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David Beckham to defend marriage in court

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20 October, 2005

THE ARTICLE

David Beckham to defend marriage in court

Real Madrid soccer star David Beckham and his wife, former Spice Girl Victoria, are going to court to defend their image and marriage. The Beckhams are angry that a British tabloid newspaper printed a story that their “happy marriage” was a lie. The *News of the World* wrote an article saying the Beckhams are just pretending to be happily married to make more money from their “Beckham brand”. The newspaper said the marriage was really “on the rocks” because of a relationship David had with another woman. He strongly denies this.

The newspaper article suggested that the Beckhams’ huge income depended on their public image. It said the couple tried to convince the public that their marriage was happy to get more advertising contracts. The article also said David almost had a nervous breakdown because of arguments with his wife. A lawyer for the newspaper commented on the high profile marriage, asking: “Is it unhappy, [full] of rows and tensions because of David Beckham’s infidelity, or is it happy? We say unhappy.” The Beckhams, meanwhile, insist they are a happily married couple.

WARM-UPS

1. CELEBRITY MARRIAGE: You are now married to a celebrity. Decide who your famous partner is. Walk around the class and talk with the other “husbands and wives” about life married to a celebrity. What are the good and bad things about being married to someone famous?

2. “ON THE ROCKS”: Which of the following things would put a happy marriage “on the rocks”? Talk about them with your partner. Rank them in order of most serious. Which can you forgive? How many times?

- _____ Your partner goes to the movies with another man / woman.
- _____ Your partner sleeps with another man / woman.
- _____ Your partner becomes an alcoholic and gambler.
- _____ Your partner spends too much money.
- _____ Your partner wants to spend more time with his/her mother than with you.
- _____ You disagree over how to raise your children.
- _____ One of you wants children, the other doesn't
- _____ Your partner stops telling you he/she loves you

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Real Madrid / David Beckham / Spice Girls / tabloid newspapers / happy marriages / relationships / public image / nervous breakdowns / arguments / happiness

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. DAVID BECKHAM: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with David Beckham. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. TABLOID OPINIONS: In pairs / groups, talk about what you think of these opinions on tabloid newspapers:

- a. I don't understand people who buy tabloids – they're full of lies.
- b. Tabloids print the news we want to hear – about celebrities and stars.
- c. There is very little news in tabloids.
- d. Editors of tabloid newspapers should go to prison for printing lies.
- e. Tabloids are fun.
- f. People have a right to know about the lives of celebrities and stars.
- g. The tabloids and paparazzi caused the death of Princess Diana.
- h. Only people with no intelligence buy tabloids.

6. BECKHAM SEARCH: Find out what other students know about David and Victoria Beckham. After you have finished, sit with your partner(s) and share and talk about what you found out.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. David Beckham will defend the idea of marriage in a court. | T / F |
| b. Beckham and his wife will sue a British tabloid newspaper. | T / F |
| c. The newspaper said the Beckhams were pretending to be married. | T / F |
| d. The newspaper article reported David had another woman. | T / F |
| e. The article said the Beckhams' incomes depended on their image. | T / F |
| f. The tabloid suggested David was on the edge of a breakdown. | T / F |
| g. The tabloid's lawyer believes the Beckham's marriage is unhappy.. | T / F |
| h. The Beckhams insist they are a happily married couple. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| a. soccer | enormous |
| b. former | in trouble |
| c. defend | unfaithfulness |
| d. "on the rocks" | rejects |
| e. denies | ex |
| f. huge | persuade |
| g. convince | football |
| h. rows | swear |
| i. infidelity | arguments |
| j. insist | protect |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| a. going | denies this |
| b. defend | really "on the rocks" |
| c. the marriage was | married couple |
| d. another | article |
| e. He strongly | their image |
| f. newspaper | breakdown |
| g. advertising | to court |
| h. had a nervous | profile marriage |
| i. high | woman |
| j. a happily | contracts |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

David Beckham to defend marriage in court

Real Madrid soccer star David Beckham and his wife, _____ Spice Girl Victoria, are going to court to _____ their image and marriage. The Beckhams are _____ that a British tabloid newspaper printed a story that their “happy marriage” was a _____. The *News of the World* wrote an _____ saying the Beckhams are just pretending to be happily married to make more money from their “Beckham _____”. The newspaper said the marriage was really “on the _____” because of a _____ David had with another woman. He strongly denies this.

lie
rocks
angry
former
relationship
article
defend
brand

The newspaper article suggested that the Beckhams’ _____ income depended on their public _____. It said the couple tried to _____ the public that their marriage was happy to get more advertising _____. The article also said David almost had a _____ breakdown because of _____ with his wife. A lawyer for the newspaper commented on the high profile marriage, asking: “Is it unhappy, [full] of rows and tensions because of David Beckham’s _____, or is it happy? We say unhappy.” The Beckhams, meanwhile, insist they are a happily married _____.

nervous
infidelity
image
contracts
couple
huge
arguments
convince

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

David Beckham to defend marriage in court

Real Madrid soccer star David Beckham and his wife, _____ Spice Girl Victoria, are going to court to _____ their image and marriage. The Beckhams are angry that a British tabloid newspaper _____ a story that their "happy marriage" was a _____. The *News of the World* wrote an article saying the Beckhams are just pretending to be _____ married to make more money from their "Beckham brand". The newspaper said the marriage was really "on _____" because of a relationship David had with another woman. He strongly _____ this.

