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Standing room on airplanes a possibility

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0907/090709-air_travel.html

Contents

The Article	2
Warm ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading / Listening	7
Student Survey	8
Discussion	9
Language Work	10
Writing	11
Homework	12
Answers	13

July 9th, 2009

THE ARTICLE

The latest cost-cutting idea from budget airlines is for passengers to stand. Michael Ryan, the CEO of Ryanair, is seriously considering this option. Ryanair is one of Europe's biggest airlines. It carried 5.84 million passengers in June, which is 13% more than a year earlier. Mr. Ryan says his airline is so popular because it is so cheap. Most of Ryanair's flights are short hops to Europe. This makes the idea of standing for an hour or so on an airplane a workable one. Ryan said that many people stand for over an hour on a train, so it should be no problem on an airplane. He told reporters he would even be prepared to offer flights for free to passengers who stood. He said he could squeeze in 50 per cent more people and cut costs by 20 per cent.

Michael Ryan has changed the way many people think about air travel. His focus is on cutting out unnecessary services and so reducing fares. One idea he is still thinking about is to ask passengers to pay one euro (around a dollar) to use the toilet. He said he could remove two toilets on board the airplane and put in extra seats. The extra revenue would reduce costs and therefore the price of airline tickets. He said asking passengers to pay would encourage them to use the toilets at the airports. Ryan has also talked about a "fat tax" on overweight travelers. His standing room idea, however, might not take off. All airlines must stick to strict international safety standards. Everybody over the age of two must have a seat.

WARM-UPS

1. AIR TRAVEL: Walk around the class and talk to other students about air travel. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

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

cost cutting / passengers / cheap / standing up / Europe / free flights / squeezing / changing the way people think / air travel / airplane toilets / overweight / safety

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

3. STANDING: When is it OK to stand? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and talk about your ideas. Change again and share what you heard.

	Do / Would you do this?	Why?
On a plane		
At the cinema		
In class		
In a restaurant		
At a concert		
On a roller coaster		

4. STANDING ROOM: Students A **strongly** believe standing room on an airplane is a great idea if it means cheaper fares; Students B **strongly** believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. ECONOMY CLASS: What do you really need on an airplane for a 90-minute flight? Rate these and share your ratings with your partner: 10 = absolute necessity; 1 = no need at all. Change partners and share your ratings again.

_____ in-flight movie

_____ meal

_____ duty free

_____ toilet

_____ a seat

_____ a life jacket

_____ a drink

_____ flight attendants

6. BUDGET: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'budget'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. An airline may offer passengers the option to stand. | T / F |
| b. The airline is a small European carrier with very few passengers. | T / F |
| c. The CEO believes people won't mind standing up for about an hour. | T / F |
| d. The CEO said he could squeeze another 50 passengers on a plane. | T / F |
| e. Michael Ryan wants to focus on providing more services on his planes. | T / F |
| f. Ryan is also thinking about removing all toilets from his airplanes. | T / F |
| g. Ryan has also talked about charging people extra if they are obese. | T / F |
| h. Everyone over the age of three must have a seat on an airplane. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. latest | a. thinking about |
| 2. considering | b. obese |
| 3. option | c. fit |
| 4. hops | d. guidelines |
| 5. squeeze | e. trips |
| 6. focus | f. most recent |
| 7. fares | g. income |
| 8. revenue | h. priority |
| 9. overweight | i. idea |
| 10. standards | j. ticket prices |

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

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. The latest cost-cutting idea | a. biggest airlines |
| 2. Ryanair is one of Europe's | b. unnecessary services |
| 3. his airline is so popular because | c. or so |
| 4. standing for an hour | d. safety standards |
| 5. offer flights for free | e. must have a seat |
| 6. cutting out | f. reduce costs |
| 7. remove two toilets on | g. from budget airlines |
| 8. The extra revenue would | h. board the airplane |
| 9. stick to strict international | i. it is so cheap |
| 10. Everybody over the age of two | j. to passengers who stood |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

