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Tobacco company tests 'safe cigarette'

URL: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0511/051107-cigarette-e.html>

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7 November, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Tobacco company tests "safe cigarette"

The British American Tobacco company has reportedly made a "safer" cigarette that is due to go on sale soon. However, a company spokeswoman denies this. She said more research was needed to make sure the cigarettes were truly safer. She also said the production of a lower-risk cigarette was an "urgent priority". She added: "This is an ongoing project at a development stage...there could be a launch [soon], but it really is far too [early] to talk about." The company denied rumors that its new product could reduce the risk of cancer by as much as 90 percent.

Anti-smoking campaigners are furious over the new product and the publicity it is getting. They said the new cigarettes will cause more harm to people's health. They also said the new product may encourage people to smoke more, which will increase deaths from smoking-related illnesses. They gave the example of how low-tar cigarettes caused an increase in tobacco-related deaths. Campaigners are worried the new product will falsely make consumers think cigarettes are safe. A leading British scientist said: "Anything involving inhaling smoke is unsafe."

WARM-UPS

1. CIGARETTE HISTORY: In pairs / groups, talk about your history with cigarettes. What are your early memories of cigarettes? Do you have any bad stories about cigarettes? Have you had any arguments about cigarettes? Do you smoke?

2. SAFE CIGARETTES: What do you think of the new "safe" cigarette? Do you think a cigarette can ever be safe? Talk about safe cigarettes and these other "safe" products that might be on sale one day:

- Safe cigarettes
- Safe guns
- Safe cars and motorbikes
- Safe marijuana
- Safe condoms
- Safe nuclear power plants
- Safe nuclear bombs
- Safe airplanes

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Tobacco / cigarettes / the near future / research / development / rumors / the lungs / cancer / being furious / health / lying to consumers / scientists / smoke

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. TOBACCO: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with tobacco. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. OXYMORONS: An oxymoron is a phrase that contains words that look like opposites of each other. Talk with your partners about the meanings of the following oxymorons and what you think about them. Do they make sense to you?

- safe cigarette
- virtual reality
- peace force
- hospital food
- ill health
- pretty ugly
- Microsoft Works
- working vacation / holiday
- American history
- just war

6. 2-MINUTE DEBATES: With your partner(s), try these (for-fun) 2-minute debates. Students A take the first argument, students B the second. Change partners often.

- a. Passive smoking doesn't kill people. vs. Oh yes it does.
- b. There is no such thing as a safe cigarette. vs. There will be soon.
- c. Smoking will completely disappear one day. vs. Oh no it won't.
- d. Tobacco companies murder people. vs. How ridiculous!
- e. Tobacco companies are the worst. vs. Pornography companies are the worst.
- f. Tobacco advertising should be banned worldwide. vs. That's unfair.
- g. Smoking should be banned in public places. vs. Many things should be banned.
- h. Smokers are unfairly treated by society. vs. Smokers should stop smoking.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. A tobacco company has made a risk-free cigarette. T / F
- b. A tobacco company spokeswoman said research has finished. T / F
- c. Producing a lower-risk cigarette is an urgent priority for the company. T / F
- d. The company says its cigarette reduces cancer risks by 90 percent. T / F
- e. Anti-smoking campaigners like the new "safe" cigarette. T / F
- f. Low-tar cigarettes increased the number of tobacco-related deaths. T / F
- g. Campaigners fear safe cigarettes will trick consumers into smoking. T / F
- h. A leading scientist said anything involving inhaling smoke was unsafe. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| a. reportedly | led to |
| b. denies | continuing |
| c. urgent | start |
| d. ongoing | help |
| e. launch | crucial |
| f. furious | wrongly |
| g. encourage | supposedly |
| h. caused | breathing in |
| i. falsely | angry |
| j. inhaling | disagrees with |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. a safer cigarette that is due | a development stage |
| b. research was needed to make | people to smoke more |
| c. an ongoing project at | early to talk about |
| d. it really is far too | think cigarettes are safe |
| e. reduce the risk of cancer by | sure the cigarettes were truly safer |
| f. anti-smoking campaigners are | to go on sale soon |
| g. the new product may encourage | smoke is unsafe |
| h. low-tar cigarettes caused an | as much as 90 percent |
| i. falsely make consumers | increase in tobacco-related deaths |
| j. Anything involving inhaling | furious over the new product |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

WHOOPS: Four of the eight words in bold in each paragraph are incorrect. In pairs / groups, find and delete them and think of a better word.

Tobacco company tests "safe cigarette"

The British American Tobacco company has **reportedly** made a "safer" cigarette that is **dew** to go on sale soon. However, a company spokeswoman denies this. She said more research was needed to make **sure** the cigarettes were **true** safer. She also said the production of a lower-risk cigarette was an "urgent **priority**". She added: "This is an ongoing project at a development stage....there could be a **lunch** [soon], but it really is far too [early] to talk about." The company denied **rumors** that its new product could reduce the risk of cancer by as **many** as 90 percent.

Anti-smoking campaigners are **furious** over the new product and the publicity it is getting. They said the new cigarettes will cause more **charm** to people's **health**. They also said the new product may **encourage** people to smoke more, which will increase **lives** from smoking-related illnesses. They gave the example of how low-tar cigarettes caused an increase in **tobacco**-related deaths. Campaigners are worried the new **production** will falsely make consumers think cigarettes are safe. A leading British scientist said: "Anything involving inhaling **tobacco** is unsafe."

