

Learning English podcasts ... from the  
Hellenic American Union©

Level: Advanced

Lesson: 36

Title: "Cigarette Lawsuit"

**Summary:**

*Vanessa and Denise discuss about a lawsuit by smokers against the tobacco industry.*

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*In this issue of world report, Vanessa and Denise are in the middle of a live show in a radio studio. Listen to their conversation and answer the question that follows about the main idea.*

**Dialogue:**

**Vanessa:** Cigarette smokers the world over are overjoyed, following a US courts' decision to **give the go-ahead** to the largest class action lawsuit in the US. You're a smoker aren't you, Denise? What do you think about this?



**Denise:** Well, Vanessa, I was but I quit at New Year. However, **the tobacco companies have been left literally "fuming"** by this new case Vanessa.

**Vanessa:** Why is that?

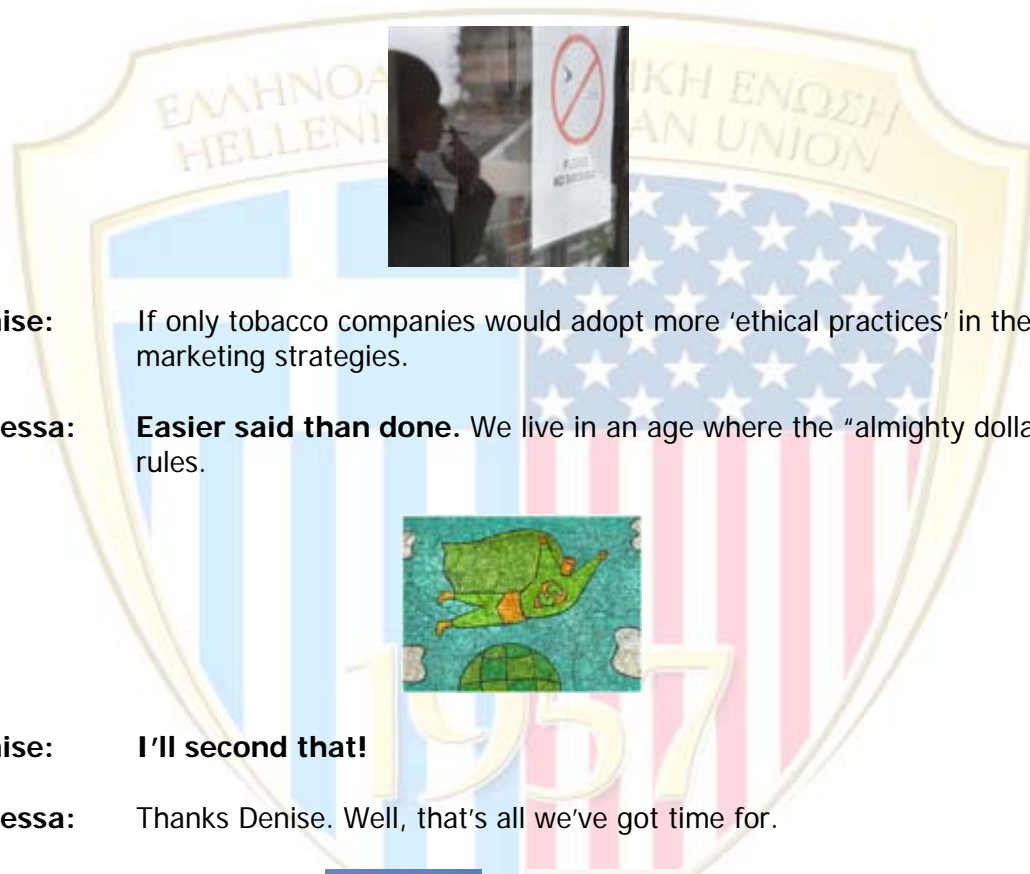


**Denise:** Well, to put it bluntly, if this lawsuit is won, **they'll be forced to fork out literally millions** of dollars in compensation. I think, **it's common knowledge** that tobacco companies have always tried to

rope in smokers with various...well, lets' just say..."questionable methods". And now its time for "the smokers' revenge"



**Vanessa:** That would certainly make an excellent film title, but I don't think tobacco companies would like it.



**Denise:** If only tobacco companies would adopt more 'ethical practices' in their marketing strategies.

**Vanessa:** **Easier said than done.** We live in an age where the "almighty dollar" rules.



**Denise:** **I'll second that!**

**Vanessa:** Thanks Denise. Well, that's all we've got time for.



*Now answer the following question...*

What news story are they discussing?  
A law suit by smokers against the tobacco industry.

