EU OKs mobile phones on planes

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9th April, 2008
THE ARTICLE

The European Union has given the go ahead for airplane passengers to use their cell phones in the skies over Europe starting later this year. This green light for mobile phones gives air travelers greater connectivity than ever before. People will now be able to keep in touch with those on the ground while 10,000 metres in the air. Business travelers in particular will benefit from staying in contact with clients, colleagues and managers. Europe becomes the first region in the world to lift the ban on using phones on planes. EU officials stressed the use of mobiles on planes will not in any way affect safety. The phone service will be disabled during takeoff and landing and the captain will have the power to turn the system off at any time. This falls in line with the current rules on using laptop computers or music players on flights.

Not everyone is happy at the prospect of an airplane full of mobile phone chatter. The friendly skies might now be a place where tempers become thin if passengers do not respect others. The EU has urged airlines to put in place flight etiquette rules to make sure passengers who want peace and quiet are not disturbed. This could include having to put phones on silent, encouraging text messaging instead of voice calls or banning calls on night flights. The EU telecoms commissioner Viviane Reding said: "I call on airlines to create the right conditions on board aircraft to ensure that those who want to use in-flight communication services do not disturb other passengers." She also warned airlines against charging high prices for mid-air calls. "If consumers receive shock phone bills, the service will not take off, she said."
1. MOBILE PHONES: Walk around the class and talk to other students about mobile phones. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you found out.

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

   giving the go ahead / cell phones / connectivity / take off / laptop computers / chatter / tempers / etiquette / text messaging / do not disturb / phone bills

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. FLIGHT ETIQUETTE: What would you do if the things in the table happened on an airplane? Talk about this with your partner(s). Change partners and share your ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things</th>
<th>What I would do if .... is ....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>someone talking loudly non stop on their mobile phone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>someone sleeping on your shoulder snoring into your ear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>someone drunk trying to talk to you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>someone who takes over your leg space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>someone with children who scream and cry non stop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>someone who gets out of their seat every 20 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. PHONES: What functions would you like a mobile phone to have? Talk about the things in the table with your partner(s). Rank them from 10 (highly important) to 1 (totally unnecessary). Change partners and share your ideas.

- text messaging
- Internet
- camera
- satellite navigation
- mp3 player
- English dictionary
- shows date and time
- shows current temperature

5. RECESSION: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word ‘recession’. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. QUICK DEBATE: Students A strongly believe that mobile phone calls should never be allowed on airplanes; Students B strongly believe it’s our right to make calls in mid air. Change partners again and talk about your roles and conversations.
BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

a. Passengers can soon make mobile phone calls over European skies.  
   T / F
b. There will be a special green light on phones that use this service.  
   T / F
c. Europe is the second region in the world to lift the ban on mid-air calls.  
   T / F
d. People will not be able to use their phone during take off and landing.  
   T / F
e. All air passengers are happy that they can use their mobiles.  
   T / F
f. There is a law that says phones must be kept on silent.  
   T / F
g. A telecom official asked passengers not to disturb phone callers.  
   T / F
h. It is likely that mid-air calls will be cheaper than those made on land.  
   T / F

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

1. given the go ahead  
   a. conversation
2. keep in touch  
   b. emphasized
3. stressed  
   c. make certain
4. disabled  
   d. maintain contact
5. power  
   e. encouraged
6. chatter  
   f. be successful
7. urged  
   g. okayed
8. banning  
   h. deactivated
9. ensure  
   i. authority
10. take off  
    j. prohibiting

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

1. given the go  
   a. ever before
2. greater connectivity than  
   b. way affect safety
3. the first region in the world to lift the  
   c. instead of voice calls
4. mobiles on planes will not in any  
   d. full of mobile phone chatter
5. This falls in  
   e. for mid-air calls
6. the prospect of an airplane  
   f. place flight etiquette
7. a place where tempers  
   g. line with the current rules
8. urged airlines to put in  
   h. ahead
9. encouraging text messaging  
   i. become thin
10. charging high prices  
    j. ban on using phones
WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The European Union has given the go ________ for airplane passengers to use their cell phones in the _________ over Europe starting later this year. This green light for mobile phones gives air travelers greater connectivity than _________ before. People will now be able to keep in touch with those on the ground _________ 10,000 metres in the air. Business travelers in _________ will benefit from staying in contact with clients, colleagues and managers. Europe becomes the first region in the world to _________ the ban on using phones on planes. EU officials stressed the use of mobiles on planes will not in any _________ affect safety. The phone service will be disabled during takeoff and landing and the captain will have the power to turn the system off at any time. This falls in _________ with the current rules on using laptop computers or music players on flights.

