Words In The News

Teacher’s pack
Lesson plan and student worksheets with answers

The death penalty
03 January 2007

BBC WORLD SERVICE LEARNING ENGLISH
The death penalty – 03 January 2007

Level: Intermediate and above

Topic: Following the execution of Saddam Hussein, Italy is to campaign for a global ban on the death penalty.

Language: Vocabulary of a news report

Aims: Reading skills – Understanding a short news report
Language skills – Practice using hyphens
Speaking skills – Discussion

Materials: Worksheet 1 – Comprehension questions
Worksheet 2 – Vocabulary matching task
Worksheet 3 – Language focus – hyphens
News story – Available online at:


Preparation: Before the lesson, make enough copies of worksheet 2 so that there is one worksheet for every 4 – 5 students. Cut up the vocabulary and explanations, to make a matching exercise. Students also need one copy each of worksheets 1 and 3.

Students will also need access to a good learner dictionary if you decide to do the further language practice activity suggested at stage J.

(optional) You may wish to copy and cut up the discussion phrases on page 8 of this document to use at stage L (discussion). Make enough copies so that each student has at least 5 strips of paper, with a different phrase on each strip.
LESSON STAGES

A  Stimulate student interest in text
Generate interest about today’s topic by writing 'The Death Penalty' as a title at the top of the board. Create 2 columns by drawing a line down the centre of the board: at the top of one column write 'for' and at the top of the other, write 'against'. Get the students to suggest arguments for and against the death penalty and summarise them in note form in the columns. A couple of suggestions to get them started:

For:
It's a good deterrent
The person can never repeat the crime

Against:
The person might be innocent
It's uncivilised

Try to get about 5 suggestions in each column, but don't worry if ideas dry up: stop the activity after a few minutes.

B  Pre-teach essential vocabulary
Elicit/present key vocabulary that students need either to understand the key points in the text or to understand and/or answer any questions that you'll set them later in the lesson. The vocabulary is from Words in the News (so you can elicit the vocabulary by using the explanations provided online or below).

You could either pre-teach the vocabulary at this stage of the lesson or you could use the vocabulary building activity from further down in this lesson plan. Have students working together in small groups and ask them to try to match the vocabulary with the definitions.

Encourage them to work with the other groups to pool their knowledge. When they have done as much as they can, if they have dictionaries, ask them to look up the words to check their answers and to find out the definitions of any words they are not sure of. If they don't have dictionaries, check their answers and give them help.

Whichever method you use to elicit/present the vocabulary, you should then model it (say it clearly, highlighting the word stress) and get them to repeat the words after you.

justify
give a good excuse or reason for doing something

moratorium
an official period of delay, waiting, temporary stopping or suspension of an activity
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**a cross-party motion**
a proposal for a new law which is supported by all political parties

**came to nothing**
failed; the desired result was not achieved

**universal condemnation**
strong disapproval from everybody

**press leaks**
private or secret information which is given to the media, often by someone who does not have permission to do so

**spectacle**
a show or display, often embarrassing or degrading, intended to be seen by a large number of people

**fundamental**
basic, essential

**dictator**
a ruler who has absolute power and complete control, often of a country or state

**derision**
unkind laughter, ridicule, mockery, contempt

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**C  Written record of vocabulary**
Write the words on the board, eliciting spelling as you write. Elicit and show the word stress of each item and word class, if appropriate. Give students some time to copy the boardwork into their notebooks.

Boardwork:

**justify**

**moratorium**

**a cross-party motion**

**came to nothing**

**universal condemnation**

**press leaks**
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a public spectacle

fundamental / fundamental
dictator
derision

D Set global questions
Tell the students they are going to read a text which is about the death penalty debate. Put these questions on the board:

1. Which country wants to ban the death penalty?
2. Which event has caused a political discussion of the death penalty?

Students read text the first time. Give them a time limit (1 - 2 minutes) to read the text quickly to find the answer to the first 2 questions. They do not need to understand the details for each topic.

E Check answers
Elicit students’ answers and write the correct answers on the board.

The answers are:
1 – Italy.
2 – The execution of Saddam Hussein.

F Set comprehension questions
Hand out Worksheet 1 or use the online quiz. Students complete the worksheet to help them understand the text in more detail. Give them a time limit (5 - 6 minutes) to read the text a second time in more detail and to answer the questions.

