

# Attitudes and beliefs

## Reading

Read the text that follows in stages - it's rather long - and note the language it offers you in the area of opinions, beliefs and attitudes.

Fifties people wore pointed shoes. Sixties people wore flowers in their hair. Seventies people dyed their hair pink. So what about the Eighties? Is this a fair picture of an Eighties couple or not? If not, why not?

A 1980s Couple

They are **passionate believers in** vegetarianism and **regard** people who eat meat as worse than criminals. (**In their view**, egg-eaters are really no better, as eggs are baby chickens.)

**I suspect**, though, that part of them is sometimes **dying for** a nice big juicy steak.

They are **suspicious** of all frozen food, **despise** any product that contains additives, **wholly disapprove of** white bread, and **reckon** that consumers of 'poisonous' white sugar will nearly all die young.

**I hope** they're wrong.

They **view** things like whaling and seal-hunting with disgust, and **find** vivisection extremely distasteful. They are **fierce opponents** of fox-hunting and are also **opposed to** women accepting presents of fur-coats.

**I dread to think** what their **views** would be on those cosmetic firms which try out their products on poor, defenceless little rabbits.

**For them**, zoos are degrading; they **refuse to accept** that they serve any useful purpose whatsoever. On the other hand, they **welcome** the growth of wild-life parks and reserves.

I can't **make up my mind** where I **stand** on this. **They know their own minds**, as usual.

They **feel strongly** that most doctors are little better than drug-pushers, and **are convinced** that acupuncture is the medicine of the future.

**I suppose** they might **have a point** there.

They **recommend** natural childbirth for all mothers-to-be and **reject** the need for such things as induction, drips and painkillers, except in special circumstances.

**I expect** one or two of you mothers would **disagree**.

They are **in favour of** abortion being freely available, and I guess you don't need me to tell you their **feelings** on women's equality. They are **against** corporal punishment of any kind - I **would imagine** their **attitude towards** capital punishment is fairly predictable - and is pro voluntary euthanasia.

They **take a keen interest in** the fortunes of the Third World, and doubt whether any of the Western powers really **care**.

They are **supporters of** conservation in its broadest sense, **back** all tree-planting projects, and **strongly approve of** recycling waste paper and other rubbish.

**I presume** most people would **share** that particular **viewpoint**.

They **would like to see** solar energy **taken more seriously and are fiercely** anti-nuclear power.

**My own feeling is** that solar energy in Britain is rather a contradiction in terms.

They are **under the impression that** all politicians are either gangsters or fools.

**I must admit, I'm afraid I'm tempted to agree**.

They **advocate** prisons without bars and **are of the opinion that** 99% of serious criminals are in need of psychiatric help.

**To my mind**, pleas of insanity have become suspiciously common.

They are **prepared to accept** that UFOs probably do exist, and they **have no time** for people who **dismiss** reincarnation **out of hand**.

It all **seems** a bit improbable **to me**.

They **adore** punk clothes, but **can't stand** the people. They **rate** Lennon above McCartney and are **great fans of** Stevie Wonder.

**I've never understood** their **taste** in clothes or trusted their **judgement** when it comes to music.

**As far as they are concerned**, tobacco is an unspeakable evil, but they **support** the movement for the legalisation of soft drugs. They are also for restrictions regarding the sale of alcohol.

Me? **I don't mind** much about the drugs thing, but **I'm quite fond of** my old pipe and rather keen on my brandy after dinner.

They **consider** that marriage should be a loose arrangement that ensures security for children, but **maintain** — **insist** even - that one balanced parent is **preferable** to two who are always at each other's throats.

They're the sort of people who **believe in** the freedom of all people at all times, and **think** anyone with a different **point of view** must be crazy.

**I wouldn't have thought** that was a very liberal **approach**, but never mind. If you ask me, nobody's totally **open-minded**.

Oh yes, and they jog.

**OK**, so you may **see eye to eye with** them on some of those issues, but you should try being related to one of them, that's all!

## Practice

Here are some names we give to people who have quite definite attitudes, views of behaviour:

**a sadist**  
**b agnostic**  
**c racist**  
**d patriot**  
**e cynic**  
**f idealist**  
**g fatalist**

**h romantic**  
**i optimist**  
**j nationalist**  
**k activist**  
**l atheist**  
**m pessimist**  
**n masochist**

**o anarchist**  
**p perfectionist**  
**q disciplinarian**  
**r philanthropist**  
**s fanatic**  
**t realist**  
**u nonconformist**

Now, who might say which of the following statements?

- 1 I don't believe in God.
- 2 I don't think I believe in God.
- 3 I don't believe that anyone really believes in anything.
- 4 Love makes the world go round.
- 5 Face facts: love doesn't make the world go round — the sun does.
- 6 Any player not on time for training will be fined £10 for every minute he's late.
- 7 Me, emigrate? You must be joking. It would break my heart.
- 8 I'm not a bad sort of person. I just happen to believe that my country is superior to and more important than any other.
- 9 **I'll concede** that 99.9% is a good examination result. I just want to know why you failed to get 100%.
- 10 Honestly, I've **nothing against** foreigners, as long as they don't come and live next door to me or try and marry my daughter.
- 11 What will be will be.
- 12 I don't know why you bother to talk about the next World Cup. There will probably have been a nuclear war by then.
- 13 It's no good just sitting and talking about social injustice. The time has come to do something about it.
- 14 We shall achieve our aims by any means available; if that includes bloodshed and suffering for innocent people, that's the way it'll have to be.

- 15 I ran fifty kilometres in the midday sun today. Every kilometre hurt more than the last, so I feel really good about it. It must have done me good.
- 16 You might not enjoy this, but I'm certainly going to enjoy watching you suffer.
- 17 What did those politicians, lawyers and priests ever do for me? We should all follow our own ideas on government, law and the church.
- 18 Just because you're losing 0-6, 0-6, 0-5 and 0-40 doesn't mean you're necessarily going to lose.
- 19 I don't **care** what they say — palace or not, royalty or not, hundredth anniversary or not, I am not going to wear a tie.
- 20 It's the moral duty of all of us to do what we can to reduce the amount of human suffering in the world. At least, **that's the way I look at things.**
- 21 **I am convinced** that we are capable of creating paradise here on earth.

Discuss or write answers to the following questions.

- 1 What is your attitude to the issues mentioned in 'A 1980s Couple'?
- 2 What is your opinion on a controversial issue in the news at the moment?

Act or write out short arguments between the pairs of people below, who are attacking each other's standpoints and attitudes. Start: *The trouble with people like you is...* .

- 1 a vegetarian and a cattle farmer
- 2 a doctor and a teacher
- 3 a 'green' supporter and the director of a firm producing chemicals
- 4 a fourteen-year-old and an eighteen-year-old

Write part of your speech as a politician, in which you outline your views on defence spending, taxation, law and order and foreign policy.

Write in dialogue form the middle of an interview between a headmaster and a candidate for a job as a teacher. The questions are getting difficult. Start: *So, Mr Brown, what is your attitude towards pupil power in schools? And how do you view the recent trend towards ... ?*

Add here any other expressions about attitudes and beliefs as you meet them.

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