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1 If I were a politician, I would offer free school meals for all primary school children. For many children, this may be their only nutritious meal of the day. I know in an ideal world, parents should be responsible for feeding their children correctly, but some just don't have the money or knowledge to do this. Fresh fruit and vegetables are expensive and, if you're in debt or struggling financially, you'll probably buy something more affordable like packet foods, which are full of salt, sugar and other additives. Free school meals will ensure that our young people get the balanced diet they need.

2 In my opinion, governments need to start thinking about a universal income. This is a basic amount of money that everyone would get, whether they're rich or poor. It has to be enough to live on so that everyone can afford somewhere to live and enough food to eat without worrying about going into debt. The reason this is important is that, very soon, many jobs will disappear because of robots, driverless cars and other innovations. People will need money to survive. Those lucky enough to have jobs will have more money. That's fine. There's nothing wrong with some people being rich as long as everyone else can afford to live reasonably well, too.

3 The thing I would change would be tax rates. Taxes pay for our children's education, they pay for doctors, nurses and hospitals, our roads, police – everything. So why do people complain about paying them? I think people should pay more. The rich could pay 60 or 70 per cent of anything they earn over £1 million. Who needs that much money anyway? Of course, poorer people shouldn't pay as much. In fact, I don't think they should pay anything until they earn over £20,000 a year. They need that money for their home and their children. It would be much fairer. After all, you can't be expected to pay if you can't afford to.

4 I definitely know what I'd do. When my parents went to university, their courses were free. They even got extra money for accommodation and food. Nowadays, students have to pay a fortune for their education. They get loans from the government and, by the time they get their degree, they already owe something like £50,000. It's crazy. It also means that children with richer parents are more likely to go to university because their parents can afford to pay for it. Some people say we can't afford to pay for every student's education, but these young people are our future doctors, computer programmers and business people. We need to support them for the success of our nation.

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Presenter: Hello! My guest today is an author whose latest novel is set in 17th-century China. Called *Flower of the Valley*, it has received mixed reviews. Some say it's a marvellously written romantic mystery. Others, though, are worried about cultural appropriation. Ellen Stevens, welcome. Can you explain what this phrase "cultural appropriation" means – and what are your own views of it?

Ellen: Basically, it questions whether we should write about the lives of others who are from another culture. The reasons for that are firstly, we may get it wrong and secondly, we may deprive other people of the chance of writing about their own culture.

Presenter: Could you explain those issues in more detail?

Ellen: Yes, of course. Let's start by talking about getting it wrong. As authors, we always spend a long time researching our novels. We want to be as authentic as possible. But if I write a novel about a schoolchild, for example, I should find out what life for schoolkids is like today. I'm a middle-class person who went to a school in a village, so it might very well be a struggle to write a realistic book about a working-class child in an inner-city school, however much research I did.

Presenter: But wouldn't this mean that you could only write about middle-class English females?

Ellen: Not exactly. Obviously, books usually have a mixture of characters. However, I think that the main focus of my novels, the heroine if you like, should be female, white and British. I could have male characters from different races and countries as background characters, but not view the world through their eyes.

Presenter: I see.

Ellen: Opinions are divided about who should or shouldn't write what. For example, there's a very famous novel called *The Help*. The writer, Kathryn Stockett, is a white American woman and she writes the book from the point of view of a white American woman in the southern state of Mississippi in the 1960s. The white character in the book tells the stories of two black women who work in her home. Some feminists were happy that the book wrote about the civil rights movement from a woman's perspective, as most books on the subject have been written by and about men. However, other people said that the black women's stories in the book didn't sound authentic.

Presenter: What do you think?

Ellen: Well, I love the book, but I can't say whether it's realistic or not, never having experienced life in that place and time.

Presenter: Right! So, on to your book. Why did you write it?

Ellen: Well, it's a time and place I've always been fascinated by, which now brings me to my second point – depriving others of writing about their own culture. Since no one alive has any personal experience of life in China in the 17th century, I have as much right as anyone to write the story. Also, as I've never visited China, there's no danger that my knowledge of present-day China and life there would affect my writing.

Presenter: What do you mean?

Ellen: I'll give you an example. Do you remember the TV series *Downton Abbey*?

Presenter: Of course!

Ellen: Well, some people criticised it because the characters didn't act as they would have done in the early 20th century. The way they spoke to each other, the relationships between the house owners and the staff were written as if they were living in the 21st century. Either that was deliberate, to make the characters more sympathetic to the viewers, or the writer made some assumptions about life 100 years ago based on his knowledge of life now. I have no knowledge of life in China or relationships between different classes of people, so everything had to be researched. Therefore, I think it may be even more realistic than if it had been written by a Chinese author.