*Now listen again to the dialogue in parts. After each part there will be 3 to 4 questions on some details...*

## Part 1

**Vanessa:** Cigarette smokers the world over are overjoyed, following a US courts' decision to **give the go-ahead** to the largest class action lawsuit in the US. You're a smoker aren't you, Denise? What do you think about this?

**Denise:** Well, Vanessa, I was but I quit at New Year. However, **the tobacco companies have been left literally "fuming"** by this new case Vanessa.

**Vanessa:** Why is that?

**Denise:** Well, to put it bluntly, if this lawsuit is won, **they'll be forced to fork out literally millions** of dollars in compensation. I think, **it's common knowledge** that tobacco companies have always tried to rope in smokers with various...well, lets' just say..."questionable methods".

*Now answer some questions...*

1. What does Vanessa mean when she says **"give the go-ahead?"**

When Vanessa says "give the go-ahead", she means that the courts have allowed people to start filing lawsuits against the tobacco companies.

2. What does Denise mean when she says **"the tobacco companies have been left literally fuming?"**

When Denise says "the tobacco companies have been left literally fuming", she means that the tobacco companies have been made angry by this decision.

3. What does Denise mean when she says **"they'll be forced to fork out literally millions" ?**

When Denise says "they'll be forced to fork out literally millions", she means that the courts will force the tobacco companies to pay millions.

*Now listen again to the second part of the dialogue...*

## Part 2

**Denise:** And now its time for "the smokers' revenge"

**Vanessa:** That would certainly make an excellent film title, but I don't think tobacco companies would like it.

**Denise:** If only tobacco companies would adopt more 'ethical practices' in their marketing strategies.

**Vanessa:** **Easier said than done.** We live in an age where the “almighty dollar” rules.

**Denise:** **I’ll second that!**

**Vanessa:** Thanks Denise. Well, that’s all we’ve got time for.

*Now answer some questions...*

1. What does Denise mean by **“it’s common knowledge”**?

When Denise says “it’s common knowledge” she means everyone knows that.