The newspaper article suggested that the Beckhams' _____ income depended on their _____ image. It said the couple tried to convince the public that their marriage was happy to get more advertising _____. The article also said David almost had a _____ breakdown because of arguments with his wife. A lawyer for the newspaper commented on the high profile marriage, asking: "Is it unhappy, [full] of rows and _____ because of David Beckham's infidelity, or is it happy? We say unhappy." The Beckhams, meanwhile, _____ they are a happily married couple.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'soccer' and 'star'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "TABLOID" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about tabloids, gossip and celebrities.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- former
- image
- angry
- pretending
- rocks
- strongly
- huge
- convince
- nervous
- lawyer
- infidelity
- happily

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think of David and Victoria Beckham?
- c. What do you think of tabloid newspapers?
- d. How would you feel if your private life was in the newspapers every day?
- e. Do you think there should be strict rules for tabloids to tell the truth?
- f. What do you least or most like about tabloids?
- g. Do you believe everything you read in the newspapers?
- h. What would you do if someone lied about you in public?
- i. Do you know any couple whose relationship is on the rocks?
- j. Why are people so interested in celebrities and gossip?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you think it's possible that David and Victoria are just pretending?
- d. What problems do you think celebrity marriages have?
- e. Do you think people who read tabloids every day lack intelligence?
- f. Do you row and argue a lot?
- g. Who do you think will win this trial?
- h. What would you do if your partner was unfaithful to you?
- i. Describe the happiest married couple you know?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

MARRIAGE ADVICE: Take turns in giving advice to an unhappy husband or wife (Student A). Choose a question and asks for advice. Student A is never happy with the advice and tells Student B (the marriage counselor) what is wrong with it. Student B must try again with new advice.

- a. What should I do if I think my marriage is on the rocks?
- b. Why should I stay with him/her when I don't like him/her?
- c. Why does he/she make me every time he/she speaks?
- d. Have I married the wrong man/woman?
- e. Why doesn't he/she ever clean the house?
- f. What do I do about his/her infidelity?
- g. How can I love a man/woman who is always so selfish?
- h. How do I convince him/her to have kids?
- i. What do I do if I think my husband/wife is not attractive anymore?
- j. Why does he/she argue with me every time I talk about money?
- k. Why am I so afraid to talk to him/her?
- l. Why can't he/she stop visiting his/her mother every day?
- m. Why am I ten times more affectionate than he/she is?
- n. Why do we keep having the same arguments?
- o. Why can't I forgive him/her for the bad things he/she has done in the past?
- p. When I plan something, why does he/she always say it is a waste of time?
- q. Why does my whole life feel like a "to do" list?
- r. Why do I want to date every attractive man/woman I see on the train?

Change partners and tell each other the different advice you gave and received
Choose several of the above questions and agree on the best advice.
Repeat the above by role playing unhappy husbands and wives.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the Beckhams. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. MARRIAGE ADVICE: Create an information poster explaining your ideas for a long-lasting and happy marriage. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all think of similar ideas?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to David and Victoria Beckham. Tell them what you think of this court case. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. F d. T e. T f. T g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| a. soccer | football |
| b. former | ex |
| c. defend | protect |
| d. "on the rocks" | in trouble |
| e. denies | rejects |
| f. huge | enormous |
| g. convince | persuade |
| h. rows | arguments |
| i. infidelity | unfaithfulness |
| j. insist | swear |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| a. going | to court |
| b. defend | their image |
| c. the marriage was | really "on the rocks" |
| d. another | woman |
| e. He strongly | denies this |
| f. newspaper | article |
| g. advertising | contracts |
| h. had a nervous | breakdown |
| i. high | profile marriage |
| j. a happily | married couple |

GAP FILL:

David Beckham to defend marriage in court

Real Madrid soccer star David Beckham and his wife, **former** Spice Girl Victoria, are going to court to **defend** their image and marriage. The Beckhams are **angry** that a British tabloid newspaper printed a story that their "happy marriage" was a **lie**. The *News of the World* wrote an **article** saying the Beckhams are just pretending to be happily married to make more money from their "Beckham **brand**". The newspaper said the marriage was really "on the **rocks**" because of a **relationship** David had with another woman. He strongly denies this.

The newspaper article suggested that the Beckhams' **huge** income depended on their public **image**. It said the couple tried to **convince** the public that their marriage was happy to get more advertising **contracts**. The article also said David almost had a **nervous** breakdown because of **arguments** with his wife. A lawyer for the newspaper commented on the high profile marriage, asking: "Is it unhappy, [full] of rows and tensions because of David Beckham's **infidelity**, or is it happy? We say unhappy." The Beckhams, meanwhile, insist they are a happily married **couple**.