Presenter: I see. Some people, though, must disagree with you.

Ellen: I've had some messages demanding to know why I'm writing about Chinese culture! The messages I've received from China, though, have all been very positive and I've been invited to visit the area where the book is set, which is very exciting.

Presenter: Wonderful. Well, good luck. I hope the book is successful – and enjoy China.

Ellen: Thank you.

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Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to tonight's Film Night. Before we watch the film, let me tell you a little about it. This film, *Loving Vincent*, tells the story of the last few days of Vincent Van Gogh's life and is based on a number of letters he wrote at the time. What's amazing about the film is that it's been created entirely from paintings. A team of over 100 painters working in Poland and Athens created a total of 65,000 paintings in the style of Van Gogh.

How was it done? Well, first of all, a live-action movie was filmed with real actors working in front of a green screen. Once the film had been made, the team of artists skilfully recreated each frame as a painting, a process which took about five months. The film finally had its premiere at the Annecy International Animated Film Festival in France and was given an excellent reception.

So, why make a film about Van Gogh's final days? The fact is that even now, over a hundred years after his death, a mystery still surrounds what happened. My apologies if you already know the story, but for those who don't, let me give you a short summary.

Most people know that Van Gogh cut his ear off in a fit of depression. You may also know that after that, he spent a year in a hospital in Saint-Rémy. While there, he painted many of his most famous works, such as *Starry Night*. On leaving the hospital, he did go to stay at an inn. He seemed happy there and painted every day, including a portrait of the innkeeper's daughter, Adeline Ravoux.

Adeline later talked about Vincent's routine whilst at the inn. Every day after breakfast, he would leave the inn and paint, returning for lunch and dinner. In the evenings, he stayed at the inn and wrote letters.

On 27th July 1890, Van Gogh left the inn as usual, but didn't return for lunch or dinner. Finally, at 9 pm, he arrived.

He was unable to speak and went straight upstairs to his room. Worried, the innkeeper went up to see what was wrong. He found Van Gogh lying on the bed with blood pouring from a bullet wound in his stomach. Van Gogh managed to tell the innkeeper that he had tried to kill himself. Van Gogh survived until the next day, but died during the second night.

It all sounds straightforward, doesn't it? However, in 1956, 66 years later, an old man named René Secrétan talked about his teenage years. He claimed that he and his brother had bullied Van Gogh as he painted. They had put snakes into his paint box, thrown fruit at him and put salt in his coffee.

Then, in 2011, a biography of Van Gogh was published. It was called *Van Gogh: The Life* and the writers wrote that René and his brother had been playing with a pistol which had accidentally gone off and hit Van Gogh. To save the boys from punishment, Van Gogh had said that he was responsible for the bullet wound. It's a popular story, but not one which most experts believe. René didn't mention any such incident in 1956 and there is little evidence for the claims.

So, how will Van Gogh's death be shown in the film? Well, I'm afraid you'll have to wait and see! Ladies and gentlemen, let's watch *Loving Vincent*.

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1 News presenter: A spokesman for the company discussed the government's concerns. Whilst he acknowledged that high levels of sugar in fizzy drinks could be harmful if large amounts were consumed, he disagreed that a sugar tax was an effective way to solve the problem. He also rejected the idea of reducing the amount of sugar used or replacing it with other artificial sweeteners. However, he said that the company would stop producing promotional material aimed at pre-teens in an effort to help parents control the amount of fizzy drinks consumed by their children.

2 Woman: So what do you think we should do today?
Man: Well, we can go to Oxford Street.
Woman: We've already been there. I'd like to explore a different area of the city.
Man: Well, let's go to Southall. It's got a large Indian population, and there's a market where we can get some Asian spices that you can't get in the supermarket.
Woman: That sounds good. Is it a big market?
Man: No, but there are lots of interesting shops in the district, too, and really good Indian restaurants.
Woman: Great! I didn't see any Indian restaurants in Oxford Street.

3 Radio guest: Community art is a chance for everyone to work together to create something for the community. In order to help us with ideas, we've been visiting various projects around the world. The one that most impressed us was the Urban Art Works in Seattle. Its aim is to help young people to learn to cooperate and work together and, of course, to develop their artistic skills. There are over 400 community murals in the city and we hope to do something similar here, on a smaller scale of course. However, we want to invite everyone to take part, old and young, to make it a real community project.

