

## **Eminem wins bully lyrics case** (Sun 17 Apr, 2005)

### **WARM-UPS**

**CHAT:** Talk in pairs or groups about: rap music / Eminem / bullying / \$1 million / song lyrics / reputations / being a rock star... For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**RAP MUSIC BRAINSTORM:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with rap music. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

**BULLYING:** In pairs / groups, talk about bullying. Were you bullied at school? What kind of bullying did you see? Who was the biggest bully? Did you bully a younger brother or sister? Is there bullying in your office? What should happen to bullies?

Eminem describes being bullied in his song “Brain Damage”. How would you react to the following bullying techniques (some from Eminem’s song)?

- a. Being harassed
- b. Being shoved
- c. Being beaten
- d. Having your nose broken
- e. Having your head banged against the wall
- f. Being grabbed
- g. Being choked
- h. Being teased and called names
- i. Having your possessions taken or broken
- j. Having your money stolen

**COMMENTS ON BULLIES:** (1) Read the comments below made about bullies and agree or disagree with them with your partner / group. (2) Rewrite the sentences so that they correspond to your own opinions. Add an extra sentence to qualify your opinions. (3) Change partners / groups and read and talk about the opinions you have written.

- a. Bullies are losers.
- b. If you stand up to a bully, he/she will stop bullying you.
- c. Bullying is a part of school life. It does no real harm.
- d. Bullies have mental problems.
- e. Teachers too often ignore bullying in classrooms.
- f. Being different shouldn’t be the cause of bullying.
- g. Boys are worse bullies than girls.
- h. Bullying stops after people are eighteen years old.
- i. Bullies should be arrested.
- j. Being bullied builds a stronger character.

## PRE-READING IDEAS

**WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... of the words 'school' and 'bully'.

**TRUE FALSE:** Guess whether the following statements about the article are true or false:

- a. Someone accused the rap artist Eminem of bullying him/her. T / F
- b. Someone tried to sue Eminem for slandering his/her name. T / F
- c. A court case centred on a song called "Brain Damage". T / F
- d. The song describes how Eminem was harassed and bullied at school. T / F
- e. The song lyrics say Eminem had his arm broken by the bully. T / F
- f. The bully denies he/she bullied Eminem. T / F
- g. The lyrics portray the bully in a good light. T / F
- h. The bully is taking the case to a higher court for a retrial. T / F

**SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| (a) slander     | character    |
| (b) lyrics      | push         |
| (c) reputation  | defamation   |
| (d) harassed    | offensive    |
| (e) obnoxious   | represent    |
| (f) shove       | undisputable |
| (g) urinal      | words        |
| (h) portray     | understand   |
| (i) interpret   | tormented    |
| (j) uncontested | toilet       |

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

- |                               |                     |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| (a) a court case              | lyrics              |
| (b) former                    | before              |
| (c) sue the superstar rapper  | allegations         |
| (d) hurt                      | classmate           |
| (e) way                       | facts               |
| (f) beat me into              | his reputation      |
| (g) song                      | light               |
| (h) portray Bailey in a false | brought against him |
| (i) uncontested               | submission          |
| (j) factual                   | for slander         |

**TEXT RECONSTRUCTION:** The article has been put in the wrong order. Put the sentences back into the correct order.

### **Eminem wins bully lyrics case**

The judges indicated the lyrics did not portray Bailey in a false light: “A reasonable person could interpret the uncontested facts indicating that plaintiff...bullied defendant...”

DeAngelo Bailey tried to sue the superstar rapper for slander and demanded \$1 million as compensation.

The sting of the song lyrics rests in their characterization of plaintiff as a bully, rather than the specific factual allegations about the bathroom assault.” Mr Bailey will not appeal.

One day he came in the bathroom.../And had me in the position to beat me into submission/He banged my head against the urinal ‘til he broke my nose,/Soaked my clothes in blood, grabbed me and choked my throat”.

The lyrics that caused Bailey to file his lawsuit said: “Way before my baby daughter Hailey/I was harassed daily by this fat kid named D’Angelo Bailey/An eighth grader who acted obnoxious, ‘cause his father boxes/so everyday he’d shove me in the lockers/

The American rap artist Eminem has won a court case brought against him by a former classmate and bully.

Bailey admitted bullying Eminem, but only with a “bump” or “little shove”, not as described in the song lyrics.

Bailey said the lyrics in a 1999 Eminem song, “Brain Damage”, hurt his reputation and ruined his own chances of becoming a rock star.

### **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 information on the Eminem. Share your findings with your class next lesson.
- 3. MY RAP:** Write your own rap song about school life. Share it with your classmates in your next lesson
- 4. ZERO TOLERANCE:** Create a poster explaining the new “zero tolerance for bullying” scheme that will start in your school / office / company. Explain the penalties for bullies.

## **DISCUSSION:**

- a. Did you like this article?
- b. How did you feel after reading this article?
- c. What are your feelings about bullies?
- d. What do you think of Eminem?
- e. What are your feelings about rap music?
- f. What do you think really happened between Eminem and DeAngelo Bailey?
- g. Do you think Eminem has a form of revenge?
- h. Was it wrong of Eminem to name Mr Bailey in his song “Brain Damage”?
- i. Why do people so often sue for \$1 million?
- j. Did the judges make the correct decision?
- k. Were you a bully / Were you bullied ... at school?
- l. What kind of bullying did you experience / witness?
- m. Who was the biggest bully at your school?
- n. Are boys bigger bullies than girls?
- o. Can you be bullied after you become an adult?
- p. Should bullying be classed as a crime?
- q. Did you like this discussion?
- r. Teacher / Student additional questions.

## **TEXT RECONSTRUCTION ANSWERS:**

### **Eminem wins bully lyrics case**

1. The American rap artist Eminem has won a court case brought against him by a former classmate and bully.
2. DeAngelo Bailey tried to sue the superstar rapper for slander and demanded \$1 million as compensation.
3. Bailey said the lyrics in a 1999 Eminem song, “Brain Damage”, hurt his reputation and ruined his own chances of becoming a rock star.
4. The lyrics that caused Bailey to file his lawsuit said: “Way before my baby daughter Hailey/I was harassed daily by this fat kid named D’Angelo Bailey/An eighth grader who acted obnoxious, ‘cause his father boxes/so everyday he’d shove me in the lockers/
5. One day he came in the bathroom.../And had me in the position to beat me into submission/He banged my head against the urinal ‘til he broke my nose,/Soaked my clothes in blood, grabbed me and choked my throat”.
6. Bailey admitted bullying Eminem, but only with a “bump” or “little shove”, not as described in the song lyrics.
7. The judges indicated the lyrics did not portray Bailey in a false light: “A reasonable person could interpret the uncontested facts indicating that plaintiff...bullied defendant....
8. The sting of the song lyrics rests in their characterization of plaintiff as a bully, rather than the specific factual allegations about the bathroom assault.” Mr Bailey will not appeal.