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Kuwait elects its first female politicians

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Contents

The Article	2
Warm ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading / Listening	7
Student Survey	8
Discussion	9
Language Work	10
Writing	11
Homework	12
Answers	13

THE ARTICLE

Four Kuwaiti women have made history by winning national elections. Kuwaitis voted on May 16 and for the first time in the history of the oil-rich Arab nation, they elected female leaders. The four women were all educated in the United States and have PhDs. Times are changing quickly for women in Kuwait. They got the vote in 2005 and voted for the first time in 2006. Women make up nearly 55 per cent of all voters but female candidates failed to get elected in two previous campaigns. In this contest, 16 women and 194 men stood for election. Women started getting more rights after Iraq attacked Kuwait in 1990. They took on many important responsibilities to help the country recover from the war.

One of the winners, Massouma al-Mubarak, said: "Frustration with the past two parliaments pushed voters to seek change. And here it comes in the form of this sweeping victory for women." Another female winner, Professor Aseel al-Awadhi, told Reuters news agency that Kuwaitis were tired of the old system. "People voted for change because people are fed up with deadlocks," she said. Newspaper columnist Sami al-Nisf believes the win by the four women is a proud moment for Kuwait and the whole region, saying: "They made it without organized political parties supporting them....This is a huge leap forward for Kuwait's democracy." It is also a blow for groups in Kuwait who fought against giving political rights to women.

WARM-UPS

1. KUWAIT: Walk around the class and talk to other students about Kuwait. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

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

making history / national elections / female leaders / PhDs / responsibilities / war / winners / frustration / seeking change / victories / proud moments / political rights

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. WOMEN MAKING HISTORY: With your partner(s), complete the table below. Use the Internet to help you. Change partners and share your ideas.

Area	Woman	The history	Importance
Politics			
Sport			
Science			
Music			
Movies			
Literature			

4. EQUAL RIGHTS: Students A **strongly** believe women will have equal rights in all countries one day; Students B **strongly** believe there will always be countries who do not give women equal rights. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. MEN OR WOMEN?: Who would you prefer in these jobs and why? Talk about your choices with your partner(s). Vote as a class on whether men or women are better at each job.

- nurse
- professional tennis player
- teacher
- leader of the country
- singer
- lawyer
- CEO
- police officer

6. POLITICIAN: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'politician'. 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. Kuwait had no elected female politicians before May 16 th , 2009. | T / F |
| b. Kuwait's newly elected female politicians all have doctoral degrees. | T / F |
| c. There are more women who can vote in Kuwait than men. | T / F |
| d. Kuwaiti women did little in Kuwait's war effort in the 1990 Gulf War. | T / F |
| e. One of the female victors said people voted for her out of frustration. | T / F |
| f. Another victor said many people were too old and tired to vote. | T / F |
| g. A columnist said the women's victory was regionally important. | T / F |
| h. Everyone in Kuwait wants women to have the vote. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. national | a. win |
| 2. elected | b. earlier |
| 3. candidates | c. step |
| 4. previous | d. voted in |
| 5. responsibilities | e. anger |
| 6. frustration | f. duties |
| 7. victory | g. state |
| 8. deadlocks | h. shock |
| 9. leap | i. nominees |
| 10. blow | j. stalemates |

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

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Kuwaiti women have made history by | a. quickly for women |
| 2. Times are changing | b. leap forward |
| 3. Women make up nearly 55 per cent | c. the whole region |
| 4. They took on many important | d. winning national elections |
| 5. help the country recover | e. for women |
| 6. sweeping victory | f. of all voters |
| 7. people are fed | g. from the war |
| 8. a proud moment for Kuwait and | h. rights to women |
| 9. This is a huge | i. responsibilities |
| 10. giving political | j. up with deadlocks |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Four Kuwaiti women have made _____ by winning national elections. Kuwaitis voted on May 16 and for the first time in the history of the oil-_____ Arab nation, they elected female leaders. The four women were all _____ in the United States and have PhDs. Times are changing quickly for women in Kuwait. They got the _____ in 2005 and voted for the first time in 2006. Women make up nearly 55 per cent of all voters but female candidates _____ to get elected in two previous campaigns. In this contest, 16 women and 194 men _____ for election. Women started getting more _____ after Iraq attacked Kuwait in 1990. They took on many important responsibilities to help the country _____ from the war.

