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Bolivian leader to halve own salary

URL: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0512/051229-bolivia-e.html>

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29 December, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Bolivian leader to halve own salary

Bolivia's new president Evo Morales will cut his own salary in half to show his people he is serious about his biggest election promise. He won the national election on December 18 because he promised he would share his poor nation's wealth. As soon as he becomes president on January 22, he will slash the current presidential salary of 30,000 bolivianos (\$3,750 US) to around 15,000 bolivianos. It is not just his salary that will go under the knife - he will also halve the salaries of his ministers and lawmakers. "This is a democratic revolution and we...must share the economic burden among all of us," he said.

The Bolivian leader wants to start a cultural revolution too. He aims to improve the quality of life of his people. He has many plans for a new social welfare system and a better security program. He also wants to end corruption, which is responsible for his country being one of the poorest in Latin America. Morales will also change his country's foreign policy. He said he would not accept overseas aid from countries that wanted to change Bolivia's internal affairs. He gave a message to the U.S. that if it cut aid to his country, he would look elsewhere for help, possibly to China or the European Union.

WARM-UPS

1. BOLIVIA SEARCH: Talk to as many other students as you can to find out what they know about Bolivia. After you have talked to lots of students, sit down with your partner(s) and share your information. Tell each other what you thought was interesting or surprising. Would you like to visit or live in Bolivia?

2. ELECTION PROMISES: Which of these election promises would you (a) vote for and (b) expect to see happen? How would your country change if these things were to happen?

- a. The president / prime minister will take a 50% salary cut.
- b. All military and energy nuclear programs will end next year.
- c. We will sell our army and spend the money on education.
- d. We will switch to non-fossil fuels within two years.
- e. Everyone will receive the same pay regardless of his or her job.
- f. Fifty percent of all employees in all positions must be women.
- g. We will ban alcohol and cigarettes. They will become illegal drugs.
- h. We will give ten percent of our wealth to help fight disease and poverty.

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

Presidents / cuts / salaries / redistributing wealth / promises / elections / revolutions / economic burdens / cultural revolution / foreign policy / help / China

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

4. I'M MY LEADER: Imagine you are the (real) leader of your country. Are you happy with your record? Do you think most of your people are happy with your record? Talk with other "leaders" in the class about your job, successes, failures and the plans you have for your country's future.

5. LEADER OPINIONS: Do you agree with these opinions? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- a. The leader of a country should receive no salary.
- b. A country's leader should be the highest paid person in the country.
- c. A country's leader does not have to be a citizen of that country.
- d. Being the leader of your country is the greatest job in the world.
- e. The financial accounts of the leader should be put on the Internet every week.
- f. A nation's leader should lead by example and make many personal sacrifices.
- g. It is important for a president to wear expensive clothes and drive a BMW.
- h. Even leaders of the poorest countries must live in palaces.

6. SALARY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "salary". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Bolivia's leader is to halve the salary he receives as a cocoa grower. | T / F |
| b. Evo Morales promised to redistribute wealth in his poor country. | T / F |
| c. Many lawmakers and politicians will be cut with a knife. | T / F |
| d. He is leading a revolution in which everyone must share the burden. | T / F |
| e. The Bolivian leader wants to start a musical revolution too. | T / F |
| f. Corruption is responsible for making Bolivia a poor country. | T / F |
| g. Mr. Morales is not so keen on changing his nation's foreign policy. | T / F |
| h. Mr. Morales said he might ask China or the EU for overseas aid. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| a. cut | plans |
| b. promised | be cut |
| c. around | foreign |
| d. go under the knife | responsibility |
| e. burden | vowed |
| f. aims | domestic |
| g. end | assistance |
| h. internal | reduce |
| i. overseas | about |
| j. aid | stamp out |

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

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| a. cut his own salary in half to show | salary of 30,000 bolivianos |
| b. he promised he would share | of life of his people |
| c. he will slash the current presidential | burden |
| d. It is not just his salary that will go | his poor nation's wealth |
| e. we must share the economic | Bolivia's internal affairs |
| f. He aims to improve the quality | his people he is serious |
| g. He also wants to end | poorest in Latin America |
| h. one of the | for help |
| i. countries that wanted to change | corruption |
| j. he would look elsewhere | under the knife |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

Bolivian leader to halve own salary

Bolivia's new president Evo Morales will cut his own salary in _____ to show his people he is _____ about his biggest election promise. He won the national election on December 18 because he promised he would share his poor nation's _____. As soon as he becomes president on January 22, he will _____ the current presidential salary of 30,000 bolivianos (\$3,750 US) to _____ 15,000 bolivianos. It is not just his salary that will go _____ the knife - he will also _____ the salaries of his ministers and lawmakers. "This is a democratic revolution and we...must share the economic burden _____ all of us," he said.