The latest cost-cutting _____ from budget airlines is for passengers to stand. Michael Ryan, the CEO of Ryanair, is _____ considering this option. Ryanair is one of Europe's biggest airlines. It _____ 5.84 million passengers in June, which is 13% more than a year earlier. Mr. Ryan says his airline is so _____ because it is so cheap. Most of Ryanair's flights are short hops to Europe. This makes the idea of standing for an hour or so on an airplane a _____ one. Ryan said that many people stand for over an hour on a train, so it should be no _____ on an airplane. He told reporters he would even be prepared to offer flights for free to passengers who _____. He said he could _____ in 50 per cent more people and cut costs by 20 per cent.

problem
popular
seriously
squeeze
idea
stood
workable
carried

Michael Ryan has changed the _____ many people think about air travel. His focus is on cutting out unnecessary _____ and so reducing fares. One idea he is still thinking about is to ask passengers to pay one euro (around a dollar) to use the toilet. He said he could _____ two toilets on board the airplane and put in extra seats. The extra _____ would reduce costs and therefore the price of airline tickets. He said asking passengers to pay would _____ them to use the toilets at the airports. Ryan has also talked about a "fat tax" on _____ travelers. His standing room idea, however, might not _____ off. All airlines must _____ to strict international safety standards. Everybody over the age of two must have a seat.

overweight
revenue
stick
services
take
way
encourage
remove

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the gaps.

The latest _____ from budget airlines is for passengers to stand. Michael Ryan, the CEO of Ryanair, is seriously _____. Ryanair is one of Europe's biggest airlines. It carried 5.84 million passengers in June, which is 13% _____ earlier. Mr. Ryan says his airline is so popular because it is so cheap. Most of Ryanair's flights _____ Europe. This makes the idea of standing for an hour or so on an airplane a workable one. Ryan said that many people stand for over an hour on a train, so it should be no problem on an airplane. He told reporters _____ prepared to offer flights for free to passengers who stood. He said he _____ 50 per cent more people and cut costs by 20 per cent.

Michael Ryan has _____ many people think about air travel. His focus is on cutting out unnecessary services and _____. One idea he is still thinking about is to ask passengers to pay one euro (around a dollar) to use the toilet. He said he could remove two toilets on board the airplane and _____. The extra revenue would reduce costs and therefore the price of airline tickets. He said asking passengers to pay would _____ use the toilets at the airports. Ryan has also talked about a "fat tax" on overweight travelers. His standing room idea, however, might not take off. All airlines must _____ international safety standards. Everybody _____ two must have a seat.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

air	travel
------------	---------------

- 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 how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• idea• option• earlier• hops• workable• stood	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• changed• reducing• remove• encourage• tax• standards
---	---

STUDENT AIR TRAVEL SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about air travel 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.

AIR TRAVEL 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 term 'air travel'?
- c) Would you stand up on a short hop if the fare was much cheaper?
- d) Do you always try and find the cheapest fare?
- e) Do you care about which airline you fly with?
- f) Would you always prefer to fly with your country's airline?
- g) What do you worry about when you fly?
- h) Do you have a set routine of things you do on the airplane?
- i) What things do you like and dislike about flying?
- j) What do you think of the idea of free flights if you stand?

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AIR TRAVEL DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What's your favourite airline?
- c) How do you think air travel could be made better?
- d) Which is better for a 300-km journey, a plane trip or the train?
- e) Do you think it's a good idea to remove the toilets on the plane and pay less as a fare?
- f) What do you think of the "fat tax" idea?
- g) How could the standing room idea be made safe?
- h) Do you think we need to change the way we think about air travel?
- i) What do you think air travel will be like fifty years from now?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Ryanair CEO Michael Ryan?

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LANGUAGE

The latest cost-cutting idea from (1) _____ airlines is for passengers to stand. Michael Ryan, the CEO of Ryanair, is (2) _____ considering this option. Ryanair is one of Europe's biggest airlines. It carried 5.84 million passengers in June, which is 13% more than a year earlier. Mr. Ryan says his airline is so popular because it is so cheap. Most of Ryanair's flights are short (3) _____ to Europe. This makes the idea of standing for an hour or (4) _____ on an airplane a workable one. Ryan said that many people stand for over an hour on a train, so it should be no problem on an airplane. He told reporters he would even be prepared to offer flights for free to passengers who (5) _____. He said he could squeeze (6) _____ 50 per cent more people and cut costs by 20 per cent.

