κ *Explain the author's statements, agree or disagree with them.*

1. In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible.
2. Political language has to consist largely of euphemisms and sheer cloudy vagueness.
3. The great enemy of clear language is insincerity.
4. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns ... to long words and exhausted idioms.
5. In our age there is no such thing as 'keeping out of politics'.
6. When the general atmosphere is bad, language must suffer.

Exercise 47
Now discuss the following:

1. In what circumstances do people resort to euphemisms?
2. In what spheres of life is the use of euphemisms justified? Why?
3. In what areas are they absolutely unacceptable? Why?
4. Could people do without euphemistic language? Why?
5. Is to be frank and blunt a virtue or a vice?

Exercise 48
a. Read the article explaining the origin of the term 'politically correct' and say whether the author approves of the phenomenon.

The Language of Political Correctness

Political correctness seems to have originated with US college students in the late 1980s and early 1990s. A set of values has come to dominate university campuses which are called politically correct: that is to say one has to have a single attitude towards certain sensitive issues such as the Third World, the situation of women, etc. "Politically correct" describes those who are ecologically sensitive, vegetarian, feminist, multicultural, sandal-wearing, etc. PC – things include ethnic pride (especially Afrocentrism), recyclable products, saying 'people of colour (never coloured people), 'women' (not girls) and 'Ms' (not Mrs or Miss), sensitivity to unconscious racism, and 'diversity' in all things. Non-PC things include polystyrene cups, saying 'businessmen' or 'congressmen' (as opposed to 'persons'), etc.

The roots of political correctness go back a long way. In the U.S. A diplomats, journalists, and others such as university teachers have been increasingly asked not to use certain words and expressions because they are politically incorrect and might cause offence, and to use other, politically correct or PC, words. Where organizations such as universities have rules about words to be avoided in conversation and elsewhere, these rules constitute a speech code.

There are a lot of arguments supporting it, and still there are some who dismiss it as an irrelevance.

The opponents say that 'political correctness' is a lacking sense but dangerous thought and speech code that threatens the free speech and intellectual curiosity' of so many students and their teachers at colleges across the USA.

'Political Correctness[7] nowadays sees everything in terms *of race, class,* and *gender.* While celebrated by promoters as a list of objectively offensive things one may not say, 'Political Correctness' is really a subjective list put together by the few to rule the many – a list of things one must think, and do. It **affronts** the right **of an individual** to establish his or her own beliefs. It enforces **a dangerous way of** looking at the world - in black and while.

Journalists are urged to avoid referring to African 'tribes ', because this offends many blacks (who are more often' African **American**') They are told never to use the word 'Jewess', but to **remember to call** a Latino woman a 'Latina'. 'Eskimos' disappear because they are not a homogeneous group and may view the term Eskimo **negatively.** 'Dutch treat' and 'Dutch courage' are offensive (to the Dutch?). There is more. The term 'deaf and dumb' is apparently offensive. Much as 'birth defects' are best replaced by 'congenital disabilities[5]. Because many women do the job, 'letter earner' is preferable to 'mailman'. 'Mankind' is no good. 'Gringo', 'savages[7] and "redskin" are among the words preferably to be avoided.

The latest edition of Webster's College Dictionary has a chapter called 'Avoiding Insensitive and Offensive Language' which urges the reader to avoid 'emphasizing the differences between people' and 'think of a language as a way towards rectifying the unequal status