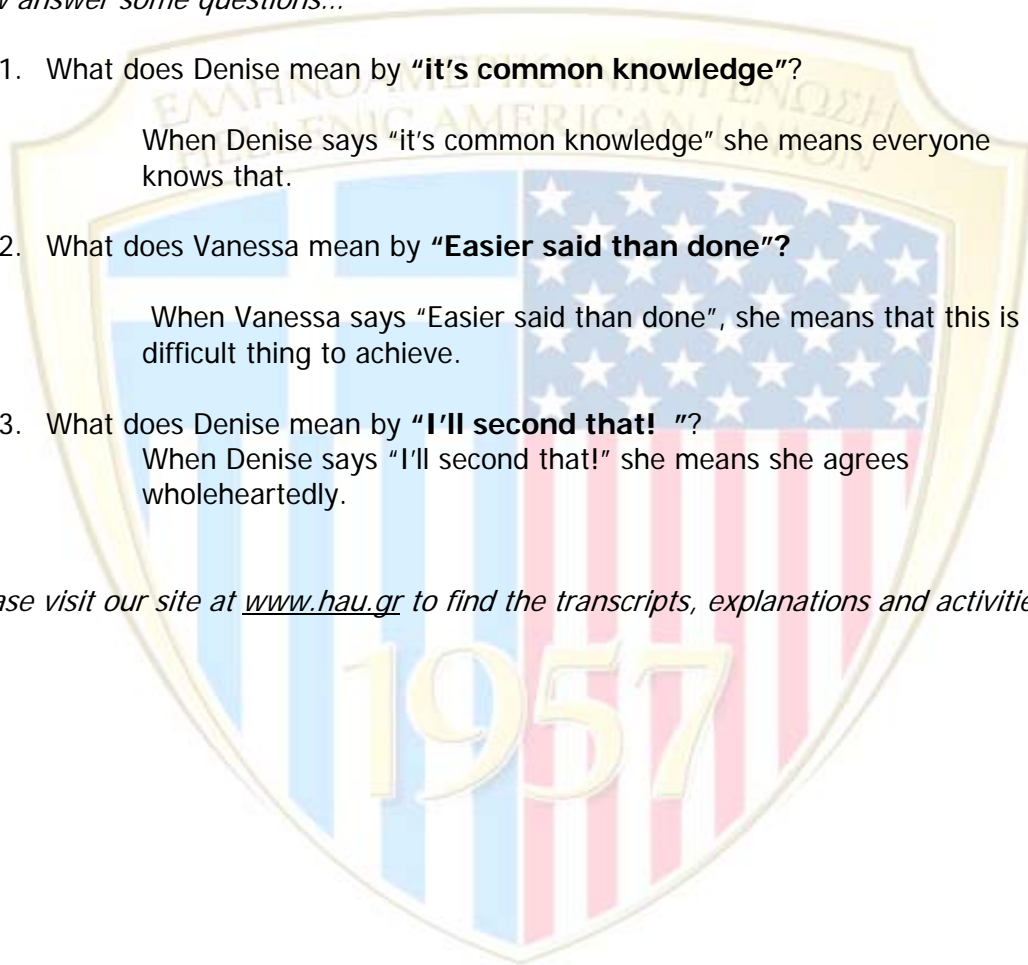
2. What does Vanessa mean by **“Easier said than done”**?

When Vanessa says “Easier said than done”, she means that this is a difficult thing to achieve.

3. What does Denise mean by **“I’ll second that! ”**?

When Denise says “I’ll second that!” she means she agrees wholeheartedly.

*Please visit our site at [www.hau.gr](http://www.hau.gr) to find the transcripts, explanations and activities.*



## GLOSSARY

**Adopt** (Vb.) if you **adopt** something you claim it or choose it as your own. You can adopt children, ideas and ways of behaving.

**Blunt** (adj.) if you are blunt then you say what you think without trying to be polite or caring about other people's feelings. **Put it bluntly** means to say something in this manner.

