Facing Changes:
Learning English through Critical Thinking

変貌する世界に触れる総合英語

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Audio Usage Guidelines

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http://nanun-do.com [512291]

FYI:
- We recommend using a Wi-Fi connection.
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Read by
Hannah Grace
Ryan Drees

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Preface

Facing Changes: Learning English through Critical Thinking is the result of collaboration between six experienced language teachers who have worked extensively in Japan and internationally. Each member brought different insights from years of teaching, curriculum development, and intercultural communication. Our shared goal was to create a textbook that is both practical and intellectually engaging, one that supports students not just in learning English, but in using it to explore ideas and communicate thoughtfully with others.

This textbook came about from a shared sense among the authors that language learning today must go beyond grammar drills and memorized phrases. Students not only need to develop practical English skills, but also the ability to think critically, reflect on complex issues, and engage meaningfully with the world around them.

What sets this textbook apart from more traditional materials is its strong emphasis on student voice. Rather than treating learners as passive recipients of information, *Facing Changes* encourages active learner participation both in classroom interactions and also in the broader societal contexts, promoting community involvement and global citizenship. The structure of each unit moves beyond the traditional four-skills approach, fostering authentic and real-life language use through tasks that require critical thinking. Students are encouraged to integrate multiple skills to complete tasks in the textbook, such as researching, organizing, presenting, debating and problem-solving. The aim is to give students the tools to form and express their own ideas, respond to others, and engage in real dialogue.

Aimed at English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners at the B1 level of the CEFR, this textbook supports the goals set out by Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), particularly its focus on encouraging students to become more active, independent thinkers. It's designed with the Japanese university context in mind but is adaptable to a range of classroom environments.

The topics covered in this book were chosen for their relevance and their potential to spark genuine interest and discussion: media literacy, business ethics, diversity, gender equality, health and wellbeing, immigration, and more. Each unit offers flexibility for teachers to adapt lessons to suit different learners, classroom contexts, and teaching styles. Whether used as a full course or selectively, the material invites a range of approaches.

Every unit follows a consistent structure. Students begin by reflecting on what they already know, then move through vocabulary preparation, reading and listening texts, discussions, and a research-based task. A writing activity follows, and the unit ends with a reflection task that connects back to the opening. This cycle helps students track their own learning and see how their ideas and language skills develop over time.

We hope this textbook proves to be a useful and enjoyable resource for teachers and learners alike. Ultimately, *Facing Changes: Learning English through Critical Thinking* is more than just a language textbook; it's an opportunity for students to think critically, express themselves clearly, and engage with the world in a more informed and open-minded way.

Textbook Overview

Facing Changes - Learning English through Critical Thinking is designed to provide students with greater responsibility for developing their English language proficiency and critical thinking skills. It caters to learners at an intermediate level and promotes the four basic English skills, reading, writing, speaking and listening

The primary objective of *Facing Changes - Learning English through Critical Thinking* is to provide students with quality language learning material and allow them the freedom and agency to create some of their own content.

This textbook is intended for university students or adult learners at a CEFR B1-B2 level of English proficiency and is particularly suited for those preparing for international environments, whether in academic, professional, or social contexts.

Each unit is structured to engage students in topics that are relevant to their lives and the development of sustainable societies.

Unit 1 introduces the students to critical thinking through engaging content related to technology and its role in society. Students are challenged to process information and organise their thoughts while offering solutions to various problems. Students will also become familiar with expressions commonly used in discussions that will aid them throughout the textbook.

Unit 2 allows students to learn about different media types, understand and question news stories, and distinguish between real and fake news.

Unit 3 is about health and wellbeing, where students will analyze cause and effect relationships while explaining many different factors and related issues to problems. Students will learn how to inform an audience by creating a public awareness campaign.

Unit 4 introduces students to the area of business and business-related vocabulary and encourages learners to creatively express themselves using a range of adjectives. It culminates in learners developing a marketing plan for a business.

Unit 5 invites students to learn about diversity. They will learn how to use reported speech to share information they have heard, read, seen, or studied in the past. In addition, they will research other countries to see how diversity can be more than race, nationality, or gender. Ultimately, students will have the chance to look inward and evaluate diversity in their own countries.

