



LESSON SEVEN

CRITICISM

PREVIEW AND PREPARATION

Look up the meaning of any unfamiliar words or phrases in the preview table.

criticize/criticism
colorblind flamingo
the nice version
ratty sneakers
Hey, enough already!
to a point
a bit late
in the way of
as a base
put on top of it
(something) has to go
take a look
go with these paints
clash with the shirt
work a miracle on
make a quick visit
How do I look?

What's so terrible about what I am wearing?
Do you want me to be honest or to be nice?
That's the nice version of my opinion.
You don't want to hear the honest version.
Let's start with the fact that...
Your shirt clashes with your pants.
Don't even get me started on the shoes.
Jeans, at least, are pretty safe.
It'll never be okay to wear the ratty shoes...
Do you see anything that would work?
What do you have in the way of T-shirts?
I don't have any other sneakers that would go with...
Take that as a sign that these pants have to go.
Put a shirt on top of it.
You'll look pretty decent.
What else do you have?

LISTENING PRACTICE

Listen to the audio program and try to answer these questions.

Where are Michael and Carol?

- a. Michael's place.
- b. Carol's place.

What is Michael doing?

- a. Getting dressed for a party.
- b. Criticizing Carol.

What's wrong with Michael's sneakers?

- a. Too worn.
- b. Too colorful.

In the end, what's Carol's suggestion?

- a. To visit her brother.
- b. Not to go to the party.



COLORBLIND FLAMINGO

*Dialogue between Michael (M)
and Carol (C).*

- M: So, how do I look? 1
- C: Do you want me to be honest, or do you want me to be nice?
- M: Be nice.
- C: You look like a color-blind flamingo trapped in the wrong decade. 5
- M: I asked you to be nice!
- C: That's the nice version of my opinion. You don't want to hear the honest version.
- M: Man! Enough already! What's so terrible about what I'm wearing? 10
- C: Okay, let's start with the fact that your shirt clashes with your pants. And don't even get me started on the shoes...
- M: I thought it was okay to wear sneakers these days.
- C: Sure, to a point. But it'll never be okay to wear the ratty sneakers you wear to the gym. 15
- M: I don't have any other sneakers that would go with these pants.
- C: Take that as a sign that the pants have to go. What else do you have? 20
- M: I've got my blue jeans...
- C: I don't expect we'll work any miracles on you tonight. Jeans, at least, are pretty safe. What do you have in the way of T-shirts?
- M: You think a T-shirt would be okay? 25
- C: As a base, sure. If we can find the right color T-shirt, we can put a shirt on top of it, and you'll look pretty decent.
- M: Here's my T-shirt drawer. Take a look. Do you see anything that would work?
- C: Would you mind getting to the party a bit late? 30
- M: I guess not. Why?
- C: I think we have to make a quick visit to my brother and borrow some of his clothes for you.

STUDY GUIDE

1. *Like a colorblind flamingo **trapped** in the wrong decade.*
The verb “trap” is in a passive voice – The flamingo is trapped, so we use a past participle phrase. For a verb with active voice, we use a progressive phrase, for example: Like a flamingo **dancing** in the water.
2. *You **don’t** want to hear the honest version.*
This is a casual way to give advice. Usually it is about something bad, like: You don’t want to watch that movie (I watched it, and it’s bad). You don’t want to know this person (I know this person and he is bad news). In this dialogue, the honest version would be much worse than the nice version.
3. ***Don’t even get me started on the shoes...***
This is said when the speaker has a lot to say about the topic, and it implies that if Carol does “get started,” she will “never stop.”
4. *I **don’t** expect we’ll work any miracles on you tonight.*
“Work a miracle on” is derived from the idea of working on or accomplishing something impossible. In this case, Carol thinks she won’t be able to make any positive transformations (in the way Michael dresses) tonight.
5. *If we **can** find the right color T-shirt, we **can** put a shirt on top of it, and you **will** look pretty decent.*
Can is about the ability, and means “be able to.” In this case, Carol is very sure that she **can** make it work if they **can** find the right T-shirt (and she’s hopeful that they’ll find one). Otherwise, she will say, “If we **could** find the right color T-shirt, we **could** put a shirt on top of it, and you **would** look pretty decent.” The second version expresses more doubt. The second version sounds less hopeful.
6. *Do you see anything that **would** work?*
Again, **would** is less hopeful about the possibility of finding something. It shows Michael is not sure what would work and he is leaving the judgment to Carol.
7. ***Would** you mind getting to the party a bit late?*
“Would you mind...?” is a polite way of asking if something is okay. This implies the listener has a choice of not being late. If they were definitely going to be late, the question would be “**Will** you mind...” We can also ask “Do you mind...?” This is a more informal, casual way of asking, and is most likely to be used among close friends, peers, etc.