G Check answers
Elicit True or False answers. Direct attention to a particular paragraph if an answer is wrong to try to elicit the correct answer (see worksheet 1 and answer key).

H Vocabulary consolidation/building
Students do the vocabulary matching exercise (worksheet 2 that you cut up before the lesson): in small groups they match each word with the right definition.

I Check answers
Elicit answers. If an answer is wrong, ask other students to try to elicit the correct answer.
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Language focus: hyphens
Check that students know what a hyphen is, and that they know the difference between a dash and a hyphen.

Hyphen: a short line that joins 2 words together to make a compound word. Hyphens can also join prefixes to words. No spaces are used between hyphens and the words or prefixes they are linking.
Examples: ex-husband, a three-year-old child, passer-by

Dash: a slightly longer line that is used to link or separate words and phrases from other words and phrases. Single spaces are used on either side of a dash.
Example: My father – he had just arrived – was talking to his eldest son.

Ask students to find 3 examples of hyphenated words in the article. They are all found in paragraph 1: centre-left, re-examine, non-permanent.

Hyphens are commonly found in compound nouns, compound adjectives and with some prefixes and suffixes. There are not many rules about which compounds are hyphenated: if in doubt, check in a good learner dictionary.

Compound nouns: these are nouns made of two or more words. One of the words may be an adjective or preposition, but the compound word functions as a noun. Examples:
pen-friend
mother-in-law
do-it-yourself

Compound adjectives: these are adjectives made of two or more words. One of the words may be a noun or preposition, but the compound functions as an adjective. Examples:
the current centre-left coalition
ten non-permanent seats
a six-year-old child

Prefixes / suffixes: co-, non-, ex- and -free are usually hyphenated. Self- and anti- are sometimes hyphenated: use a good learner dictionary to check. Examples:
co-operation
non-permanent
ex-girlfriend
sugar-free
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Hand out Worksheet 3 which focuses on hyphens. Students complete the sentences below by using one 'word' from each table: the two words must be joined with a hyphen. The words in the top table are always first.

For further practice in hyphens and dictionary use, students can use dictionaries to help them create some gapped sentences of their own, which they can then give to another group to complete.

K Check answers
If an answer is wrong, ask other students to try to elicit the correct answer (see worksheet 3 and answer key).

L Follow-up speaking activity: discussion

Stage 1: Tell the students that they are going to have a small group discussion about the death penalty. Organise them into an even number of small groups (2-3 students per group). Half of the groups will be arguing 'for' the death penalty, and half 'against'. Make sure there are as many 'for' groups as 'against' groups: the exact number of students per group is not important. Give them 5 minutes to prepare arguments to support their position: remind them to think of evidence, facts, statistics, expert opinion, case studies, personal experience etc.

Stage 2 (optional): Give each student at least 5 strips of paper, each with a debating phrase, that you cut up before the lesson. Tell them that they must try to use all their phrases during the discussion: as the say a phrase, they should place it in front of them. Give them a few minutes to practice pronunciation of the phrases with their groups.

Stage 3: Re-group the students so that each 'for' group is paired with an 'against' group. Give them a fixed time for their discussion – this can be as little as 5 minutes, or much longer if appropriate.

Circulate and monitor the discussion as appropriate.
## Discussion phrases to cut up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I really don't agree with you about that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You could be right, but…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse me, could I just say something at this point?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That's an unacceptable argument, because…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree with you wholeheartedly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could you explain that point please?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you prove that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could you just repeat that please?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm sorry, I didn’t quite catch that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That's a very good argument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but have you thought about…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have any evidence to back that up?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorry to butt in, but could I just say something here?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
M Feedback
Give praise for content and show your interest in the different views expressed.
Give praise for correct language, and give feedback on incorrect language. You could
write some example phrases or sentences on the board and elicit from students which ones
are correct and which ones are wrong and why.
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
Are the following sentences true or false?