Unit 6 is a lighter unit that explores movies from behind the scenes. Furthermore, students will analyse and discuss movies based on plot, score and special effects, learn how to write reviews and give opinions supported by evidence.

Unit 7, a unit on immigration, will introduce debate to students and how to create arguments and support them with facts and data, culminating in a full class debate at the end of the unit. Students will also learn how to compare and contrast in expository writing.

The last unit, **Unit 8**, is Gender Equality. In this unit, students will be able to understand and explain graphs and charts in English, describe statistics, identify problems, and have a better understanding of the gender gap issue.

This textbook primarily adopts a communicative approach to language teaching, encouraging students to actively engage in meaningful conversations. By focusing on task-based activities and authentic materials, the book fosters a learner-centred environment where students practice using English in practical, real-life situations.

Structure and Organization

Facing Changes - Learning English through Critical Thinking is organized into eight thematic units, each focusing on an engaging topic. Each unit includes the following sections:

- ▶ Warm-up Activities: Engaging exercises that activate prior knowledge and introduce the unit's theme.
- ▶ Language Focus: Key grammar points and vocabulary presented in context.
- ▶ Listening and Speaking Tasks: Authentic dialogues and role-play scenarios to practice oral communication.
- ▶ Research: Interesting research topics that develop critical thinking skills.
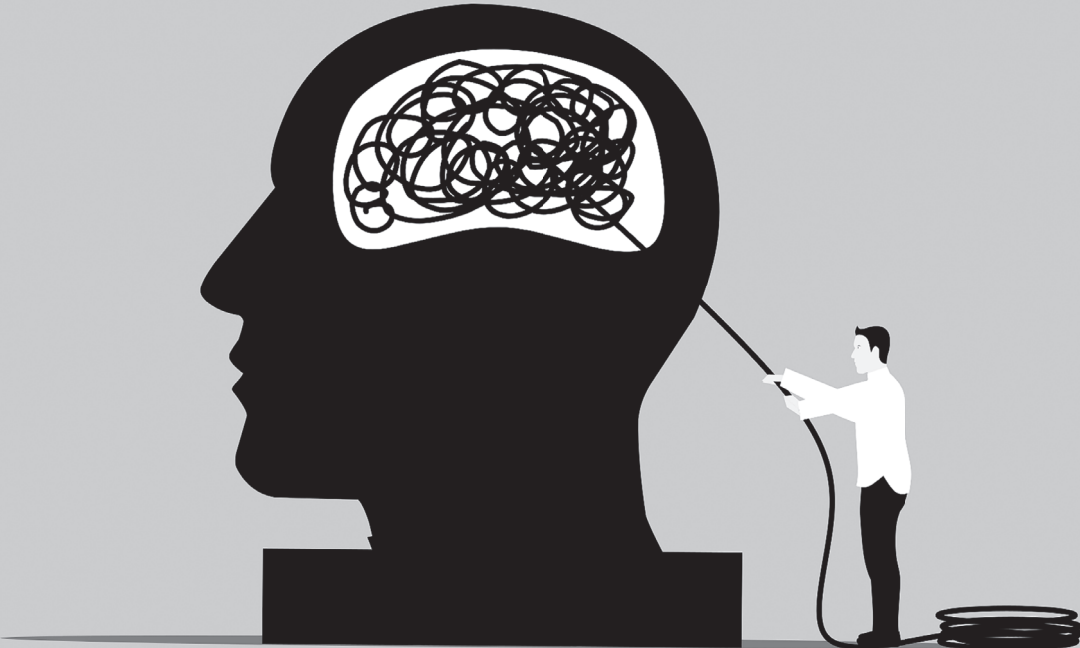- ▶ Reading and Writing Tasks: Short articles and essay prompts designed to build literacy skills.

CONTENTS

Unit 1
A Changing World

— In this chapter you will —

► *Identify and respond to problems and offer solutions*
► *Process information and organize thoughts*
► *Develop critical thinking skills*
► *Learn and use expressions for discussions*

What do you know about critical thinking?

