



UNIT 6

Exercise 1

Reading comprehension

Why We Love To Gossip

It is very much possible that 15,000 years ago, a group of Mesolithic humans stood around a bright fire, talking about someone who wasn't holding up his end of the hunting and other responsibilities. And now, in the 21st century, we're still at it. Gossip is very much alive, flowing freely either as natural and casual conversation or as a pathogen infecting morale, productivity, and even health. In addition to the negative view, gossip may be a special problem for women, who supposedly practice it more than men and who also, for the same reason, qualify as more vulnerable targets.

Being cautious with gossip would be common sense, but the lure of being in the loop can be seductive, and stepping out of it is difficult because gossip is a standard currency of human connection. A research team from at the University of Amsterdam found that 90 percent of total office conversation qualifies as gossip. Research at the Georgia Institute of Technology concluded that gossip makes up 15 percent of office e-mails. So the main questions are: Why do we do it? Where does this nastiness come from? *'Being mean begins at an early age when children compare themselves with others,'* says psychoanalyst Virginie Megglé. *'Forbidden to bite or hit, they turn to verbal violence. They want to remain their parents' favourite, and so devalue their friends,'* she continues. *'To reassure themselves they are normal, they say bad things about anyone who is different'.*

Anthropologists believe that throughout human history, gossip has been a way for us to bond with others—and sometimes a tool to isolate those who aren't supporting the group. Humans have a powerful drive to know about other people's lives. It's the fascination promoted by a welter of magazines and television programs that have made celebrity gossip a more than \$3 billion industry. "Your life may be more glamorous than mine," we might think as we scan the covers, "but I'm not an alcoholic".

Some argue that, at least in the workplace, gossip serves a useful purpose. Northeastern University professor Dr. Jack Levin, author of *Gossip: The Inside Scoop*, says it can actually be good for our emotional health except, of course, the kind of rumor-spreading that destroys reputations, because it ties together social and business networks. However, other might argue that gossip can hurt relationships and create a climate of fear and resentment, which leads to workplace stress, and causes problems ranging from a decline in productivity to a rise in illness and absenteeism.

The question of whether women gossip more than men, and suffer more accordingly, immediately trips over a familiar double standard: What women call gossip men might call just shooting the breeze. And yet differences in how men and women communicate would suggest that the impact of gossip is uneven: Studies show that women use far more words during the day than men do, and, especially woman-to-woman, those words tend to be personal. The bartering of intimacies—I share-you share—is the adhesive

of female friendship. While women tend to bond over feelings, men tend to bond over activities—with limited intimacy.

It's a fact of life: Where there are groups, there will be gossip. It's how we're wired. The best practice is to simply assume that anything you say can and will be used against you.

Choose the correct option based on the information in the text:

1. Gossiping at work can affect morale, health and...

- a) productivity
- b) resentment
- c) intimacies

2. According to Virginie Megglé, children gossip:

- a) to feel normal
- b) to get their parents attention
- c) to hurt other children

3. Gossip affects women more than men because:

- a) men bond over personal issues
- b) women bond over activities
- c) women tend to share personal information

4. Gossip is useful sometimes because:

- a) it reduces stress
- b) it helps us form a special bond
- c) we have fun when we gossip

Exercise 2

Find the words or expressions in the text which mean the same as the following:

- a) shiny
- b) jumble
- c) depreciate
- d) connection
- e) chat

Exercise 3

Confusing verbs. Complete each sentence with the correct verb. Make any necessary changes.

1. Do/Make

a) I ____ a lot of research and I think I ____ a good job on that essay. I ____ my best anyway.

.....

b) I ____ three suggestions and left it to him to ____ the final decision.

.....

2. Lie/Lay

a) Yesterday, I ____ there thinking about what I had to do during the day.

.....

b) As I walked past, I ____ the tools on the workbench.

.....

3. Lend/Borrow

a) She doesn't like ____ her books.

.....

b) ____ have to pay more for their mortgages.

.....

4. Lose/Miss

a) You ____ a great English class yesterday!

.....

b) My favorite soccer team ____ 3-0 in the semifinal.

.....

5. Intend/Pretend

a) He ____ that his daughter would inherit the business.

.....

b) The children ____ to be animals.

.....

6. Remind/Remember

a) I ____ meeting her once. It must have been about five years ago.

.....

b) ____ me to email Tony today; otherwise I'll probably forget.

.....

7. Fall/Feel

a) My book is so old that it ____ apart.

.....

c) Have you ever ____ unwanted in your job?

.....

8. Listen/hear

a) What type of music do you ____ to.

.....

b) Have you ____ the latest news on terrorist attacks?

.....

Exercise 4

Rewrite the sentences using the following adjectives. Make any necessary changes.

- inefficient
- clumsy
- handy
- proficient
- capable

1. John is nice, but he is so ungraceful. He's always dropping or breaking things.

.....

2. He was sacked basically for wasting a lot of time while being at work.

.....

3. She is certainly able to win a new tennis championship.

.....

4. He was a very good writer with an interest in human nature.

.....

5. Having an assistant is very useful. I don't have to work such long hours any more.

.....