

A. Pre-Reading Preparation

Cultural Context

Night life in North America is generally quite loud. Background music is often played in restaurants and bars. In expensive and classy places, the volume of the background music remains relatively low, but in the most common and popular places, loud music and television programs often prevent normal conversation. Music is even louder in dance clubs and concert halls.

Going out to a restaurant or a bar is a very popular activity for most people in North America and spending an evening yelling in order to try to have a conversation is not unusual! The sound level of public places of entertainment has become so loud that more and more complaints have been registered from the neighbors and the patrons of these places.

- 1) Describe the night life of your country. Do people go out for dinner? For drinks? To dance?
- 2) Do age, gender and social status define the type of night life that people choose? How? Can you give examples?
- 3) Are public places of entertainment really loud in your country?
- 4) Do you enjoy noisy environments? Why?
- 5) Describe what would constitute an ideal social outing for you.
- 6) In your country, do people usually dress up when they go out? Why?
- 7) Do families go out together in your country? What kind of places do they go to?
- 8) Do you have an active night life? What do you like about it?
- 9) If you do not have an active night life, explain why.
- 10) Is night life reserved for the week-ends or does it happen all week?

The Workers Compensation Board (WCB) is a government agency concerned with the health and safety of people in the work place. When workers get injured on the job or when their health is put in jeopardy because of their job, the board works with employers to improve conditions and/or to provide workers with monetary compensation.

- 1) Is there an equivalent to the Workers Compensation Board in your country? What is it called?
- 2) Can you explain how the equivalent to the Workers Compensation Board works in your country?
- 3) Do you think that it is important for workers to be protected against injury and health problems related to their jobs? Why?

About the text

In this text, the writer relies on her personal experience to build her argument. She starts her analysis of the noise problem in public places with personal observations and supports them with some research. She also adopts a sarcastic tone in order to incorporate humor into her argument. Her plays on words and images also contribute to the entertaining quality of her text.

- 1) What are the advantages and disadvantages of personal anecdotes in argumentative texts?
- 2) How does a humorous tone affect the seriousness of an argument? Does it strengthen or weaken the argument? Why?
- 3) What do you think is the most effective way of convincing people through writing?
- 4) How important is imagery? Is imagery more important in certain types of texts than others? Which ones? Why?

B. Reading

Read the text twice. Try to deduce the meaning of the words that you do not understand from the context in which they appear. The following vocabulary and comprehension sections will help you. By the end of the unit, you should have become familiar with many new words. If the different exercises and materials of this lesson do not enable you to understand all the words, use your dictionary to build up your vocabulary.

Appeal Falls on Deaf Ears

By Patricia Coppard, The Vancouver Courier

- 1 **T**here's a restaurant I like to go to. I like the food, the **ambiance** and the prices. But my restaurant is being ruined by awful thumping club music that makes my stomach **churn**. The waitress tells me management believes the music creates an "**upbeat**" atmosphere. As if unless the bass is jack hammering your **cerebellum** and mix mastering your intestines, you can't be having fun.
- 2 I've never been one for loud bars and clubs, even when I was young enough not to worry too much about my hearing. I'm a talker, and you can't talk in those places without feeling the next day like someone's been going at your throat with a hairbrush. These days, however, clubs aren't just loud, they're organ-shuffling. Marilyn Miller, an occupational **audiologist** with the Workers Compensation Board, describes the experience of standing at the back of the Commodore Ballroom—the busiest night club in the downtown area—during a concert feeling like she was being punched in the chest.
- 3 Six years ago, the city measured the noise level on the dance floor of one downtown club as 85 to 87 **decibels**—about the same level as a food processor crushing ice. By 1997, it had risen to the 98-to-100 range. Today, most clubs are well into the 100s—the noise level you'd expect from a power saw or loud **outboard motor**.

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