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Sharp objects allowed back on US planes

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3 December, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Sharp objects allowed back on US planes

Airline passengers in the US can once again carry sharp objects onto airplanes. Transportation Security Administration chief Edmund Hawley announced new laws yesterday. The revised rules now allow small sharp objects, including scissors less than 6 cm long, back onto aircraft. Flight attendants are worried over the decision. Many feel it is an unnecessary danger to passengers and crew. Sherry Travis, a flight attendant of 23 years, said: "I'm not quite sure what the authorities are playing at. The possibility of another 9/11 is still with us. No one needs scissors on airplanes".

The change in the rules over sharp objects is part of a campaign to increase customer service. Spokeswoman Yolanda Clark said it was part of "a number of new initiatives that will have both a positive security and customer service impact". It will also help many airlines that are having financial difficulties. Several of the largest companies need government money to stay alive. However, flight attendant Corey Caldwell is angry that passengers can now carry razors in their hand luggage. She warned: "The pilots will be able to land the plane safely [because they have guns], but the aisles will be running with blood."

WARM-UPS

1. MY AIRPLANE HISTORY: In pairs / groups, talk about your history with airplanes. Can you remember the first time you flew or went to an airport? How has air travel changed over the years? What are your best and worst moments flying?

2. SAFE TRAVEL: Look at the different examples of public transport below. With your partner(s), discuss how dangerous or safe they are. Have you had any near misses?

- Airplanes
- Trains
- Buses
- Taxis
- Ferries and boats
- Cable cars
- Subways
- Other

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

Airlines / passengers / sharp objects / airplanes / September 11 / airplane dangers / scissors / flight attendants / customer service / security / luggage / pilots / blood

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. COMMENTS ON AIRLINE SECURITY: What do you think of these comments on airline security? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- a. Terrorists will always find a way to hijack airplanes.
- b. People do not need to take scissors onto an airplane.
- c. The pilots have guns and there are air marshals on planes. No problem.
- d. I think there should be double the safety checks at check-in.
- e. The problem is explosives. Many X-ray machines can't spot them.
- f. Flying is still one of the safest ways of traveling.
- g. Airline bosses should never forget 9/11. Passenger safety always comes first.
- h. Another 9/11 will happen because the government isn't tough enough.

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

6. QUICK DEBATE: Have a quick debate with your partner about airplane security. Students A think passengers should be allowed to take scissors onto an airplane, Students B think this is a totally crazy idea.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. American airline passengers can now take sharp objects onto planes. | T / F |
| b. Passengers are not allowed to take scissors onto airplanes. | T / F |
| c. Flight attendants are not concerned over passengers having scissors. | T / F |
| d. A flight attendant wasn't sure what authorities were playing at. | T / F |
| e. There is a campaign to increase customer service. | T / F |
| f. Many US airlines are experiencing major financial difficulties. | T / F |
| g. Passengers cannot carry razors onto the aircraft. | T / F |
| h. A flight attendant warned the aisles will be running with blood. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|----------------|-----------|
| a. carry | actions |
| b. announced | changed |
| c. revised | furious |
| d. worried | doing |
| e. playing at | stated |
| f. campaign | take |
| g. initiatives | flowing |
| h. impact | drive |
| i. angry | concerned |
| j. running | effect |

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

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| a. passengers in the US can once again | danger to passengers and crew |
| b. Flight attendants are worried | authorities are playing at |
| c. an unnecessary | and customer service impact |
| d. not quite sure what the | the rules |
| e. The possibility of another 9/11 | carry sharp objects onto airplanes |
| f. The change in | with blood |
| g. a positive security | having financial difficulties |
| h. help many airlines that are | government money to stay alive |
| i. the largest companies need | is still with us |
| j. the aisles will be running | over the decision |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Sharp objects allowed back on US planes

Airline passengers in the US can _____ again carry sharp objects onto airplanes. Transportation Security Administration chief Edmund Hawley _____ new laws yesterday. The revised _____ now allow small sharp objects, including scissors less than 6 cm long, back onto _____. Flight attendants are worried over the _____. Many feel it is an unnecessary _____ to passengers and crew. Sherry Travis, a flight attendant of 23 years, said: "I'm not quite sure what the authorities are _____ at. The possibility of another 9/11 is still _____ us. No one needs scissors on airplanes".

with
announced
aircraft
danger
once
rules
playing
decision

The change in the rules over sharp objects is _____ of a campaign to increase customer service. Spokeswoman Yolanda Clark said it was part of "a number of new _____ that will have both a positive security and customer service _____". It will also _____ many airlines that are having financial difficulties. Several of the largest companies need government money to stay _____. However, flight attendant Corey Caldwell is angry that passengers can now carry _____ in their hand luggage. She warned: "The pilots will be able to _____ the plane safely [because they have guns], but the aisles will be running with _____."

land
impact
razors
help
part
alive
initiatives
blood

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Sharp objects allowed back on US planes

Airline passengers in the US can once _____ carry sharp objects onto airplanes. Transportation Security Administration chief Edmund Hawley announced new laws yesterday. The _____ rules now allow small sharp objects, including _____ less than 6 cm long, back onto aircraft. Flight attendants are worried over the decision. Many feel it is an unnecessary danger to passengers and _____. Sherry Travis, a flight attendant of 23 years, said: "I'm not quite sure what the authorities are _____ at. The possibility of another 9/11 is _____ _____. No one needs scissors on airplanes".

