

How politically correct are you?

READING COMPREHENSION EXERCISE



Read the contribution to an Internet message board shown below and answer the questions

Back in the good old days when I was growing up, people were more or less free to speak their minds and hardly anyone was offended. With the passage of time, people's attitude has changed drastically and something called political correctness has gained control of our lives.

These days **it's like a minefield** to be honest since some people can be so sensitive and I really hate all this political correctness which is in vogue these days. At the end of the day, if you are not a sexist, prejudiced or racist in any way, then I just do not see why you should not be allowed to say what you want. While I was living in USA, I did experience a few racist remarks towards me and I didn't get offended by it at that time because it was plain to see that the man who was **spewing this garbage** was a victim of the illegal Mexican infiltration which really did take away a lot of jobs in his area.

Usually I don't get **all worked up** and offended by certain jokes since these are really just jokes and don't mean any real harm at times. If certain people **go out of their way** to be malicious about somebody, then that is really unfair and the people at whom **these jibes are aimed at** are justified in getting offended. But if you are just joking with people about certain things or want to **get something off your chest** then I just simply do not see why you should not be allowed to do it.

If you to ask me for my honest and unbiased opinion on this subject, I would probably say that all this political correctness has gone simply too far. I am all for proper rules/regulations and I am 100% against all types of bullying and discrimination but I can't help thinking that **it has swung the wrong way** and if you happen to say something which might offend anyone, you end up being heavily punished or even worst still sued for **a slip of the tongue** or just for speaking your mind. If someone is such a little coward and has their feelings hurt over a harmless comment then they should **grow a backbone** and learn not to be so easily offended.

In the end of the day, one comes to realize that these days the situation is really fluid. When you can freely speak your mind and when you have to **hold your tongue** really depends on the situation which you are confronted with. If I am amongst friends or people with whom I am comfortable with, I would speak out freely about whatever is on my mind knowing that we all think more or less **on the same lines**. If there are strangers or people whom I do not know well enough, I refrain from making any comments which might be taken the wrong way. I have learned the hard way that sometimes it is better **to err on the safe side**.

TRUE OR FALSE?

1. When the writer was a child, people used to give their opinions with complete freedom.
2. The writer is very sensitive about the subject of political correctness.
3. He was hurt by racist remarks when he lived in the USA.
4. He understands that some jokes can make people feel offended.
5. He thinks bullying and discrimination are always unacceptable.
6. He thinks some people are upset by innocent remarks.
7. He feels free to speak his mind in any situation.
8. His mistakes have taught him to be cautious.

MATCH THESE PHRASES FROM THE TEXT WITH THEIR MEANING

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| 1. it's like a minefield | A. to be extremely careful |
| 2. spewing this garbage | B. become stronger and more confident |
| 3. all worked up | C. it has become a worse problem |
| 4. go out of their way | D. it's very dangerous |
| 5. these jibes are aimed at | E. keep silent |
| 6. get something off your chest | F. make an effort |
| 7. it has swung the wrong way | G. not hide your feelings any longer |
| 8. a slip of the tongue | H. sharing similar ideas |
| 9. grow a backbone | I. something inconvenient to say |
| 10. hold your tongue | J. these jokes try to upset |
| 11. on the same lines | K. using insulting language |
| 12. to err on the safe side | L. very angry |