**Ethical** (adj.) **Ethical** means relating to moral principles.

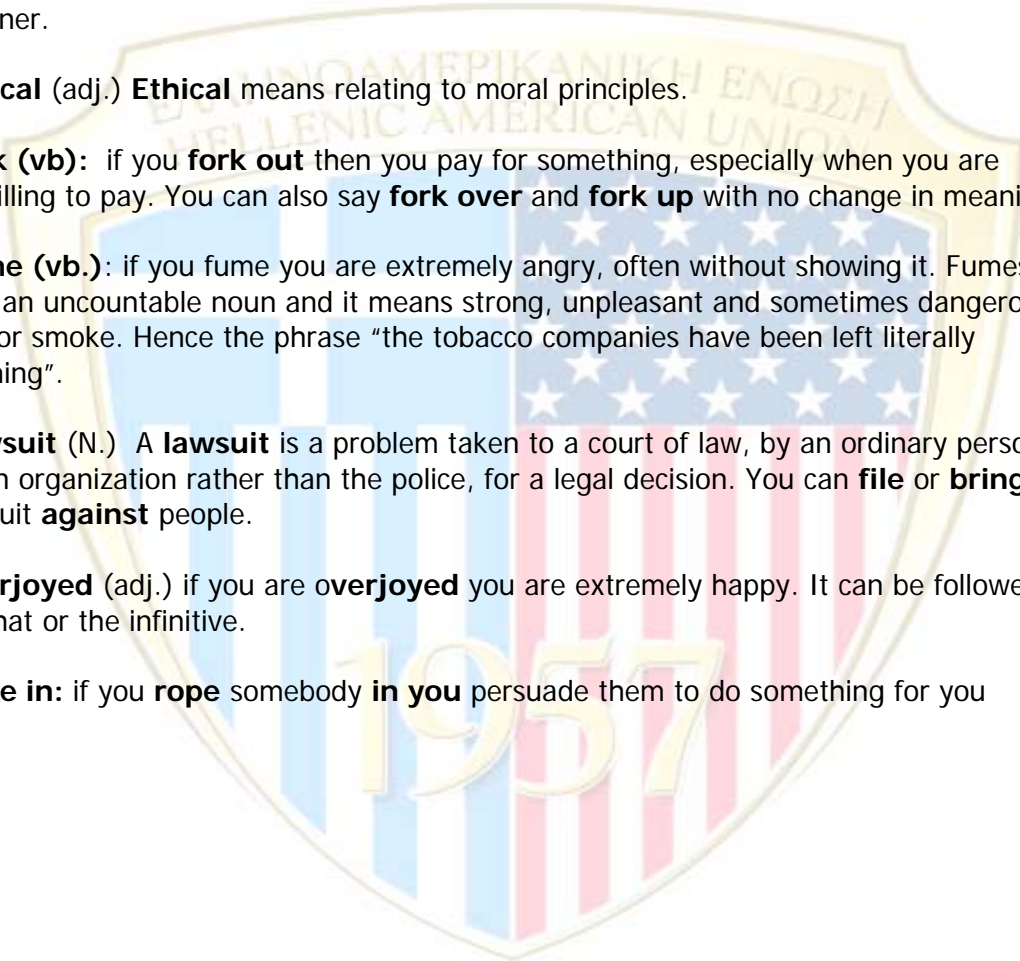
**Fork (vb):** if you **fork out** then you pay for something, especially when you are unwilling to pay. You can also say **fork over** and **fork up** with no change in meaning.

**Fume (vb.):** if you fume you are extremely angry, often without showing it. Fumes is also an uncountable noun and it means strong, unpleasant and sometimes dangerous gas or smoke. Hence the phrase "the tobacco companies have been left literally "fuming".

**Lawsuit** (N.) A **lawsuit** is a problem taken to a court of law, by an ordinary person or an organization rather than the police, for a legal decision. You can **file** or **bring** a lawsuit **against** people.

**Overjoyed** (adj.) if you are **overjoyed** you are extremely happy. It can be followed by that or the infinitive.

**Rope in:** if you **rope** somebody **in you** persuade them to do something for you



## ACTIVITIES

### Activity 1

Choose the most appropriate aforementioned word or expression to fill in each blank. You may need to change the form of the word (e.g. from a noun to a verb)

1. We had to \_\_\_\_\_ ten bucks to park near the stadium.
2. Two of the directors have filed \_\_\_\_\_ against their former employer.
3. The whole episode left me \_\_\_\_\_ at the injustice of it all.
4. She told me \_\_\_\_\_ that I should lose weight.
5. Helen was \_\_\_\_\_ to hear that she had got the job.
6. We are \_\_\_\_\_ people and therefore we do not approve of their activities.
7. Roz has \_\_\_\_\_ one or two funny mannerisms since she's been away.
8. At the last minute, we \_\_\_\_\_ a couple of spectators to complete the team.

### Activity 2

A. Study the following explanations:

Denise says "If only tobacco companies would adopt more 'ethical practices' in their marketing strategies." **If only** is used here to express a wish that is most unlikely to come true. She could have said "**I wish...**" instead, but **if only** expresses more strongly the idea that the situation she is wishing for does not exist, whereas wish is used for something that might come true.

The following words and phrases can be used to express wishes and regrets:

- I wish + past (used for present time)
- I wish + past perfect (used for past time)
- If only + past (used for present time)
- If only + past perfect (used for past time)
- Be sorry that
- Regret + gerund

- It's a pity / shame (that)

*B. Complete each of the sentences in such a way that it means exactly the same as the sentence printed before it.*

1. It's a pity smokers are so addicted to nicotine

If only ...

2. Craig regrets taking up smoking at 14.

Craig now wishes ...

3. It's a pity she never consulted a doctor about her cough before it was too late.

I wish she ...