The change in the rules over _____ objects is part of a campaign to increase customer service. Spokeswoman Yolanda Clark said it was part of "a _____ new initiatives that will have both a positive security and customer service impact". It will also help many airlines that are having _____ difficulties. Several of the largest companies need government money to stay _____. However, flight attendant Corey Caldwell is angry that passengers can now carry razors in their _____ luggage. She warned: "The pilots will be able to land the plane safely [because they have guns], but the _____ will be running with blood."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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. STUDENT "AIRLINE SAFETY" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about airline safety.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| • again | • campaign |
| • yesterday | • initiatives |
| • 6 cm | • financial |
| • crew | • alive |
| • 23 years | • land |
| • playing | • blood |

DISCUSSION

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

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think of the decision to allow sharp objects on airplanes?
- c. Why do you think authorities have changed the rules about airplane safety?
- d. Would you worry more about flying if you knew other passengers had scissors?
- e. What reasons do you think an airplane passenger might need a pair of scissors during a flight?
- f. Do you think checks on passengers and luggage are too strict?
- g. What positive security impact regarding scissors could the transportation spokeswoman Yolanda Clark be talking about?
- h. How would you feel if the passenger next to you put a pair of scissors next to his/her lunch tray?
- i. Do you think having armed pilots and air marshals is enough to guarantee passenger safety?
- j. What do you think of the "aisles running with blood" comment?

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

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you think customer service has been placed above passenger safety here?
- d. How would you feel about the new law if you were a flight attendant?
- e. Why do you think so many of America's airlines are having financial problems?
- f. What do you think of the service on airplanes?
- g. Do you think another 9/11-type attack will happen again?
- h. What do you think America's authorities are playing at with the introduction of this new law?
- i. Do you like flying?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

AIRLINE SAFETY: You are an airline safety expert. Your government has asked you to create new laws to make airports and airplanes safer. With the other “airline safety experts” in your group, think of two or three new rules for the things in the list below. Explain your reasons for these rules.

	RULES	REASONS
Passenger identity / background check		
Passenger’s bag		
Body and clothes check		
Check-in luggage		
Flight attendant weapons		
Potentially dangerous on-board objects (cutlery for meals etc.)		

- Change partners and compare and share your ideas.
- Give each other feedback on how to improve on the ideas.
- Give presentations on your ideas to other groups / the rest of the class.
- In pairs / groups, discuss the presentations and vote on the one you thought was best.
- Which of the rules you heard do you think are necessary?

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 more information on airline and airport security in your country. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. SAFETY LIST: Make a poster explaining how the everyday things people normally take on board airplanes that might be a security risk to other passengers. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all think of similar things?

4. SECURITY PROCEDURES: Design a system that will make sure no passenger can be a danger to other passengers on an airplane. Make a security procedure plan that checks the passenger at every stage of the travel process. This starts when the passenger orders the air ticket and ends after the passenger has left the airport. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all think of similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------|
| a. carry | take |
| b. announced | stated |
| c. revised | changed |
| d. worried | concerned |
| e. playing at | doing |
| f. campaign | drive |
| g. initiatives | actions |
| h. impact | effect |
| i. angry | furious |
| j. running | flowing |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| a. passengers in the US can once again | carry sharp objects onto airplanes |
| b. Flight attendants are worried | over the decision |
| c. an unnecessary | danger to passengers and crew |
| d. not quite sure what the | authorities are playing at |
| e. The possibility of another 9/11 | is still with us |
| f. The change in | the rules |
| g. a positive security | and customer service impact |
| h. help many airlines that are | having financial difficulties |
| i. the largest companies need | government money to stay alive |
| j. the aisles will be running | with blood |

GAP FILL:

Sharp objects allowed back on US planes

Airline passengers in the US can **once** again carry sharp objects onto airplanes. Transportation Security Administration chief Edmund Hawley **announced** new laws yesterday. The revised **rules** now allow small sharp objects, including scissors less than 6 cm long, back onto **aircraft**. Flight attendants are worried over the **decision**. Many feel it is an unnecessary **danger** to passengers and crew. Sherry Travis, a flight attendant of 23 years, said: "I'm not quite sure what the authorities are **playing** at. The possibility of another 9/11 is still **with** us. No one needs scissors on airplanes".

The change in the rules over sharp objects is **part** of a campaign to increase customer service. Spokeswoman Yolanda Clark said it was part of "a number of new **initiatives** that will have both a positive security and customer service **impact**". It will also **help** many airlines that are having financial difficulties. Several of the largest companies need government money to stay **alive**. However, flight attendant Corey Caldwell is angry that passengers can now carry **razors** in their hand luggage. She warned: "The pilots will be able to **land** the plane safely [because they have guns], but the aisles will be running with **blood**."