4 Male: It's good that another gym has opened up, and this one-hour free trial is a great way to encourage people to join.
Female: Yes, if we hadn't already signed up at our local gym, I'd be tempted to sign up.
Male: Me too. There are loads of things to do.
Female: That's right. It's interesting watching the people here. I think a lot of them have probably never been to a gym before. They can't decide which machines to use.
Male: I remember being like that on my first day. Anyway, we've had a rest. What shall we try now?
Female: I like that rowing machine over there. I've never seen one of those before.

5 Boy: Hi, Kate. Where's the coach? It should be here by now.
Girl: It isn't coming. The school trip has been cancelled. There was a mix up with the dates. The travel company thought we were going on 7th July, not 7th June.
Boy: July! That's in the school holidays.
Girl: I know. Mr Jenkins is furious. He's got all the contracts and the dates are clearly written on them. But the travel company can't get us a coach now and anyway the hostel is booked for the wrong time as well. At least we'll get a refund and we get today off, but from tomorrow it'll be school as usual.

6 Girl: How are you feeling?

Boy: Nervous.

Girl: Don't worry. My family's cool.

Boy: I'm sure they are, but this is a huge gathering. I'll be meeting all your aunts, uncles and cousins for the first time.

Girl: You know my mum's sister, Elaine. You met her when you came to our house.

Boy: Right, but I think she disapproved of me.

Girl: No – she's just shy until you get to know her! Don't worry. It's not her opinion you have to worry about. Mum and Dad like you and that's what's important. Anyway, it's my cousin Maggie's engagement party, so no one's going to be interested in us. You can relax.

Boy: I'll try!

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Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this talk about business opportunities. Now, to start, I'm going to talk about hipsters. You may have heard of them. Basically, everything about hipsters starts off as being anti-fashion. They try to find a look which isn't fashionable, live in places which aren't fashionable and open businesses which aren't fashionable. Of course, hipsters themselves became fashionable, which probably upsets them, but, from an investment point of view, they've found the perfect business model. This is, of course: buy low, sell high. They find cheap places to live, make the areas trendy and then, when they get tired of being the centre of attention, they sell for a huge profit and move on. In business, they think of original ideas so, when they start up, they have no competition. As they build up customers, other businesses move in to offer a similar service and, again, the hipsters move on. We should aim to do the same and we're going to look at some classic hipster ideas to try to get inspiration of our own from them.

So, firstly, one many people have heard of – Cereal Killer Café in Brick Lane, London. Brick Lane used to be one of the poorest areas of London. Now, as central London prices rise, it's become popular, it's real hipster territory! Cereal Killer Café sells breakfast cereals. The owners did their own market research and found that the idea was popular. It's a simple idea. Customers can choose from over 100 brands of cereal from all over the world, with choices of different kinds of milk and toppings. A bowl of cereal costs from £2.60 to £5.50, far more than the cost to the café, and a special milk and a topping of fruit will add another pound to that. There's no cooking or preparation necessary, no need for trained chefs or skilled staff and they make a decent profit on each bowl of cereal they sell. What could be better? There were some protests when the café opened. Some people were upset that anyone would spend around £5 on a bowl of cereal. However, it also inspired others.

The next idea, I'm sure you'll agree, was influenced by Cereal Killer Café. You can imagine the owners saying: "What's easy to prepare and serve, but can be sold at a ridiculous price?" So, they came up with Hipchips, which sells crisps. Prices range from about £4.50 for a small box to £11.50 for a large one. The café makes its own crisps, so a certain amount of preparation is necessary – peeling and slicing potatoes and deep frying them. There are seven types of potatoes available to choose from. The prices also include dips.

Finally, let me tell you about Archipelago, a restaurant in central London. It isn't really a hipster restaurant, but it is different. Now, you can get any kind of food in London – Iranian, Mongolian, Vietnamese, Peruvian. You name it, there are restaurants serving it, so what can you offer to make yourself stand out from the crowd? Archipelago have found a way. They sell crocodile, snake, zebra, kangaroo and other exotic meat. For the very brave, they even offer various insects. Now, does anyone know how much these things would cost from a butcher's or supermarket? No, neither do I. So, how do we know whether their prices are reasonable or not? We don't. So, you pay £7.50 for your bug salad and accept it happily. In addition, if the food is terrible – and I'm not saying it is as I haven't eaten there – customers will probably say "Zebra meat is really tough and tasteless" rather than blaming the chef. They may even return to try something else. Where else would an unhappy customer do that?