What are some types of technology that you use?

How does technology help you?

Could you live without technology?

Back to Basics

Vocabulary: Scan the reading to find and highlight the words in the box. 🎧 02

1. **anxious** (adj) – worried and nervous
2. **bug** (n) – an illness or computer illness
3. **essential** (adj) – very important
4. **solution** (n) – an answer to a problem
5. **withdraw** (v) – to take something out

🎧 03

Many young people have never heard of the Y2K bug, but if you lived in the year 1999, then you would have known that it was something to fear. The Y2K bug, also known as the Millennium Bug, refers to a problem in the coding of computers that was expected to cause trouble in computers and computer networks around the world at the start of the year 2000. News reports warned that computers may become confused and make mistakes as they would not be able to read the new ⁵ calendar correctly and think it is January 1st, 1900.

People around the globe became anxious as December 31st approached. Some people believed it could be difficult to use technology correctly such as withdrawing money from banks. In the USA, some people were very concerned about the Millennium Bug and bought a large supply of food, water, and guns (Time, 2019), while others believed that airplanes would crash. *The New York Times* ¹⁰ reported that air transportation was heavily affected as airports around the world were abandoned by people. Many companies identified the problem and spent billions of dollars to prevent harm to their computing systems (Britannica, 2021). Fortunately, nothing major happened to the computer systems and people were relieved.

In today's advanced technological world, people often look back at the Y2K bug and wonder why ¹⁵ society panicked about the new millennium. However, in 1999, computers were not as widespread as they are today, and most people had no idea how they worked (de Jeger, as cited in Time, 2019). Nowadays, technology is an important part of our lives and we rely on many items to help us live. For example, most homes have TVs, washing machines, microwave ovens and refrigerators and many people own smartphones and computers. ²⁰

However, did you ever wonder what your life would be like if all technology failed? Could you survive without your computer, phone, Internet, washing machine, or microwave oven? One

person who lived without technology was an Irishman called Mark Boyle. Mark saw that people were becoming too busy and he wanted to live a more simple life with nature and decided to live for one ²⁵ year without technology. Mark built his house with wood and grew his own vegetables. He didn't have a computer, the Internet, electricity or running water. Many people may think that it is difficult to survive without these essential things, but Mark really enjoyed the experience. He believes that a big advantage of his life is that he does not have any bills to pay. Mark is also called The Moneyless Man because in 2008 he lived for a year without money. He did this because he wanted to show people that ³⁰ they can live a life without harming the environment. For example, people do not have to always buy new things but can get things that friends or other people don't need. If a friend doesn't need their car anymore, then maybe the person can buy it from them. Mark is an example of how individuals can be creative and find solutions to problems. His problem was that life was too busy and his solution was to live with nature. If Mark can live without technology and money then maybe more people can too.

Your Vocabulary: Choose five words from the reading to learn.

Vocabulary Term	Definition
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

True or False

1. The Y2K Bug and the Millennium Bug are the same. **T / F**
2. In 1999, people became anxious because they couldn't read calendars. **T / F**
3. Companies did not spend money to prevent harm from the Millennium Bug. **T / F**
4. Many people did not know how computers worked in 1999. **T / F**
5. Mark Boyle believed people are too busy in their lives. **T / F**
6. Mark is called The Moneyless Man because he lives with nature. **T / F**
7. (Your original) _____ **T / F**

Post-Reading Discussion

1. How has technology impacted society the most?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of a world without technology?
3. Rank the following 5 things that you could not live without from 1 to 5. Explain.

   Money / Smartphone / Television / Computer / Friends

   1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

4. (Your question) _____

Vocabulary

dating apps	diapers	lonely	spooky

Before You Listen

1. How do you feel about ads on the Internet?

2. Are the products in those ads things you want or need?

3. If you had the chance to help a company you worked for become successful, what information would be important? How would you collect the information?

While You Listen

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You will hear two classmates talk about targeted ads. Take notes in the box below.

Listening Notes:

Comprehension Questions

1. What was James' advice for May to recover from the breakup?

2. Why would businesses want to listen to people's private conversations?

3. How did James and May test if their devices were listening to their conversation?

Discussion Questions

1. Has the Internet suggested any products to you that were exactly what you were looking for? Please share your experiences.

