred
absolutely	spoke up
acceptable	fury

What is the Correct Synonym?

Table 2

Look at the table below.

Match the words on the left with the correct synonyms on the right.

A synonym is a word of similar meaning.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan!

behaviour	disdain
dream	shoved
parcel	stress
barged	polite
waiting	impolite
contempt	focus
refused	package
pressure	queuing
phenomenon	conduct
attention	surveillance
civil	declined
cameras	occurrence
unspeakably	imagine
rude	indescribably

What is the Correct Antonym?

Table 1

Look at the table below.

Match the words on the left with the correct antonyms on the right.

An antonym is a word of similar meaning.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan!

younger	wrong
modern	humble
entitled	doubted
annoyed	separated
right	impatient
loud	impolite
patient	old-fashioned
firm	quiet
joined	inappropriate
believed	older
refused	content
acceptable	lenient
polite	agreed

What is the Correct Antonym?

Table 2

Look at the table below.

Match the words on the left with the correct antonyms on the right.

An antonym is a word of similar meaning.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan!

conduct	bypassing
imagine	anomaly
package	obscurity
shoved	doubt
queuing	accepted
declined	clearly
stress	misbehaviour
occurrence	rude
focus	relaxation
polite	unpack
surveillance	distraction
indescribably	withdrew

Words and Meanings

Look at the table below.

Parcel	Blasting	Be civil
Earphones	Snap	Annoyed
Shoulder	Contempt	Polite
Marched	Security guard	Line

Now match each of the above words with the correct meaning below.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan!

Producing a loud, continuous noise, especially music.

A person employed to protect a building, people, or valuables.

A package wrapped up for sending by mail or delivery.

The feeling that a person or a thing is beneath consideration, worthless, or deserving of scorn.

Slightly angry or irritated.

A row of people or things, especially one waiting for something or arranged in a queue.

The part of your body that joins the arm and the rest of your body. The part of your body between your neck and the rest of your body.

Having or showing behaviour that is respectful and considerate of other people.

Small listening devices that fit into the ears that we can use to listen to music.

To behave in a polite and respectful manner.

Walk quickly with determination, especially in a military manner.

Break suddenly and completely, typically with a sharp cracking sound. It can also mean to speak abruptly or sharply.

What is the Missing Word?

Look at the table of words and phrases below.

Annoyed	Use headphones	Waiting in line
Pressure of work	Instant rage	Post office
Listening to music	Yelling and screaming	Parcel
Blasting the music	Other people	Modern life
Polite	Loud	Civil

Now use one of the words or phrases in the sentences below.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan!

The _____ arrived safely despite the rough handling during shipping.

The neighbours started _____ late at night, disturbing everyone in the building.

The _____ noise from the construction site made it difficult to concentrate.

He enjoys _____ while jogging in the park every morning.

_____ is characterized by rapid technological advancements and societal changes.

Despite the long wait, she remained _____ and patient at the customer service desk.

His _____ over minor inconveniences often startled those around him.

We spent hours _____ at the amusement park before finally getting on the ride.

She had to go to the _____ to send a parcel to her friend overseas.

_____ is never an effective way to resolve conflicts.

She was visibly _____ when her computer crashed in the middle of a deadline.

It's courteous to _____ in public places to avoid disturbing others.

Sometimes, it's better to ignore _____'s opinions

and follow your own path.

Being _____ and respectful towards others should be a fundamental principle in every community.

The _____ often leads to stress and burnout if not managed properly.

Who Do You Think You Are?

This is a whole class group discussion.

Look at all the situations below.

Say how you would respond or whether you would respond at all.

You are on the subway train when a passenger answers their phone and starts to have a very loud and very public conversation on the train. They are speaking very loudly with no consideration for others.

You are in the park, enjoying your lunch in the relaxing atmosphere, but then someone sits on a bench opposite and starts to play very loud music from the speaker on their phone. This is very disturbing and you do not wish to listen to this loud and horrible music.