Right, now it's your turn. In groups of four, you have 20 minutes to think of a completely new idea for a food outlet – café, restaurant, takeaway or whatever – starting from ... NOW.

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Presenter: Good afternoon. Today my guest is Christopher Parker, who lives in a luxury flat with a glorious view of the River Thames. Most people could only dream of living in a place like that and yet Christopher and many of the residents of his building are upset about living there. Welcome, Christopher, and tell us what's causing this unhappiness in living in one of the most beautiful buildings in the city.

Christopher: Hello, Deborah. Well, you're right, they are beautiful flats, with floor-to-ceiling windows and wonderful views. As soon as I saw the plans, I paid a deposit for one of the flats on the top floor. However, since I moved in, the Tate Modern art gallery next door has opened an outdoor viewing area, and that directly overlooks the flats in my building.

Presenter: Does that matter?

Christopher: Yes, it does. We have no privacy during the day. Hundreds of people look down at us, taking photos and waving. One woman even saw photos of the inside of her flat on the Internet. It's like living in a zoo. Fortunately, double-glazing windows keep out the noise.

Presenter: So, the viewing area wasn't there when you chose the flat?

Christopher: No. I know that permission had been given to Tate Modern to build the area before I bought my flat and I understand that I could have looked at the plans and models more carefully. However, I'm not the only one who thinks it's disgusting that Tate Modern should be allowed to build this viewing area without taking our feelings into consideration. Well over half the residents are furious.

Presenter: Tate Modern has taken some steps to solve the problem, haven't they?

Christopher: They've put up very small notices asking people to respect our privacy – notices which are completely ignored. They could do a lot more. Perhaps a big sign saying it's illegal to take photos of the flats.

Presenter: Is that actually true?

Christopher: Well, no, but tourists wouldn't know that. Or they could put security guards up there. They have them in the gallery to stop people touching the works of art, so why not on the viewing area?

Presenter: I believe residents have met representatives of the gallery. Did that do any good?

Christopher: Unfortunately, no. They didn't seem very sympathetic. In fact, one suggestion was that we should all install blinds and keep them closed all day, which is not really a very helpful suggestion. We did, after all, pay millions of pounds for the chance to sit and enjoy the view.

Presenter: Another comment is that London is a very crowded city and you can't expect to have such huge windows and not have people seeing inside.

Christopher: That's true. The office block behind us overlooks our flats. However, there's a huge difference. People in offices are too busy working to take much notice of us. They may occasionally glance across as they walk past the windows, but we aren't worried about that. It's just that with Tate Modern, we feel as if we're living in a goldfish bowl.

Presenter: So, what can you do?

Christopher: Well, the next stage is to take legal action to force Tate Modern to impose much stricter restrictions on visitors. That could involve lower numbers, shorter hours or, preferably, the closure of the part of the area which overlooks the flats. The main reason for going up there is to look at the river and the view down onto the Globe Theatre on the opposite side of the gallery, both of which would remain accessible. There's no real need for the gallery to advertise a 360º view – 180º would be just as good.

Presenter: OK, well, we've got some phone calls from listeners, so let's hear from ... .

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Presenter: Good afternoon, listeners. On today's show, we'll be hearing from Jonathan Cook. Jonathan is a television writer who's working on a documentary series about the Space Race which will be aired at the beginning of next year. Jonathan, you're here to tell us about one of the USA's most famous astronauts, Buzz Aldrin.

Jonathan: Yes, Mary. I'll be dedicating a whole episode to Buzz Aldrin. He's probably best known for being part of the Apollo 11 mission in 1969, which was the first time man had landed on the moon. Most people think of Neil Armstrong when they think of this mission, as he was its commander and the first man to step on the moon. However, the iconic photograph of the man on the moon that everyone remembers is actually of Buzz Aldrin rather than Neil Armstrong. Armstrong was the one who took the photo.

Presenter: Yes, that is certainly an iconic photo. Could you tell us something about Aldrin's early life?

Jonathan: Buzz was born as Edwin Eugene Aldrin Jr. in New Jersey, USA, in 1930. He got his nickname when one of his older sisters mispronounced the word "brother" as "buzzer". His family shortened it to "Buzz" and that's what he's been known as for most of his life. In fact, in 1988, he even made it his legal first name!

Presenter: Wow! What was he before he became an astronaut?

Jonathan: Well, Buzz started off as a fighter pilot in the US Air Force, flying 66 missions during the Korean War. After completing his doctorate in astronautics, he applied for astronaut training. Interestingly enough, at first, despite all of his flying experience, they didn't want to accept him as he'd never been a test pilot! But in the end, he began training and eventually got the chance to go to space on the Gemini 12 mission in 1966.

