

GOSSIP AT THE OFFICE.- Communicative activities.

Situation

Read the text and listen to the situation.



It's Monday morning and **Lourdes** and **Susana** take the tube to work. It's peak hour and as usual, the tube is overcrowded. At Russell Square station, two men leave the train and the girls can finally sit down.



Susana: Aaaaahhhh. she yawns. Oh my God, I'm so sleepy. I don't know why, but I wasn't able to sleep at all last night!

Lourdes: Oh really, ah? That's awful! Maybe you are just nervous about coming back home, don't you think?

Susana: Yes, maybe.. I don't know... **Lourdes,** look! What is that man over there reading? Holy cow! It seems to be a huge newspaper!

Lourdes: Oh that one, the one in blue? Yes, that's a Broadsheet! We've been here for nine months and you haven't seen one yet?

Susana: No, not really! You know I always fall asleep while commuting to the office! He, he... and what are broadsheets?

Lourdes: Well, as I read once, there are two types of newspapers here: Tabloids and Broadsheets. Tabloids are tiny and they are kind of sensationalist, like magazines more or less, whereas Broadsheets are huge and more serious in tone.

Susana: And why are they so big? They must be really difficult to read!

Lourdes: I think it has to be with typography format, since it allows them to carry more news in more columns, but I'm not sure! Hey! For a change, you should read more than romantic novels!

Susana: OK, whatever... ummm Leicester Square station, I still have some time for a little nap! Aaaaahhhh! She yawns again and goes back to sleep.

Lourdes: Oh gee! You sometimes get on my nerves!



Now it's your turn

What do you usually do to [keep updated](#)? Do you usually read newspapers?

If you lived in the UK, what type of newspapers would you read, Tabloids or Broadsheets? Why?

Enter the forum and share your opinion with your classmates. Have fun!



Materiales formativos de FP Online propiedad del Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte.

[Aviso Legal](#)

1.- Reading exercise.

British reading habits.

British people watch a lot of television. They are also reported to be the world's most dedicated home-video users. However, this does not mean that they have given up reading, in fact they are the world's third biggest newspaper buyers; only the Japanese and the Swedish buy more.

In Britain, newspaper publication is dominated by the national press. The morning newspaper is a British household institution; such an important one that, until the laws were relaxed in the early 1990's, newsagent's were the only shops that were allowed to open on Sundays so that the people could buy their papers. Another indication of the importance of the papers is the morning "paper round". Most newsagent's organize these, and more than one half of the country's readers get their morning paper delivered to their door by a teenager who gets up around 5.30 a.m every day to earn a bit of extra pocket money.



In Britain, each of the national papers can be characterized as belonging to one of two distinct categories. The "quality papers", often called Broadsheets and "the popular papers" or Tabloids.

Broadsheets are usually printed on large pages and they report national and international news in a serious tone since they cater for better educated readers. The most important quality diaries are the Daily Telegraph, The Times, The Guardian, The Independent and The Financial Times. As a curiosity, many broadsheets measure approximately 11 or 12 inches wide and 20 or more inches wide, which make them really difficult to handle while reading them, that's why today, sizes are being reduced so that people can read them easily while commuting to work. In fact, The Independent was the first newspaper in 2003 to downsize to tabloid format.

On the other hand, Tabloids sell to a much larger readership. They contain far less print than the broadsheets and far more pictures. They use larger headlines and write in a simpler style of English. While the broadsheets devote much space to politics and other "serious" news, the tabloids concentrate on "human interest" stories which often mean sex and scandal. The most important tabloids are The Sun, The Mirror, The Express and The Daily Mail. By means of curiosity, it can be said that tabloids get their popular name after the name given to compressed tablets marketed as Tabloid pills in the late 1880s. In these pills, the medicine was condensed in a small space, like gossip and other information are condensed in Tabloids.

Regarding popularity, Tabloids sell about six times as many copies as the broadsheets. According to the selling figures, The Sun is the paper that sells most, followed by the Daily Mirror, The Daily Mail and The Daily Express. If we have a look at the broadsheets, the one that sells most is The Daily Telegraph, followed by The Guardian, The Independent and The Times. However, there has been an improvement on past decades. In 1950, for instance, tabloids sold 20 times as many copies as the broadsheets. Education seems to be having an effect on people's reading habits.

