

## UK politician says burka is 'bank robber' clothing

10th August, 2018



The United Kingdom's former Foreign Minister Boris Johnson has been accused of racism. He made a number of comments about women wearing the burka while writing in the British newspaper 'The Telegraph'. Mr Johnson said women who wear burkas "look like letter boxes". He also said: "If a female student turned up at

school or at a university lecture looking like a bank robber," he would ask her to remove it so that he "could talk to her properly". Johnson was writing an article about the recent full-face veil ban in Denmark. In the article, Mr Johnson said full-face veils should not be banned in the UK, but said women who wear a burka "look absolutely ridiculous".

The UK's Prime Minister Theresa May has asked Mr Johnson to apologize for his comments. She said: "I do think that we all have to be very careful about the language and terms we use, and some of the terms Boris used describing people's appearance obviously have offended." Another senior British politician has asked Mr Johnson to resign. Many other politicians said Johnson's comments were Islamophobic and were a hate crime. They say he knew his comments would offend many Muslims and others in the UK. Mr Johnson was London's mayor for eight years and the UK Foreign Minister for two years and so had thousands of experiences interacting with Muslim people.

Sources: [bbc.com](http://bbc.com) / [theaustralian.com](http://theaustralian.com) / [thenational.ae](http://thenational.ae)

### Writing

Anyone should be allowed to wear what they want. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

United Kingdom / foreign minister / racism / burka / female / bank robber / article / apologize / careful / language / appearance / Islamophobic / hate crime / mayor

### True / False

- a) Boris Johnson is the UK's Foreign Minister. T / F
- b) Mr Johnson made comments about the burka in the 'Times' newspaper. T / F
- c) Mr Johnson said women who wear a burka look like 'letter boxes'. T / F
- d) Mr Johnson wants full-face veils to be banned in the UK. T / F
- e) Britain's leader asked Mr Johnson to apologize for his comments. T / F
- f) Theresa May said we must be careful about the language we use. T / F
- g) A politician asked Boris Johnson to quit his job. T / F
- h) Boris Johnson was the mayor of London for two years. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. <b>former</b>       | a. arrived       |
| 2. <b>turned up</b>    | b. quit          |
| 3. <b>properly</b>     | c. say sorry     |
| 4. <b>banned</b>       | d. stupid        |
| 5. <b>ridiculous</b>   | e. upset         |
| 6. <b>apologize</b>    | f. correctly     |
| 7. <b>resign</b>       | g. forbidden     |
| 8. <b>offended</b>     | h. communicating |
| 9. <b>comments</b>     | i. ex-           |
| 10. <b>interacting</b> | j. remarks       |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of Boris Johnson's comments?
- b) Are Boris Johnson's comments racist?
- c) What do you know about the burka?
- d) Are Mr Johnson's comments sexist?
- e) Is Mr Johnson childish for making such comments?
- f) What would Muslims think about Johnson's comments?
- g) What do you think of full-face veil bans?
- h) What do you know about Islamophobia?

## Phrase Match

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. Johnson has been accused                  | a. comments about women |
| 2. He made a number of                       | b. were Islamophobic    |
| 3. writing an article about the recent       | c. ridiculous           |
| 4. full-face veils should not                | d. offend many Muslims  |
| 5. look absolutely                           | e. of racism            |
| 6. be very careful about the language        | f. with Muslim people   |
| 7. describing people's                       | g. be banned            |
| 8. other politicians said Johnson's comments | h. appearance           |
| 9. he knew his comments would                | i. full-face veil ban   |
| 10. thousands of experiences interacting     | j. and terms we use     |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- Why should Mr Johnson apologize?
- How tolerant do you think Britain is?
- Is racism around the world increasing or decreasing?
- Are Mr Johnson's comments an example of hate crime?
- What might a burka-wearing woman say to Mr Johnson?
- What advice do you have for Mr Johnson?
- What questions would you like to ask Boris Johnson?

## Spelling

- Johnson has been usceacd of racism
- He made a number of octnmsem
- at a university retlcue
- he could talk to her peropyrl
- Johnson was writing an iatrcle
- look absolutely oisliuucdr
- May has asked Mr Johnson to oipaegzlo
- describing people's rppcaaeen
- lvyusoobi have offended
- Another senior British aopniiltc
- London's oyarm
- experiences naticigentr with Muslim people

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. i	2. a	3. f	4. g	5. d
6. c	7. b	8. e	9. j	10. h

## Role Play

### Role A – Racism

You think racism is the worst ~ism. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their HHHHHH. Also, tell the others which is the least harmful of these (and why): sexism, ageism or alcoholism.

### Role B – Sexism

You think sexism is the worst ~ism. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their HHHHHH. Also, tell the others which is the least harmful of these (and why): racism, ageism or alcoholism.

### Role C – Ageism

You think ageism is the worst ~ism. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their HHHHHH. Also, tell the others which is the least harmful of these (and why): sexism, racism or alcoholism.

### Role D – Alcoholism

You think alcoholism is the worst ~ism. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their HHHHHH. Also, tell the others which is the least harmful of these (and why): sexism, ageism or racism.

## Speaking – ~isms

Rank these with your partner. Put the worst ~isms at the top at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| • capitalism | • racism    |
| • alcoholism | • sexism    |
| • pessimism  | • ageism    |
| • hedonism   | • communism |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.