Not everyone is happy at the _________ of an airplane full of mobile phone chatter. The friendly skies might now be a place where tempers become _________ if passengers do not respect others. The EU has urged airlines to put in place flight _________ rules to make sure passengers who want peace and _________ are not disturbed. This could include having to put phones on silent, encouraging text messaging instead of voice calls or _________ calls on night flights. The EU telecoms commissioner Viviane Reding said: "I call on airlines to create the _________ conditions on board aircraft to ensure that those who want to use in-flight communication services do not _________ other passengers." She also warned airlines against charging high prices for mid-air calls. "If consumers receive _________ phone bills, the service will not take off, she said.
LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

The European Union has ______________________ airplane passengers to use their cell phones in the skies over Europe starting later this year. This green light for mobile phones gives air travelers ______________________ ever before. People will now be able to keep in touch with ______________________ 10,000 metres in the air. Business travelers in particular will benefit from staying in contact with clients, colleagues and managers. Europe ______________________ the world to lift the ban on using phones on planes. EU officials stressed the use of mobiles on planes ______________________ affect safety. The phone service will be disabled during takeoff and landing and the captain will have the power to turn the system off at any time. This ______________________ current rules on using laptop computers or music players on flights.

Not everyone is ______________________ an airplane full of mobile phone chatter. The friendly skies might now be a place where ______________________ passengers do not respect others. The EU has urged airlines to put in place flight etiquette rules to make sure passengers ______________________ are not disturbed. This could include having to put phones on silent, encouraging text messaging ______________________ banning calls on night flights. The EU telecoms commissioner Viviane Reding said: "I call on airlines to create the right conditions ______________________ ensure that those who want to use in-flight communication services do not disturb other passengers." She also warned airlines against charging high prices for mid-air calls. "If consumers receive shock phone bills, the ______________________, she said.
AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words ‘mobile’ and ‘phone’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mobile</th>
<th>phone</th>
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• 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. GAP FILL: 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. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- ahead
- green
- touch
- lift
- way
- line
- prospect
- thin
- quiet
- voice
- disturb
- shock
STUDENT MOBILE PHONE SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about mobile phones 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.1.</th>
<th>STUDENT 1</th>
<th>STUDENT 2</th>
<th>STUDENT 3</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Q.2.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q.3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q.4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q.5.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- 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.
RECESSION DISCUSSION

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

a) What did you think when you read the headline?
b) What springs to mind when you hear the word ‘mobile phone’?
c) Do you think this article brings good news or bad news?
d) Do you think you would use your mobile phone on an airplane?
e) Will the new rule make flying better?
f) Don’t you think it’s silly that mobile phone calls are banned on airplanes?
g) Do you need to take your mobile phone everywhere you go?
h) Do you think other regions will follow the EU in lifting the ban on mobile phones?
i) What are the pros and cons of mid-air phone calls?
j) Do you think this service should only be available in business and first class?