To finish, it can be said that together with the newspapers, in any well-stocked newsagent in Britain you will also see rows and rows of magazines catering for almost every imaginable pastime. There are a few weeklies dealing with news and current affairs, and weekly, bi-weekly or monthly publication dealing with fashion, art, literature, travelling and Britain's favourite: Gardening and DIY



Now it's your turn

Read the previous text again and answer the following questions.

According to the text, British people...

- prefer watching TV to reading newspapers.
- read more newspapers than the Japanese but not than the Swedish.
- are among the world's fifth bigger newspaper buyers.

Until the 1990's ...

- newsagent's were only allowed to open on Sundays.
- newsagents opened seven days a week, whereas the rest of shops only opened 6 days a week.
- people didn't need to go to the newsagent's to buy their newspapers.

Broadsheets compared to Tabloids...

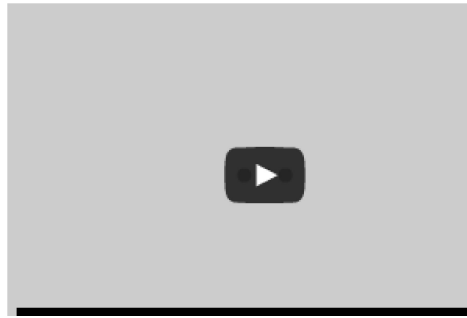
- contained much serious information and they are bigger in size and number of pages.
- are bigger in size and they contained more sensationalistic information.
- are bigger in size but they contained less information.

Tabloids sell...



- Twenty times as many copies as Broadsheets.
- less copies than in the 1950's.

2.- Listening exercise.



Text summary



Now it's your turn

Watch the video carefully and answer these questions.



What day of the week do British people usually buy more newspapers?

- On Mondays.
- On Sundays.
- On Saturdays.

What are the main topics in Tabloids?

- Gossip, human interests and more informal news.
- Gossip, scientific matters and serious news.
- Scientific matters, politics and serious news.

How many different magazines are there?

- Around 6400 magazines.
- Around 6500 magazines.
- Around 650 magazines.

The BBC means...

- British Broadcasting Corporation and it is a commercial TV.
- British Broadcasting Corporation and it is a non-commercial TV.
- British Broadcast Corporation and it is an independent TV.

How many households in Britain have got a video recorder?

- 90 percent.
- 84 percent.
- 74 percent.

It's interesting that...

- In Britan more people have a television than a microwave.
- In Britain more people have a television than a washing machine.
- In Britain less people have a television than a washing-machine.

A step ahead

Now you can read the text of the listening exercise.

[Listening script for 'Media in Britain'](#)

3.- Speaking exercise.

Think about it

- ✓ Who do you think are more fond of reading newspapers, men or women? Why?
- ✓ And magazines? Why?
- ✓ What do you prefer reading? Why?



Now it's your turn

Enter the forum and give your personal opinion about the questions above. Remember that speaking is not reading so try to sound natural. When you are ready, click on the link below to record your voice and then, send the file to your tutor.

4.- Writing exercise.

Dear Abby is one of the most popular magazine columns in the world. People usually write to them when they have some kind of problem and they need some advice.








Now it's your turn

Make it real!

Imagine you have fallen in love with a colleague but you are really shy and don't know what to do have an opportunity with that person. Yesterday, while going to the toilet you eavesdropped a conversation in which he or she said "If someone fell in love with me, I would like him/her to take the first step." Write an email to Dear Abby in which you tell her about this situation and ask her for some advice. Try to use some of the vocabulary and expressions learned within the units.

Appendix.- Licenses of resources.

Licenses of Resources used in Communicative Activities

Resource (1)	Resource information (1)	Resource (2)	Resor
	<p>By: Apdk. License: CC by 2.0. From: http://www.flickr.com/photos/62337512@N00/3902764265/</p>		<p>By: Leeks. License: CC by-nc 2. From: http://www.flickr.com</p>
	<p>By: Roy1Gray. License: CC by-nc 2.0. From: http://www.flickr.com/photos/36847996@N00/150746727</p>		<p>By: Felipe Skroski. License: CC by 2.0. From: http://www.flickr.com</p>
	<p>By: Rosie Cottom. License: CC by-nc-sa 2.0. From: http://www.flickr.com/photos/pinwheels-folly/3668475189</p>		