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Tobacco company tests "safe cigarette"

The British American Tobacco company has _____ made a "safer" cigarette that is _____ to go on sale soon. However, a company spokeswoman denies this. She said more research was needed to make _____ the cigarettes were truly safer. She also said the production of a lower-_____ cigarette was an "urgent priority". She added: "This is an ongoing project at a development stage....there could be a _____ [soon], but it really is far too [early] to talk about." The company denied rumors that its new product could _____ the risk of cancer by as much as 90 percent.

Anti-smoking campaigners are _____ over the new product and the publicity it is getting. They said the new cigarettes will _____ more harm to people's health. They also said the new product may _____ people to smoke more, which will increase deaths from smoking-_____ illnesses. They gave the example of how low-tar cigarettes caused an increase in tobacco-related deaths. Campaigners are worried the new product will _____ make consumers think cigarettes are safe. A leading British scientist said: "Anything involving _____ smoke is unsafe."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**low**' and '**tar**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. WHOOPS: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "SAFE CIGARETTE" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about smoking, tobacco companies and whether there can be such a thing as a "safe cigarette".

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- reportedly
- spokeswoman
- urgent
- ongoing
- launch
- risk
- furious
- harm
- encourage
- low-tar
- falsely
- unsafe

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think of tobacco companies?
- c. Do you think cigarettes have any use?
- d. What do you think of the idea of a "safe" cigarette?
- e. What is your opinion on banning people from smoking in all public places?
- f. What do you think of tobacco ads that are full of healthy-looking and beautiful young people?
- g. Do you think tobacco companies should give smokers money for illnesses related to smoking?
- h. Do you think a non-smoker should be able to sue a smoker for damaging his/her health?
- i. Do you think the "safe" cigarette is an advertising technique aimed at tricking consumers?
- j. Do you think smokers should pay more for their health insurance?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you think the tobacco industry can survive the world's increased efforts to reduce smoking?
- d. Do you think tobacco companies can really reduce the risk of cancer by 90 percent?
- e. Have attitudes to smoking changed in your country?
- f. Governments do not want to pressure tobacco companies because money from taxes would fall. What do you think of this?
- g. Why do you think smokers take such big risks with their lives?
- h. Why do you think tobacco company executives are proud of their companies, which kill millions of people each year?
- i. What questions would you like to ask the CEO of a tobacco company?
- j. What do you think his/her replies would be?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. Did you like this discussion?
- b. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- c. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- d. Was there a question you didn't like?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

"SAFE" CIGARETTE ROLE PLAY: Should tobacco companies be allowed to advertise a "safe" cigarette?

Team up with classmates who have the same role as you. Develop your roles and discuss ideas and "strategies" before the role play begins. Introduce yourself to the other role players.

Role A – TOBACCO COMPANY CEO

You want to be more responsible in your business. You are worried that so many people die from smoking. You want to create a risk-free cigarette. The new "safe" cigarette is the first step. Soon, everyone in the world will be able to smoke without worrying about his/her health. Smoking will be cool and trendy again.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY SAFE CIGARETTES ARE A GREAT IDEA.

Role B – ANTI-SMOKING CAMPAIGNER

Tobacco company CEOs have lied for many years. They knew smoking killed people but covered the facts up. They are murderers. They make billions of dollars from killing people. The safe cigarette is the latest in their long line of dirty tricks. It is a new way to get people hooked.

THINK OF REASONS WHY CIGARETTES SHOULD BE BANNED.

Role C – JO PUBLIC (SMOKER)

You have been smoking for many years. You feel great. You know all of the facts about the dangers of smoking. You are fed up with people attacking your lifestyle. You think the new safe cigarettes will save millions of lives and make smoking acceptable again.

THINK OF REASONS WHY SAFE CIGARETTES ARE A GOOD IDEA.

Role D – JO PUBLIC (NON-SMOKER)

You think a cigarette is a cigarette. Cigarettes kill millions of people. Passive smoking destroys the health of non-smokers. There is no value in cigarettes or smoking. The "safe" cigarette is a huge trick to increase sales. You want all cigarettes banned.

THINK OF REASONS WHY CIGARETTES SHOULD BE BANNED.

Change roles and repeat the role play. Comment in groups about the differences between the two role plays.

Discuss whether the new "safe" cigarettes should be allowed to be advertised as being "safer".

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the damage smoking does to health. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. CAMPAIGN: Design a poster either (a) from an advertising executive of British American Tobacco that shows the benefits of the new safe cigarette or (b) from an anti-smoking organization that says the new safe cigarette is dangerous. Show your poster to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all have similar ideas?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to the CEO of British American Tobacco. Tell him/her what you think of the new "safe" cigarette. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. F c. T d. F e. F f. T g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| a. reportedly | supposedly |
| b. denies | disagrees with |
| c. urgent | crucial |
| d. ongoing | continuing |
| e. launch | start |
| f. furious | angry |
| g. encourage | help |
| h. caused | led to |
| i. falsely | wrongly |
| j. inhaling | breathing in |

PHRASE MATCH:

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| b. research was needed to make | sure the cigarettes were truly safer |
| c. an ongoing project at | a development stage |
| d. it really is far too | early to talk about |
| e. reduce the risk of cancer by | as much as 90 percent |
| f. anti-smoking campaigners are | furious over the new product |
| g. the new product may encourage | people to smoke more |
| h. low-tar cigarettes caused an | increase in tobacco-related deaths |
| i. falsely make consumers | think cigarettes are safe |
| j. Anything involving inhaling | smoke is unsafe |

WHOOPS:

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