failed
vote
rich
rights
history
recover
stood
educated

One of the winners, Massouma al-Mubarak, said: "Frustration with the _____ two parliaments pushed voters to seek change. And here it comes in the form of this sweeping _____ for women." Another female winner, Professor Aseel al-Awadhi, told Reuters news agency that Kuwaitis were _____ of the old system. "People voted for change because people are _____ up with deadlocks," she said. Newspaper columnist Sami al-Nisf believes the win by the four women is a _____ moment for Kuwait and the whole _____, saying: "They made it without organized political parties supporting them....This is a _____ leap forward for Kuwait's democracy." It is also a _____ for groups in Kuwait who fought against giving political rights to women.

fed
tired
blow
huge
past
region
victory
proud

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the gaps.

Four Kuwaiti women _____ by winning national elections. Kuwaitis voted on May 16 and for the first time in the history _____ nation, they elected female leaders. The four women were all educated in the United States and have PhDs. Times are changing quickly for women in Kuwait. They _____ 2005 and voted for the first time in 2006. Women make up nearly 55 per cent of all voters but female candidates _____ in two previous campaigns. In this contest, 16 women and 194 men stood for election. Women _____ rights after Iraq attacked Kuwait in 1990. They took on many important responsibilities to help the _____ war.

One of the winners, Massouma al-Mubarak, said: " _____ two parliaments pushed voters to seek change. And here it comes in the form _____ for women." Another female winner, Professor Aseel al-Awadhi, told Reuters news agency that Kuwaitis were _____ system. "People voted for change because people are fed up with deadlocks," she said. Newspaper columnist Sami al-Nisf believes the win by the four women _____ for Kuwait and the whole region, saying: "They made it without organized political parties supporting them....This is _____ for Kuwait's democracy." It is also a blow for groups in Kuwait who fought against _____ to women.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

national	election

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• time• educated• times• nearly• stood• recover	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• past• sweeping• tired• fed• proud• blow
--	--

STUDENT FEMALE LEADERS SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about female leaders in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

FEMALE LEADERS DISCUSSION

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

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'Kuwait'?
- c) What do you know about countries with few female politicians?
- d) Do you think Kuwait will change a lot because of the recent election?
- e) What is the history of female politicians in your country?
- f) Do men or women make better leaders?
- g) Why don't you think Kuwaitis elected women in the two earlier elections?
- h) What can a woman bring to politics that a man can't?
- i) What changes do you think the female politicians should make?
- j) How do you think Kuwaiti women feel about their new female leaders?

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FEMALE LEADERS DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Are you frustrated with politics in your country?
- c) What changes would you like to see in your country?
- d) Do you think things will now change in the Arabian Gulf?
- e) What things have you been fed up with recently?
- f) What has been the proudest moment in your country's recent history?
- g) Does your country need a huge leap forward?
- h) What needs to happen in your country to achieve sexual equality?
- i) Why do some groups in Kuwait oppose giving women political rights?
- j) What questions would you ask the new female leaders?

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LANGUAGE

Four Kuwaiti women have made history (1) _____ winning national elections. Kuwaitis voted on May 16 and for the first time in the history of the oil-(2) _____ Arab nation, they elected female leaders. The four women were all educated in the United States and have PhDs. Times are changing (3) _____ for women in Kuwait. They got the vote in 2005 and voted for the first time in 2006. Women (4) _____ up nearly 55 per cent of all voters but female candidates failed to get elected in two (5) _____ campaigns. In this contest, 16 women and 194 men stood for election. Women started getting more rights after Iraq attacked Kuwait in 1990. They took (6) _____ many important responsibilities to help the country recover from the war.