RECESSION DISCUSSION

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

a) Did you like reading this article?
b) What do you think of mobile phone chatter?
c) What do you think of the term ‘the friendly skies’? Are they friendly?
d) Do other people’s mobile phones ever make your temper become thin?
e) Do you always respect people around you when you use your mobile phone?
f) What flight etiquette rules do you think are necessary?
g) What things disturb you while you are on an airplane?
h) Would you make mid-air calls if the costs were double the usual cost?
i) What questions would you like to ask Viviane Reding?
j) Did you like this discussion?
The European Union has given the go (1) _____ for airplane passengers to use their cell phones in the skies over Europe starting later this year. This (2) ____ light for mobile phones gives air travelers greater connectivity than ever before. People will now be able to keep (3) ____ touch with those on the ground while 10,000 metres in the air. Business travelers in (4) ____ will benefit from staying in contact with clients, colleagues and managers. Europe becomes the first region in the world to (5) ____ the ban on using phones on planes. EU officials stressed the use of mobiles on planes will not in any way affect safety. The phone service will be disabled during takeoff and landing and the captain will have the power to turn the system off at any time. This falls in (6) ____ with the current rules on using laptop computers or music players on flights.

Not everyone is happy at the prospect (7) ____ an airplane full of mobile phone chatter. The friendly skies might now be a place where tempers become (8) ____ if passengers do not respect others. The EU has urged airlines to put in place flight etiquette rules to make sure passengers who want peace and quiet are not disturbed. This could include (9) ____ to put phones on silent, encouraging text messaging (10) ____ of voice calls or banning calls on night flights. The EU telecoms commissioner Viviane Reding said: "I call (11) ____ airlines to create the right conditions on board aircraft to ensure that those who want to use in-flight communication services do not disturb other passengers." She also warned airlines against charging high prices for mid-air calls. "If consumers receive shock phone bills, the service will not (12) ____, she said.

**Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.**

1. (a) again (b) ahead (c) against (d) attack
2. (a) amber (b) blue (c) green (d) red
3. (a) in (b) on (c) to (d) as
4. (a) particularly (b) especially (c) special (d) particular
5. (a) elevate (b) raise (c) lift (d) carry
6. (a) line (b) mine (c) pine (d) vine
7. (a) to (b) with (c) by (d) of
8. (a) than (b) thin (c) then (d) tin
9. (a) have (b) had (c) has (d) having
10. (a) except (b) place (c) instead (d) apart
11. (a) with (b) on (c) by (d) from
12. (a) take off (b) depart (c) land (d) taxi
WRITING:

Write about mobile phones for 10 minutes. Correct your partner’s paper.

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EU OKs mobile phones on planes - 9th April, 2008
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 out about the EU’s decision to allow airplane passengers to use their mobile phones on planes. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. ETIQUETTE: Make a poster about the do’s and don’ts of using mobile phones on airplanes. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. MID-AIR CALLS: Write a magazine article about problems caused by airlines allowing people to use mobile phones on airplanes. Include imaginary interviews with a business traveler who needs to use his/her phone for the whole flight and a passenger who just wants peace and quiet.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to the EU telecoms commissioner Viviane Reding. Ask her three questions about lifting the ban on mobile phones on airplanes. Give her three pieces of advice on what she should do to ensure passengers are not disturbed by phone chatter. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

6. DIARY / JOURNAL: Imagine you are a flight attendant on an airplane. Write your diary / journal entry for the first day that mobile phone calls are allowed on planes. Be sure to write about the opinions of passengers you talked to. Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson.
EU OKs mobile phones on planes

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ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

1. given the go ahead  a. okayed
2. keep in touch  b. maintain contact
3. stressed  c. emphasized
4. disabled  d. deactivated
5. power  e. authority
6. chatter  f. conversation
7. urged  g. encouraged
8. banning  h. prohibiting
9. ensure  i. make certain
10. take off  j. be successful

PHRASE MATCH:

1. given the go ahead  a. ahead
2. greater connectivity than  b. ever before
3. the first region in the world to lift the  c. ban on using phones
4. mobiles on planes will not in any  d. way affect safety
5. This falls in  e. line with the current rules
6. the prospect of an airplane  f. full of mobile phone chatter
7. a place where tempers  g. become thin
8. urged airlines to put in  h. place flight etiquette
9. encouraging text messaging  i. instead of voice calls
10. charging high prices  j. for mid-air calls

GAP FILL:

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LANGUAGE WORK

1 - b  2 - c  3 - a  4 - d  5 - c  6 - a  7 - d  8 - b  9 - d  10 - c  11 - b  12 - a