

Analysis Time – New Gun Laws.

Facing powerful opposition to new gun laws, President Barack Obama is considering(1) 19 steps that he could take through executive action(2). The steps could include punishing(3) people who lie on gun sale background checks(4), getting more complete records in the federal background check database(5), more federal research into gun use, ordering tougher(6) penalties against gun trafficking, and giving schools flexibility to improve safety. "My starting point is not to worry(7) about the politics," said the President. "My starting point is to focus on what makes sense, on what works." At the same time Obama said that he will not back off(8) of his support for sweeping(9) gun legislation that requires congressional support. There is, however, great opposition from the very influential gun lobby(10). "Will all of these (changes) get through Congress? I don't know," Obama said at a news conference on Monday.

1. 'To consider' is to think about before making a decision. The word 'considering' is used a lot in English in the same way as 'understanding that' or 'taking into account'.
 - a. We're considering buying the house; we'll make a decision in a few weeks.
 - b. Considering the bank's past mistakes, I wouldn't invest in them.
2. 'Executive action' is the ability of the President to pass laws, or make changes to laws without Congress. This power is limited. The word 'executive' comes from the word 'to execute' meaning to put into action, and also to kill. It is, therefore, used as the title of the head of a company. The person who makes the decisions.
3. 'The steps could include punishing...' this sentence has a list of verbs, all in the gerund form. You wouldn't actually use the infinitive form of the verbs instead; the gerund sounds more normal.
 - a. To make a cabinet, the steps include buying and cutting the wood, finishing it, drilling holes, measuring, and putting it all together.
 - b. The steps to make a good cake should include buying good quality ingredients, and having the right setting on the oven.
4. 'A background check' is an investigation into someone's background or personal, past life. 'Background' is like the back scene of something, a picture, or a person.
 - a. You have to have a background check before you can become a teacher.
 - b. His background check revealed that he had been in prison for stealing.
5. 'Database' is a collection of information or 'data'. It is like a big file.
 - a. Your computer's database is full; you need to get more memory.
 - b. They lost information from their database.
6. 'Tough' or 'tougher' can be used when talking about penalties, punishments, laws, or luck.
 - a. He lost his job and then crashed his car; what tough luck!
 - b. We must have tougher punishments for violent crimes.
7. "My starting point is not to worry.." here you could say 'to not worry'. There is only a slight difference. If you want to emphasize that you are deliberately avoiding worrying, then it is more effective to have 'not' first. The other way around emphasizes the whole meaning rather than the negative of the verb.
 - a. I will control my classroom by not paying attention to noisy, distracting students.

- b. They were advised not to go on the lake while it was frozen.
- 8. 'To back off' means to walk away from, to back away, to leave alone, or to forget. I have mentioned it before in a previous podcast. In this instant, it describes how President Obama does not want to walk away from proposed changes.
- 9. 'Sweeping ' is often used when talking about the making or changing of laws. When a big change is made it is described in this way.
 - a. Sweeping changes have been made to the way the office is run.
 - b. Sweeping legislation about school safety will be proposed.
- 10. 'Lobby' is a noun and a verb. The verb means to try and influence, and the noun is a group of people who do just that. It is also the entry into a hotel, where you book your room, or like an ante room or a gallery.
 - a. The environmentalists are lobbying for forest preservation.
 - b. The turkey protection lobby is asking for more rights for turkeys.

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