2. How do you feel about businesses accessing smartphone microphones and search engine history?

3. (Your question) _____

4. (Your question) _____

Expressing Opinions

In effective communication, it is important to express your opinion in a clear manner. You should also try to support your opinion with reasons and explanations. Sometimes people will agree or disagree with your opinions and you will agree or disagree with theirs.

Language for Agreeing

Exactly.
Definitely.
Absolutely.
That sounds like a good idea.

_____

Language for Disagreeing

I am not sure if I agree …
You have a good point, but …
I see your point, but …
That's a great idea, but …
That's not necessarily true …

_____

Other Good Responses

I've never thought about it …
Interesting.
_____? (Repeat other's responses)
You think so?

_____

+ Your Reason & Explanation

A Using the language from the box above, discuss the following situations with your friends.

1. You are going for dinner with your friend. You really want to go to an Italian restaurant, but your friend really wants to go to a French one. Discuss.

2. You and your friend are planning a trip. You really want to go to (fill in a place), but your friend really wants to go to (fill in a place). Discuss.

3. You need a laptop for university. You prefer (choose a brand), but your parents only want to buy (choose another brand) for you. Discuss.

4. You work part-time at a coffee shop. Recently, fewer customers are coming and your boss has reduced the number of employees. However, this means that you have more work to do. You are discussing your salary with your boss. You think you deserve a wage increase because you have more responsibilities, but your boss disagrees as the business doesn't make enough money. Discuss.

B Write your own situation for discussion.

_____

_____

Moving Online

In the reading, you learned that if people are creative, they can find solutions to many problems. However, finding solutions is not always easy and can involve discussions with other people. Below is a discussion you will have about a university moving all its classes online.

Jami University is a university in Japan currently planning its future. It is worried about the declining student population in Japan and is considering moving all its classes online. The university believes that if all classes are online, it can attract more students in Japan and internationally.

You have been invited to a meeting to discuss this plan and are expected to present your opinion on the topic. After listening to all the opinions and having a discussion, the decision will be made.

Person 1: The president of Jami University
Interview or imagine a university president's opinion of online learning.

Person 2: First-year students at Jami University
Interview or imagine a university student's opinion of online learning.

Person 3: A parent of a student at Jami University
Interview or imagine a parent's opinion of online learning.

Person 4: A lecturer at Jami University
Interview or imagine a university lecturer's opinion of online learning.

Person 5: International student studying at Jami University
Interview or imagine an international student's opinion of online learning.

Discussion Memo

Classmate	Opinion	Follow-Up Questions
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking is thinking about something in more than one way and coming to a solution. We use critical thinking skills every day when we make decisions. Please remember that the process of thinking is more important than agreeing or disagreeing.

Let's look at an example: "Children under 10 years old shouldn't own a smartphone."

If you think about this in one way, you might agree that children are too young to own a smartphone. However, if you look at it in another way, you might disagree because parents can contact their children if they have a smartphone. There are more reasons to consider before you agree or disagree. Here is the process that people follow when they are thinking critically.

▶ **Remember** and recall what you have learned from school, books, news, etc.
   ▶ **Understand** and explain the information in your words.
      ▶ **Apply** and use the information in your lives.
         ▶ **Analyze** and investigate if the information is appropriate, relevant, and up-to-date.
            ▶ **Evaluate** and criticize if your decision is well thought out.
               ▶ **Create** and plan what we will do, think, or even believe.

(Bloom's Taxonomy)

Writing

Using as many of the words and knowledge you acquired in this unit, write a short paragraph advising someone of the advantages and disadvantages of a life without technology.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Reflection

What did you learn about critical thinking?

**Vocabulary:** Use this table to keep track of new words you learn from classmates.

Words	Notes

Critical Questions

Use this table to write questions about the topic that you would like to ask your classmates or teacher.

