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**Level 5 – 22nd April 2024**

## **UK leader cracks down on 'sick note culture'**

**FREE online quizzes, mp3 listening and more for this lesson here:**

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2404/240422-sick-note-culture-5.html>

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**Please try Levels 4 and 6. They are (a little) harder.**

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# THE READING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2404/240422-sick-note-culture-5.html>

British leader Rishi Sunak has plans to crack down on what he labelled Britain's "sick note culture". Mr Sunak believes too many people in the UK are claiming welfare benefits because of mental health issues. He said this was a drain on the economy. He added that people not working was creating labour shortages. The number of sick notes issued by doctors has risen sharply. The most common diagnoses being given by doctors are related to mental health. Sunak said: "We need to change the sick note culture, so the default becomes what work you can do, not what you can't."

Sunak wants to get people off benefits. He said: "We need to be more ambitious about helping people back to work, and more honest about the risk of over-medicalising the everyday...worries of life." He added: "Half of people becoming inactive over the last year cited depression and anxiety." Many people say the government caused the current crisis. A charity said: "Services are at breaking point following years of underinvestment." Opposition politicians called Sunak's plans, "another front for their culture wars". It said the government was "tone deaf, shameless and irresponsible".

Sources: <https://www.ft.com/content/c2ce5fc7-81d7-4f07-b339-c868bcd6df26>  
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/apr/19/sunak-accused-of-making-mental-illness-another-front-in-the-culture-wars>  
<https://time.com/6969002/rishi-sunak-welfare-reform-sick-note-culture-uk/>

# PHRASE MATCHING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2404/240422-sick-note-culture-5.html>

## PARAGRAPH ONE:

- |                                  |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. what he labelled Britain's    | a. issued by doctors    |
| 2. people in the UK are claiming | b. on the economy       |
| 3. because of mental health      | c. what work you can do |
| 4. He said this was a drain      | d. welfare benefits     |
| 5. labour                        | e. being given          |
| 6. The number of sick notes      | f. "sick note culture"  |
| 7. The most common diagnoses     | g. shortages            |
| 8. the default becomes           | h. issues               |

## PARAGRAPH TWO:

- |                                      |                      |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Sunak wants to get people         | a. and irresponsible |
| 2. We need to be more                | b. anxiety           |
| 3. the risk of over-medicalising the | c. politicians       |
| 4. depression and                    | d. deaf              |
| 5. opposition                        | e. ambitious         |
| 6. another front for their culture   | f. off benefits      |
| 7. tone                              | g. wars              |
| 8. shameless                         | h. everyday worries  |

# LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2404/240422-sick-note-culture-5.html>

British leader Rishi Sunak has (1) \_\_\_\_\_ down on what he labelled Britain's "sick note culture". Mr Sunak believes too many people in the UK are (2) \_\_\_\_\_ because of mental health issues. He said this was (3) \_\_\_\_\_ the economy. He added that people not working was creating labour shortages. The (4) \_\_\_\_\_ notes issued by doctors (5) \_\_\_\_\_. The most common diagnoses being given by doctors are related to mental health. Sunak said: "We need to change the sick note culture, so (6) \_\_\_\_\_ what work you can do, not what you can't."

Sunak wants to get (7) \_\_\_\_\_. He said: "We need to be more ambitious about helping people back to work, and more honest about the risk (8) \_\_\_\_\_ the everyday...worries of life." He added: "Half of people becoming inactive over the last year (9) \_\_\_\_\_ anxiety." Many people say the government caused the current crisis. A charity said: "Services are (10) \_\_\_\_\_ following years of underinvestment." Opposition politicians called Sunak's plans, "another front for (11) \_\_\_\_\_". It said the government (12) \_\_\_\_\_, shameless and irresponsible".

# PUT A SLASH ( / ) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2404/240422-sick-note-culture-5.html>

British leader Rishi Sunak has plans to crack down on what he labelled Britain's "sick note culture". Mr Sunak believes too many people in the UK are claiming welfare benefits because of mental health issues. He said this was a drain on the economy. He added that people not working was creating labour shortages. The number of sick notes issued by doctors has risen sharply. The most common diagnoses being given by doctors are related to mental health. Sunak said: "We need to change the sick note culture, so the default becomes what work you can do, not what you can't." Sunak wants to get people off benefits. He said: "We need to be more ambitious about helping people back to work, and more honest about the risk of over-medicalising the everyday... worries of life." He added: "Half of people becoming inactive over the last year cited depression and anxiety." Many people say the government caused the current crisis. A charity said: "Services are at breaking point following years of underinvestment." Opposition politicians called Sunak's plans, "another front for their culture wars". It said the government was "tone deaf, shameless and irresponsible".

# BEING SICK SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2404/240422-sick-note-culture-4.html>

Write five GOOD questions about being sick in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

# WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student A: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

d) \_\_\_\_\_

e) \_\_\_\_\_

f) \_\_\_\_\_

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More free lessons at [breakingnewsenglish.com](https://breakingnewsenglish.com)

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# WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student B: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

d) \_\_\_\_\_

e) \_\_\_\_\_

f) \_\_\_\_\_

# WRITING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2404/240422-sick-note-culture-5.html>

Write about **being sick** for 10 minutes. Read and talk about your partner's paper.

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