Presenter: So, what other interesting fact can you tell us about the Apollo 11 mission?

Jonathan: Well, Buzz's first words as he walked on the moon's surface were "Beautiful view", to which Armstrong replied, "Isn't it magnificent?" Buzz then commented, "Magnificent desolation." And this became the title of his autobiography.

Presenter: How would you describe Buzz?

Jonathan: I have to say that he's a guy with a great sense of humour. He's even appeared as himself in episodes of such famous TV comedy series as *The Simpsons* and *The Big Bang Theory*.

Presenter: Yes, I think I remember seeing him on one of those shows. It was really funny. Quite an impressive individual.

Jonathan: Yes, but what really impressed me about him was that, after all these years, he still hasn't given up on his dreams of expanding space travel.

Presenter: What else is he hoping for?

Jonathan: Well since the last lunar landing in 1972, there's been little progress in the field of manned space travel, but Buzz still dreams of reaching for the stars, as they say. He hopes that one day the moon will not just be a space destination, but a point of departure and that there could be people living on the planet Mars by the year 2040.

Presenter: Really? How could that be done?

Jonathan: Well, his plan is to send a crew to one of Mars' moons. The crew would operate robots by remote control to put together a settlement on Mars before anyone arrives there. Buzz is aware that these individuals reaching Mars would have to deal with many problems, such as how to protect themselves from radiation on the surface, but he believes that they'd overcome the problems. Even though he's almost 90 years old, Buzz still hasn't given up dreaming about a new space frontier.

Presenter: Fascinating stuff, Jonathan. Thanks for talking to us.

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Presenter: Welcome back to our programme. So if I took a survey and asked our listeners if it's fair to have a law against texting and driving, it would be safe to assume that most of you would be in favour. But what about texting while you're crossing a road? Should that be illegal as well? Apparently, the city of Honolulu in Hawaii has just issued legislation making that illegal. People caught viewing mobile devices, including sending text messages, can be fined up to $100. To discuss this with us, I'm pleased to have here in the studio Phillipa Beal, who is from the National Association for the Prevention of Accidents. Good afternoon, Phillipa.

Phillipa: Good afternoon, Sally. Thanks for having me.

Presenter: Well, Phillipa, many people would say that this law is a violation of one's rights. Don't you think it's going a little too far?

Phillipa: Not at all, Sally. The purpose of this law is to protect pedestrians by preventing them from getting hurt when crossing streets. After all, not every accident which involves a car and a pedestrian is the driver's fault.

Presenter: Of course. And so often, a driver ends up carrying the burden of guilt after an accident even when the pedestrian is at fault.

Phillipa: Exactly. More cities should have made laws like this a long time ago. Actually, Honolulu isn't the first place to pass such legislation. The reason it's made the news is because it's the first major city to do so. Several years ago, Fort Lee in New Jersey imposed a $50 fine on anyone who was caught texting while crossing a road, but because it's a small town, this didn't make any headlines.

Presenter: Why do you think it's taken such a long time to implement laws for texting pedestrians?

Phillipa: Probably like you just mentioned, it's considered a violation of our rights, but even more so is that people simply don't understand the dangers of texting while walking. People are turning into what are being called today "smartphone zombies". Go out into the street and look at the number of people whose eyes are glued to their phone screens. They're completely disconnected from everything and everyone around them. In fact, if you ask me, I don't think Honolulu's new law goes far enough.

Presenter: Really? What do you mean?

Phillipa: Honolulu's new legislation is called the Distracted Walking Law, but it only deals with crossing the road. Many accidents occur on the pavement too. For example, people can trip, they can run into trees and lampposts and into each other because they aren't looking at what's ahead of them. Studies show that the number of incidents involving cellphones and pedestrians is steadily increasing.

Presenter: Are there no other ways of dealing with this problem apart from giving out fines?

Phillipa: Well, there have been attempts to do this. In England, for instance, there have been experiments where lampposts were padded with soft material so that people who bumped into them wouldn't hurt themselves as much. And in Germany, someone had the idea of embedding traffic signals into the ground so people looking down at their phones would see them. But I don't believe measures such as these are the solution.

Presenter: So what do you think of these measures?

Phillipa: The intentions were certainly good, but they're not realistic solutions. If we don't hit people in their pockets, that is giving out fines, they won't stop texting.

Presenter: Thank you, Phillipa. You've certainly given us a lot to think about. And now for a short break ...