You are in a line in a fast-food restaurant, when someone comes in and barges to the front of the

line. They demand to be served next and refuse to wait in line. You have limited time as you have to get back to work soon.

You are walking along the street in your neighbourhood when you see someone walking their dog. Their dog relieves itself on the street, but the person refuses to clean the mess up and tries to walk away.

You are sick of seeing people do this and you really wish people would clean up after their dogs.

You are getting on the train to visit your friend in another town. As you try to look for a seat, you see a passenger with all their bags occupying about three seats in total. This person could put all their bags on the luggage rack. Why should you have to stand just because this person cannot think of others?

Every time you get in the elevator at work, you encounter the same person who uses a very strong perfume or cologne. It is very pungent!

You think this is not socially acceptable in such a confined space and you have had enough. You want to tell this person about it.

You are in the cinema, enjoying a new movie that you have been waiting to see. But in front of you are three people making a lot of noise — laughing and shouting during the movie.

You have run out of patience, so what do you say to them?

You are on the bus and going home after a long day. In front of you is a young couple, clearly in love with each other. But they are displaying intimate behaviour and affection for each other that should only be done in private. You feel compelled to say something.

You are in a cafe enjoying a bite to eat. But at the next table, someone is eating food very noisily and creating a lot of mess on the table. It is putting you off eating your own food. So you finally react and say something.

You are walking around an art gallery, looking at an exhibition of paintings of one of your favourite local artists.

But some children are running around the space, bumping into others and generally making a nuisance

of themselves. They are shouting and jeering at each other.

You think you need to talk to the parents about it.

Go through all the above situations and discuss them together in class.

Discussion Questions

How old do you think Joy is?

Do you think this could be relevant to her opinions about politeness in society?

How would you describe the behaviour of the young man listening to music on the train?

Do you think his reaction was justified when asked to use headphones?

Do you think it was right of the man to ask the young guy to turn his music down? Or should the man just have kept quiet?

What would you have done if you were in this situation?

Why do you think the young guy responded so angrily when asked to turn his music down?

Why do you think the woman in the post office just marched to the front of the line?

Why did she not want to wait in line?

Is this acceptable do you think?

A man asked her to wait in line. Do you think he was right to do this?

If you were in the post office, how would you have reacted to this woman?

Have you ever seen examples of rude behaviour like this in public places?

How did it make you feel?

What do you think might be some reasons why people behave selfishly in public spaces like the train or post office?

How do you think cultural differences might influence what people consider acceptable behaviour in public?

Do you think there are cultural differences when it comes to waiting in line? Try to give examples.

What are three examples of rude behaviour in your country?

If a visitor comes to your country, say three things that they should never do in public.

Joy mentions that she believes this selfish behaviour is more prevalent today than in the past. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

In your opinion, what role do schools and parents have in teaching children about respecting others in public places?

Do you think schools and parents can help young people to learn respect?

How should young people learn about being polite in public?

How can technology, like cameras and social media, affect people's behaviour in public spaces?

Are people afraid of being observed or recorded?

Or do they not care?

Are you rude to others in public?

Are you always polite?

In your country, do you think old people sometimes do rude things?

What about young people?

Role Play

This is a role play activity.

Oh, That Is So Rude!

Get into groups of two students and choose one of the role play situations from below.

Choose only ONE situation.

The Situations

Scenario 1: In The Coffee Shop

Characters:

Customer (polite), Barista (rude)

Plot:

A customer comes into a coffee shop and orders a coffee but the barista is very rude to the customer.

The barista uses no manners at all!

However, the customer remains polite at all times even though the barista is very rude.

How can this role play come to a conclusion?

What kind of ending can it have?

Scenario 2: In The Office

Characters:

Colleagues or Boss (polite), New Employee (rude)

Plot:

A new employee has started work in the office but is often very rude to others. This employee interrupts people, uses bad language, and so on.