COMPREHENSION PRACTICE

Referring back to the dialogue,
answer the question.

1. *C: You look like a color-blind flamingo trapped...*
What does “color-blind flamingo” imply?
 - a. The colors are bold and don’t match.
 - b. Michael’s clothes are too colorful.

2. *C: ...a color-blind flamingo trapped in the wrong decade.*
What does “trapped in the wrong decade” imply?
 - a. Michael should wear something more formal.
 - b. Michael’s sense of fashion is outdated.

3. *C: That’s the nice version of my opinion.*
What will Carol’s honest version probably be?
 - a. Better than the nice version.
 - b. Worse than the nice version.

4. *C: Take that as a sign that the pants have to go.*
What is Carol suggesting about his pants?
 - a. He should replace them with other pants.
 - b. They should be able to go with other sneakers.

5. *C: But it’ll never be okay to wear the ratty sneakers you wear to the gym.*
What’s wrong with Michael’s sneakers?
 - a. They are sports shoes.
 - b. They are too worn out.

6. *C: I don’t expect we’ll work any miracles on you tonight.*
What is Carol telling Michael with this statement?
 - a. Don’t get your hopes up for tonight.
 - b. It is completely hopeless.

7. *C: Jeans at least are pretty safe.*
What is Carol saying about jeans?
 - a. Jeans are not great but usually workable.
 - b. Jeans are the only things that look great.

IN OTHER WORDS

1. *So, how do I look?*
 - a. What do I look at?
 - b. What do I look like?
 - c. What do I look for?
2. *Enough already!*
 - a. Please say no more.
 - b. Never mind.
 - c. That's a good point.
3. *Let's start with the fact that (your shirt clashes with your pants.)*
 - a. First of all, ...
 - b. The fact is...
 - c. Let's put it this way, ...
4. *Sure, to a point.*
 - a. That's surely a good point.
 - b. That's a point I'd like to make.
 - c. Only to some extent.
5. *Take that as a sign that these pants have to go.*
 - a. It means you can't go in these pants.
 - b. These pants are good to go.
 - c. You should throw these pants away.
6. *What do you have in the way of T-shirts?*
 - a. What kinds of T-shirts do you have?
 - b. Do you have any other T-shirts?
 - c. Where can you buy new T-shirts?
7. *Would you mind getting to the party a bit late?*
 - a. Would you mind if this is going to be a late night?
 - b. Can you show up at the party a bit late?
 - c. Is it too late to get to the party now?

Referring back to the dialogue,
choose the expression that has the
closest meaning.

IN ANOTHER CONTEXT

Practice the following sentence patterns by reading them aloud to the class.
Try to make one new sentence for each pattern using your own words.

Let's start with the fact that

your shirt clashes with your pants.
he is never here on time.
Judy is now a straight-A student.
I am three years older than you.

What's so

terrible about
wrong with
strange about
secretive about

what I'm

wearing?
eating?
doing?
writing?

Take that as

a sign
a warning
proof

that

the pants have to go.
the guest has to leave.
the art piece has to stay.
the work has to be done.

Would you mind

going to the party
starting the show
picking up the car
working on the house

a bit
a little bit
five minutes
a day

late?
early?

You don't want to
You won't want to

hear
know
find out
see

the honest version.
the truth.
the real reason.
the other side of the story.

CONVERSATION PRACTICE

Role-play the following dialogue with a partner.

If you can't remember every word, use your own words to say the same thing.

- a. You don't want to know what I think about your clothes.
- b. What's so wrong with what I'm wearing?
- c. The color of your shirt clashes with the color of your skirt.
- d. I thought purple would go okay with yellow.
- e. To a point, but not this kind of yellow.
- f. Can I keep the purple shirt as a base and put my green dress on top of it?
- g. Don't get me started on that dress again. Don't you have anything else to wear?
- h. I'll take that as a sign that I need go shopping.

Now work with a classmate and make up a dialogue according to the new situation described below. Try to include at least eight of the new expressions in the table:

in the way of	How do I look?
as a base	What's so terrible about...?
on top of	You don't want to...
has to go	Don't even get me started...
take a look	It'll never be okay to...
go with	Take that as a sign...

Situation: A is criticizing the stationery B bought for the office.

- A: _____
- B: _____
- A: _____
- B: _____
- A: _____
- B: _____
- A: _____
- B: _____
- A: _____
- B: _____