Unit 2
Media Literacy

— In this chapter you will —

▶ *Learn about different types of media*

▶ *Understand and question the media*

▶ *Identify "Real News and Fake News"*

▶ *Identify bias in the media*
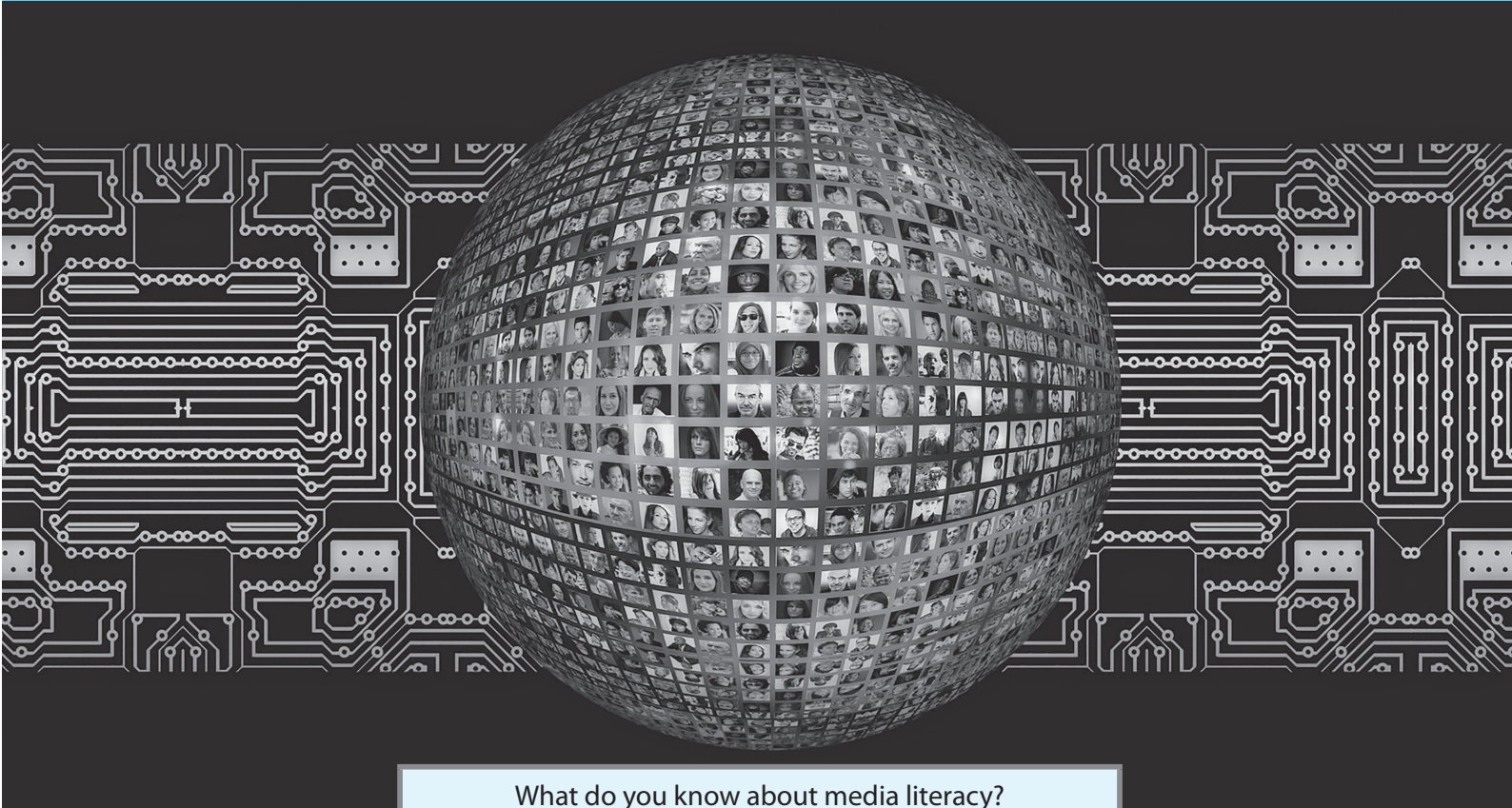
What do you know about media literacy?

Do you watch and trust the news?

What news sources do you use and why?

Do news reporters have to be honest?