One of the winners, Massouma al-Mubarak, said: "Frustration (7) _____ the past two parliaments pushed voters to seek change. And here it comes in the form of this (8) _____ victory for women." Another female winner, Professor Aseel al-Awadhi, told Reuters news agency that Kuwaitis were tired of the old system. "People voted for change because people are (9) _____ up with deadlocks," she said. Newspaper columnist Sami al-Nisf believes the win by the four women is a (10) _____ moment for Kuwait and the whole region, saying: "They made it without organized political parties supporting them....This is a huge (11) _____ forward for Kuwait's democracy." It is also a (12) _____ for groups in Kuwait who fought against giving political rights to women.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. | (a) with | (b) at | (c) for | (d) by |
| 2. | (a) rich | (b) riches | (c) richly | (d) richness |
| 3. | (a) quick | (b) quickly | (c) quicken | (d) quickens |
| 4. | (a) take | (b) wake | (c) make | (d) rake |
| 5. | (a) early | (b) last | (c) previous | (d) before |
| 6. | (a) off | (b) on | (c) in | (d) out |
| 7. | (a) on | (b) an | (c) of | (d) with |
| 8. | (a) sweeping | (b) windswept | (c) sweeps | (d) swept |
| 9. | (a) feeding | (b) fed | (c) feed | (d) food |
| 10. | (a) proudest | (b) pride | (c) prude | (d) proud |
| 11. | (a) leapt | (b) leaping | (c) leap | (d) leaps |
| 12. | (a) blow | (b) punch | (c) hit | (d) slap |

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 out more about Kuwait. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. FEMALE LEADERS: Make a poster about different female leaders around the world today. Include their history and achievements. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. LEADERSHIP: Write a magazine article about whether a man or woman is better at leading a country. Include imaginary interviews with a male and female world leader.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to one of the newly-elected female Kuwaitis. Ask her three questions about Kuwaiti politics. Give her three ideas on how she can change things for women in Kuwait. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. national | a. state |
| 2. elected | b. voted in |
| 3. candidates | c. nominees |
| 4. previous | d. earlier |
| 5. responsibilities | e. duties |
| 6. frustration | f. anger |
| 7. victory | g. win |
| 8. deadlocks | h. stalemates |
| 9. leap | i. step |
| 10. blow | j. shock |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Kuwaiti women have made history by | a. winning national elections |
| 2. Times are changing | b. quickly for women |
| 3. Women make up nearly 55 per cent | c. of all voters |
| 4. They took on many important | d. responsibilities |
| 5. help the country recover | e. from the war |
| 6. sweeping victory | f. for women |
| 7. people are fed | g. up with deadlocks |
| 8. a proud moment for Kuwait and | h. the whole region |
| 9. This is a huge | i. leap forward |
| 10. giving political | j. rights to women |

GAP FILL:

Kuwait elects its first female politicians

Four Kuwaiti women have made **history** by winning national elections. Kuwaitis voted on May 16 and for the first time in the history of the oil-**rich** Arab nation, they elected female leaders. The four women were all **educated** in the United States and have PhDs. Times are changing quickly for women in Kuwait. They got the **vote** in 2005 and voted for the first time in 2006. Women make up nearly 55 per cent of all voters but female candidates **failed** to get elected in two previous campaigns. In this contest, 16 women and 194 men **stood** for election. Women started getting more **rights** after Iraq attacked Kuwait in 1990. They took on many important responsibilities to help the country **recover** from the war.

One of the winners, Massouma al-Mubarak, said: "Frustration with the **past** two parliaments pushed voters to seek change. And here it comes in the form of this sweeping **victory** for women." Another female winner, Professor Aseel al-Awadhi, told Reuters news agency that Kuwaitis were **tired** of the old system. "People voted for change because people are **fed** up with deadlocks," she said. Newspaper columnist Sami al-Nisf believes the win by the four women is a **proud** moment for Kuwait and the whole **region**, saying: "They made it without organized political parties supporting them....This is a **huge** leap forward for Kuwait's democracy." It is also a **blow** for groups in Kuwait who fought against giving political rights to women.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - a 3 - b 4 - c 5 - c 6 - b 7 - d 8 - a 9 - b 10 - d 11 - c 12 - a