1. Italy is a member of the United Nations Security Council.  
   T/F

2. The Italian government has already prepared 3 proposals to get the UN to ban the death penalty.  
   T/F

3. The European Union countries all agreed with previous Italian plans for a ban on the death penalty.  
   T/F

4. Italian politicians have different opinions about the death of Saddam Hussein.  
   T/F

5. Most of the Italian newspapers did not approve of the way the death of Saddam Hussein was filmed.  
   T/F

6. Mussolini’s grand-daughter agrees with the Iraqi government.  
   T/F
STUDENT WORKSHEET 2

VOCABULARY

Match these words and phrases to their definitions.

1. **justify**  
   A. a show or display, often embarrassing or degrading, intended to be seen by a large number of people

2. **moratorium**  
   B. a ruler who has absolute power and complete control, often of a country or state

3. **a cross-party motion**  
   C. unkind laughter, ridicule, mockery, contempt

4. **came to nothing**  
   D. give a good excuse or reason for doing something

5. **universal condemnation**  
   E. private or secret information which is given to the media, often by someone who does not have permission to do so

6. **press leaks**  
   F. a proposal for a new law which is supported by all political parties

7. **a public spectacle**  
   G. basic, essential

8. **fundamental**  
   H. an official period of delay, waiting, temporary stopping or suspension of an activity

9. **dictator**  
   I. strong disapproval from everybody

10. **derision**  
    J. failed; the desired result was not achieved
STUDENT WORKSHEET 3

LANGUAGE FOCUS – Hyphens

Complete the sentences below by using one 'word' from each of the two tables. Join them with a hyphen. The 'words' in the top table are always first.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>chocolate</th>
<th>self</th>
<th>mid</th>
<th>anti</th>
<th>co</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mass</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>well</td>
<td>duty</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>operation</th>
<th>American</th>
<th>eighties</th>
<th>covered</th>
<th>conscious</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>way</td>
<td>free</td>
<td>shirt</td>
<td>known</td>
<td>produced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I don't like pop music very much. A lot of it sounds very ________________ and unoriginal.

2. The protestors burnt the flag and shouted ________________ slogans.

3. He was fined for driving the wrong way down a ________________ street.

4. He put on a pair of jeans and a clean ________________.

5. William Shakespeare is a very ________________ playwright.

6. The whole class was looking at her. She felt incredibly ________________.

7. The problem started in the ________________ and continued until the early nineties.

8. The EU is an organisation which encourages economic ________________ between European countries.

9. They ate 3 packets of ________________ peanuts during the film.

10. They bought lots of ________________ cigarettes at the airport.
ANSWER KEY

STUDENT WORKSHEET 1
1. True – Paragraph 1 of the written text says, 'Italy took up one of the ten non-permanent seats on the Security Council this week.'

2. True – Paragraph 2 says, 'Italy presented proposals for a moratorium on the death penalty at the UN assembly in 1994 and again in 1995 and last July the Italian parliament approved a cross-party motion urging the government to table yet another moratorium proposal.'

3. False – Paragraph 2 says, '…this came to nothing because of disagreement among Italy's EU partners.'

4. False – Paragraph 3 says, 'Politicians from both left and right have been expressing disgust at the execution of Saddam Hussein.'

5. True – Paragraph 3 says '…almost universal condemnation in the Italian press of the press leaks and videos of the hanging of the former Iraqi leader.'

6. False – Paragraph 4 says 'The Iraqi government has said that Italy has no right to criticise Saddam Hussein's execution … Mussolini's granddaughter, Alessandra, a right-wing MP, joined in the argument saying she found the killing of Saddam Hussein disgusting and shameful.'

STUDENT WORKSHEET 2
1. D  
2. H  
3. F  
4. J  
5. I  
6. E  
7. A  
8. G  
9. B  
10. C

STUDENT WORKSHEET 3
1. I don't like pop music very much. A lot of it sounds very mass-produced and unoriginal.

2. The protestors burnt the flag and shouted anti-American slogans.

3. He was fined for driving the wrong way down a one-way street.

4. He put on a pair of jeans and a clean t-shirt.

5. William Shakespeare is a very well-known playwright.
6. The whole class was looking at her. She felt incredibly **self-conscious**.

7. The problem started in the **mid-eighties** and continued until the early nineties.

8. The EU is an organisation which encourages economic **co-operation** between European countries.

9. They ate 3 packets of **chocolate-covered** peanuts during the film.

10. They bought lots of **duty-free** cigarettes at the airport.