One day, a colleague or boss confronts the new employee to find out why this person is so rude.

How can this situation be resolved?

What do you think will happen to the new employee?

Scenario 3: On The Subway

Characters:

Passenger (polite), Subway staff member (rude)

Plot:

While on the subway train, a staff member behaves very rudely to the passengers. The staff member says rude things to people and uses inappropriate language.

The passenger reacts to the staff member with civility and politeness.

What kind of ending could this role play have?

Do you think the staff member's behaviour can be corrected?

Scenario 4: In The Restaurant

Characters:

A Diner (polite), A Waiter(rude)

Plot:

A diner eating alone experiences extreme rudeness from the waiter. But the diner does not allow this to interfere with their own conduct.

How can this situation be resolved?
What kind of ending could this role play have?

In your pairs, go over your role play ideas and practice the role play.

You must think of a good conclusion for your role play that would be satisfying for people to observe.

When you are ready, perform your role play in front of the class.

Other class members should give feedback.

Debate

This is a debate activity.

Everyone Must Be Polite! This Is An Order!

The Situation

In the college or school, it has come to the attention of many people that some people are not very polite. They do or say things that are considered impolite or rude.

Such impolite behaviour includes:

- Not holding the door open for others
- Not saying please or thank you
- Playing music too loudly on their phones
- Being late to class and refusing to apologise to the teacher or other students
- Using bad language
- And many other examples...

It has now been suggested that people must be polite to others whether they wish to or not.

Therefore, students on the campus will report other

people for being rude or impolite.

All campus members will act as guardians to ensure that everyone acts in a courteous and sociable manner.

Any time a person is rude, they will be reported and will lose social credit points.

If the person goes below a certain number, that means they lose certain privileges.

- For example, not being able to use sports facilities on campus.
- Or not being allowed to use the library.
- Or not being invited to any campus outings or events.

The idea is that this will encourage all campus members to act correctly with others and be polite at all times.

Team A

You strongly believe in this idea and you want others to support it too.

So many people are rude today, and they need to learn to behave well in society.

If all members act as campus police and report others, this will create a harmonious society in the college.

Team B

You are strongly opposed to this idea. It sounds too authoritarian.

You cannot force people to be polite in this way. People should learn to be polite.

Having all campus members act as police is not the right way to build a harmonious society.

In the class, choose one person to act as chairperson.

The chairperson should govern the debate and make sure everyone has a chance to speak during the debate.

The chairperson will also ensure there is order and civility during the debate.

You should also choose two team captains for Team A and Team B.

The team captains then choose members for their team one by one from all the remaining class students.

In your teams, take some time to prepare what to say during the debate.

When you are ready, begin the debate!

After the debate, you can discuss all the points that were made and say whether these are good ideas or not.

Writing

This is a creative writing exercise.

The Rudest Man/Woman I Ever Met!

You are going to write a story based on the above title.

Your story can be any style you like. It can be funny or dramatic. Or a horror story or a love story.

Anything you want!

Write your story.

When you have finished your writing, read it out loud in front of the other students.

Ask the students to give you some feedback and a critique of your story.

Or you can give the story to your teacher and ask them for an appraisal.

True or False — Answers

These are the correct answers below.

Joy believes people are generally becoming less considerate of others.

True.

The young guy on the train was listening to music with headphones.

False. *He was playing music loudly via his phone speaker.*

The man who asked the young guy to turn off his music was met with immediate agreement.

False. *The young guy disagreed strongly.*

The young guy responded angrily to the man's request.

True.

The woman who cut the line at the post office was apologetic when confronted.

False. *She responded angrily.*

The staff at the post office did not intervene when the woman cut the line.

False. *One of the staff members called security.*

Joy suggests that modern-day pressures like work and daily life might contribute to people's behaviour.

True.

Joy believes that selfish behaviour was less prevalent in the past.

True.