The Bolivian leader wants to start a _____ revolution too. He aims to improve the _____ of life of his people. He has many plans for a new social welfare _____ and a better security program. He also wants to end _____, which is responsible for his country being one of the poorest in Latin America. Morales will also change his country's _____ policy. He said he would not accept overseas aid from countries that wanted to change Bolivia's _____ affairs. He gave a _____ to the U.S. that if it cut aid to his country, he would look _____ for help, possibly to China or the European Union.

under
wealth
around
half
halve
serious
among
slash

message
quality
internal
system
foreign
cultural
elsewhere
corruption

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Bolivian leader to halve own salary

Bolivia's new president Evo Morales will cut his own salary ____ ____ to show his people he is serious about his biggest election promise. He ____ the national election on December 18 because he promised he would share his poor nation's _____. As soon as he becomes president on January 22, he will _____ the current presidential salary of 30,000 bolivianos (\$3,750 US) to around 15,000 bolivianos. It is not _____ his salary that will go under the _____ - he will also _____ the salaries of his ministers and lawmakers. "This is a democratic revolution and we...must _____ the economic burden among all of us," he said.

The Bolivian leader wants to _____ a cultural revolution too. He aims to improve the _____ of life of his people. He has many plans for a new social welfare system and a better security program. He also wants to _____ corruption, which is responsible for his country being ____ ____ ____ poorest in Latin America. Morales will also change his country's foreign policy. He said he would not accept overseas _____ from countries that wanted to change Bolivia's internal affairs. He gave a message to the U.S. that if it cut aid to his country, he would look _____ for help, possibly to China or the European Union.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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 activity. 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 "SALRIES" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about salaries and how much people in different jobs should receive.

- 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:

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| • half | • cultural |
| • biggest | • welfare |
| • soon | • end |
| • knife | • poorest |
| • halve | • internal |
| • burden | • China |

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 know about Evo Morales?
- c. What would you like to know about Evo Morales?
- d. Do you believe politicians when they talk about redistributing wealth and ending corruption?
- e. Which politicians do you respect?
- f. What do you think of Evo Morales' promise to cut his own salary in half?
- g. What do you think of the term "democratic revolution"?
- h. Would you like to see the foreign policy of your country changed?
- i. Why would the EU or China help Bolivia?
- j. What burdens do you share?

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 all of the world's leaders should cut their salaries in half?
- d. What kinds of things would you like your leader to end in your country?
- e. Do you think Mr. Morales will keep his promises?
- f. What would the world be like if there were more leaders like Evo Morales?
- g. What do you think Bolivia's ministers and lawmakers think about Mr. Morales' plans to slash their salaries?
- h. Have you ever put your money where your mouth is?
- i. Have you ever broken a major promise?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

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

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

SALARIES: In pairs / groups, decide on the salaries for the people in the table. Decide also how much of a year-end bonus they should receive and what conditions they need to meet to get the bonus.

PERSON	SALARY	BONUS	BONUS CONDITIONS
U.S President			
Bolivian President			
Heart surgeon			
English teacher			
Soldier			
TV newscaster			
World number-one tennis player			
Refuse collector			

Change partners and tell your new partner(s) the salary, bonus and conditions you decided with your old partner(s).

Combine your salaries, bonuses and conditions to ones you both / all agree on.

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 Bolivia's new president Evo Morales. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. MY ELECTION: Write six election promises you would make if you were to become leader of your country. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar promises? Whose promises look best?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to Bolivia's new president about his plans to redistribute wealth in his country. Show your letters to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. cut	reduce
b. promised	vowed
c. around	about
d. go under the knife	be cut
e. burden	responsibility
f. aims	plans
g. end	stamp out
h. internal	domestic
i. overseas	foreign
j. aid	assistance

PHRASE MATCH:

a. cut his own salary in half to show	his people he is serious
b. he promised he would share	his poor nation's wealth
c. he will slash the current presidential	salary of 30,000 bolivianos
d. It is not just his salary that will go	under the knife
e. we must share the economic	burden
f. He aims to improve the quality	of life of his people
g. He also wants to end	corruption
h. one of the	poorest in Latin America
i. countries that wanted to change	Bolivia's internal affairs
j. he would look elsewhere	for help

GAP FILL:

Bolivian leader to halve own salary

Bolivia's new president Evo Morales will cut his own salary in **half** to show his people he is **serious** about his biggest election promise. He won the national election on December 18 because he promised he would share his poor nation's **wealth**. As soon as he becomes president on January 22, he will **slash** the current presidential salary of 30,000 bolivianos (\$3,750 US) to **around** 15,000 bolivianos. It is not just his salary that will go **under** the knife - he will also **halve** the salaries of his ministers and lawmakers. "This is a democratic revolution and we...must share the economic burden **among** all of us," he said.

The Bolivian leader wants to start a **cultural** revolution too. He aims to improve the **quality** of life of his people. He has many plans for a new social welfare **system** and a better security program. He also wants to end **corruption**, which is responsible for his country being one of the poorest in Latin America. Morales will also change his country's **foreign** policy. He said he would not accept overseas aid from countries that wanted to change Bolivia's **internal** affairs. He gave a **message** to the U.S. that if it cut aid to his country, he would look **elsewhere** for help, possibly to China or the European Union.