Michael Ryan has changed the way many people think about air travel. His focus is (7) _____ cutting out unnecessary services and so reducing fares. One idea he is still thinking about is to ask passengers to pay one euro (around a dollar) to use the toilet. He said he could (8) _____ two toilets on board the airplane and put in extra seats. The extra revenue would reduce costs and (9) _____ the price of airline tickets. He said asking passengers to pay would encourage (10) _____ to use the toilets at the airports. Ryan has also talked about a "fat tax" on overweight travelers. His standing room idea, however, might not take (11) _____. All airlines must (12) _____ to strict international safety standards. Everybody over the age of two must have a seat.

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

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. | (a) budgets | (b) budgeted | (c) budgetary | (d) budget |
| 2. | (a) seriously | (b) serious | (c) seriousness | (d) series |
| 3. | (a) hips | (b) hops | (c) hip-hop | (d) haps |
| 4. | (a) as | (b) from | (c) so | (d) to |
| 5. | (a) stands | (b) standing | (c) stood | (d) standard |
| 6. | (a) along | (b) in | (c) up | (d) out |
| 7. | (a) at | (b) of | (c) if | (d) on |
| 8. | (a) remove | (b) removal | (c) removes | (d) removing |
| 9. | (a) because | (b) therefore | (c) if | (d) though |
| 10. | (a) these | (b) they | (c) we | (d) them |
| 11. | (a) in | (b) on | (c) off | (d) up |
| 12. | (a) stick | (b) bond | (c) glue | (d) tape |

WRITING:

Write about **air travel** for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

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 more about budget airlines. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. AIR SAFETY: Make a poster about what airlines should provide for passengers to stay safe. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. STAND: Write a magazine article about standing room on airplanes. Include imaginary interviews with a passenger who wants to stand for a cheaper price, and a safety official who believes it is too dangerous for passengers to stand.

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 Michael Ryan. Ask him three questions about Ryanair. Give them him three suggestions on how he could reduce air fares. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. latest | a. most recent |
| 2. considering | b. thinking about |
| 3. option | c. idea |
| 4. hops | d. trips |
| 5. squeeze | e. fit |
| 6. focus | f. priority |
| 7. fares | g. ticket prices |
| 8. revenue | h. income |
| 9. overweight | i. obese |
| 10. standards | j. guidelines |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. The latest cost-cutting idea | a. from budget airlines |
| 2. Ryanair is one of Europe's | b. biggest airlines |
| 3. his airline is so popular because | c. it is so cheap |
| 4. standing for an hour | d. or so |
| 5. offer flights for free | e. to passengers who stood |
| 6. cutting out | f. unnecessary services |
| 7. remove two toilets on | g. board the airplane |
| 8. The extra revenue would | h. reduce costs |
| 9. stick to strict international | i. safety standards |
| 10. Everybody over the age of two | j. must have a seat |

GAP FILL:

Standing room on airplanes a possibility

The latest cost-cutting **idea** from budget airlines is for passengers to stand. Michael Ryan, the CEO of Ryanair, is **seriously** considering this option. Ryanair is one of Europe's biggest airlines. It **carried** 5.84 million passengers in June, which is 13% more than a year earlier. Mr. Ryan says his airline is so **popular** because it is so cheap. Most of Ryanair's flights are short hops to Europe. This makes the idea of standing for an hour or so on an airplane a **workable** one. Ryan said that many people stand for over an hour on a train, so it should be no **problem** on an airplane. He told reporters he would even be prepared to offer flights for free to passengers who **stood**. He said he could **squeeze** in 50 per cent more people and cut costs by 20 per cent.

Michael Ryan has changed the **way** many people think about air travel. His focus is on cutting out unnecessary **services** and so reducing fares. One idea he is still thinking about is to ask passengers to pay one euro (around a dollar) to use the toilet. He said he could **remove** two toilets on board the airplane and put in extra seats. The extra **revenue** would reduce costs and therefore the price of airline tickets. He said asking passengers to pay would **encourage** them to use the toilets at the airports. Ryan has also talked about a "fat tax" on **overweight** travelers. His standing room idea, however, might not **take** off. All airlines must **stick** to strict international safety standards. Everybody over the age of two must have a seat.

LANGUAGE WORK

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