Joy recommends that schools and parents should ignore this behaviour.

False. *She believes that schools and parents should pay attention to this.*

Joy mentions the prevalence of cameras in public spaces as a deterrent to rude behaviour.

True.

Joy thinks it's acceptable to behave rudely if it's not recorded on social media.

False. *She implies that social media may act as a deterrent.*

Joy tries to maintain civility when in public, to avoid negative attention.

True.

What is the Correct Synonym – Answers

These are the correct answers below.

Table 1

generation	age group
selfish	self-centred
overbearing	domineering
entitlement	privilege
blasting	blaring
piped up	spoke up
polite	courteous
rage	fury
yelling	shouting
annoyed	irritated
absolutely	completely
acceptable	permissible

What is the Correct Synonym – Answers

These are the correct answers below.

Table 2

behaviour	conduct
dream	imagine
parcel	package
barged	shoved
waiting	queuing
contempt	disdain
refused	declined
pressure	stress
phenomenon	occurrence
attention	focus
civil	polite
cameras	surveillance
unspeakably	indescribably
rude	impolite

What is the Correct Antonym – Answers

These are the correct answers below.

Table 1

younger	older
modern	old-fashioned
entitled	humble
annoyed	content
right	wrong
loud	quiet
patient	impatient
firm	lenient
joined	separated
believed	doubted
refused	agreed
acceptable	inappropriate
polite	impolite

What is the Correct Antonym – Answers

These are the correct answers below.

Table 2

conduct	misbehaviour
imagine	doubt
package	unpack
shoved	withdrew
queuing	bypassing
declined	accepted
stress	relaxation
occurrence	anomaly
focus	distraction
polite	rude
surveillance	obscurity
indescribably	clearly

Words and Meanings – Answers

These are the correct answers below.

Parcel: A package wrapped up for sending by mail or delivery.

Earphones: Small listening devices that fit into the ears that we can use to listen to music.

Shoulder: The part of your body that joins the arm and the rest of your body. The part of your body between your neck and the rest of your body.

Marched: Past tense. Walk quickly with determination, especially in a military manner.

Blasting: Producing a loud, continuous noise, especially music.

Snap: Break suddenly and completely, typically with a sharp cracking sound. It can also mean to speak abruptly or sharply.

Contempt: The feeling that a person or a thing is beneath consideration, worthless, or deserving of scorn.

Security guard: A person employed to protect a building, people, or valuables.

Be civil: To behave in a polite and respectful manner.

Annoyed: Slightly angry or irritated.

Polite: Having or showing behaviour that is respectful and considerate of other people.

Line: A row of people or things, especially one waiting for something or arranged in a queue.

What is the Missing Word – Answers

These are the correct answers below.

Annoyed — She was visibly **annoyed** when her computer crashed in the middle of a deadline.

Pressure of work — The **pressure of work** often leads to stress and burnout if not managed properly.

Listening to music — He enjoys **listening to music** while jogging in the park every morning.

Blasting the music — The neighbours started **blasting the music** late at night, disturbing everyone in the building.

Polite — Despite the long wait, she remained **polite** and patient at the customer service desk.

Use headphones — It's courteous to **use headphones** in public places to avoid disturbing others.

Instant rage — His **instant rage** over minor inconveniences often startled those around him.

Yelling and screaming — Yelling and screaming is never an effective way to resolve conflicts.

Other people — Sometimes, it's better to ignore **other people's** opinions and follow your own path.

Loud — The **loud** noise from the construction site made it difficult to concentrate.

Waiting in line — We spent hours **waiting in line** at the amusement park before finally getting on the ride.

Post office — She had to go to the **post office** to send a parcel to her friend overseas.

Parcel — The **parcel** arrived safely despite the rough handling during shipping.

Modern life — **Modern life** is characterized by rapid technological advancements and societal changes.

Civil — Being **civil** and respectful towards others should be a fundamental principle in every community.

Credits

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