4. "I'm sorry I didn't quit smoking when I was younger." David said.

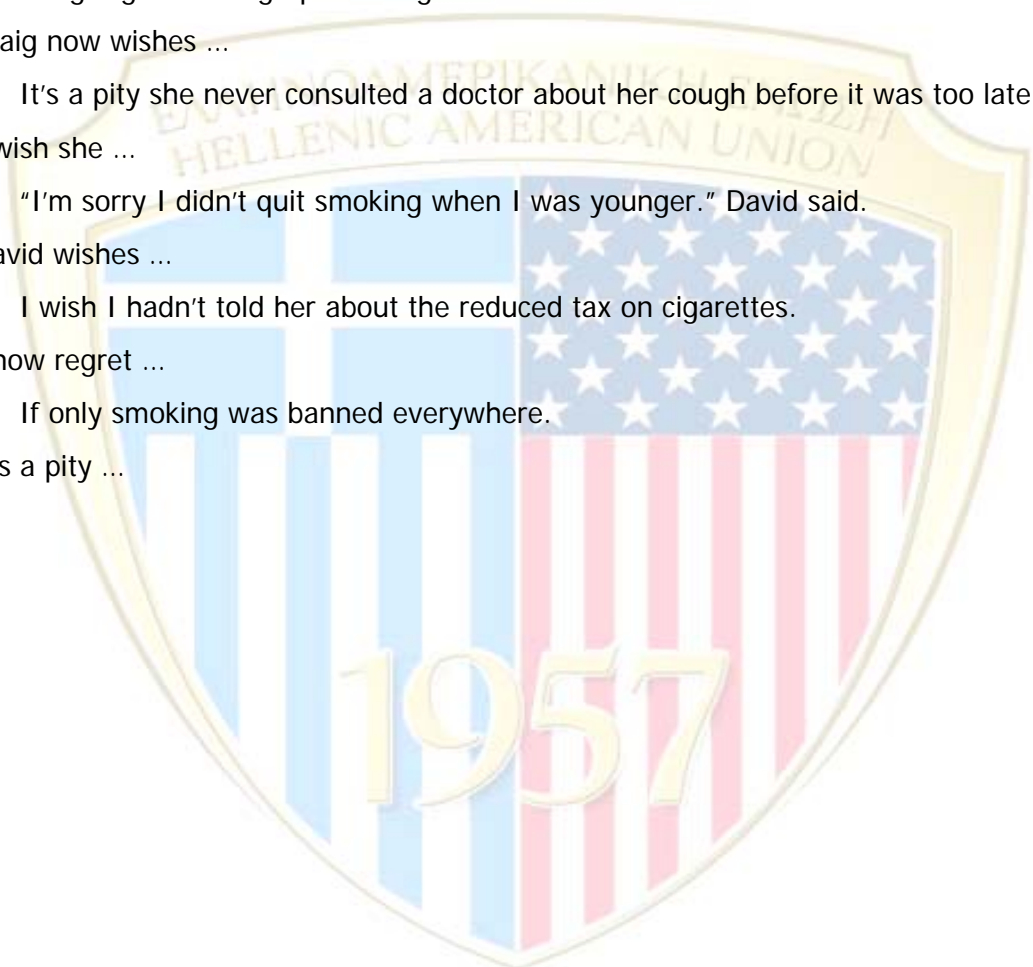
David wishes ...

5. I wish I hadn't told her about the reduced tax on cigarettes.

I now regret ...

6. If only smoking was banned everywhere.

It's a pity ...



## KEY TO ACTIVITIES

### Activity 1

1. fork over
2. a lawsuit
3. fuming
4. bluntly
5. overjoyed
6. ethical
7. adopted
8. roped in

### Activity 2B

1. If only smokers weren't so addicted to nicotine.
2. Craig now wishes he hadn't taken up smoking at 14.
3. I wish she had consulted a doctor about her cough before it was too late.
4. David wishes he had quit smoking when he was younger.
5. I now regret telling her about the reduced tax on cigarettes.
6. It's a pity smoking isn't banned everywhere.

