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Kuwaiti women get the vote

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17 May, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Kuwaiti women get the vote

BNE: Women in Kuwait can now vote in local and national elections. On Monday (May 16), a new law was passed in the Kuwaiti parliament to give women the vote for the very first time. Law makers had a marathon ten-hour discussion to come to a decision. Of course, all of the politicians who passed the bill were men. There were 35 votes in favour of giving women the vote, 23 against, and one person decided not to vote. Supporters of the new law cheered loudly at the news. Kuwait's women now join women from neighbouring Qatar, Oman and Bahrain in having the vote.

Traditional Islamist politicians opposed the new law. They believe Islamic teachings say women should not enter politics or have positions of leadership. However, this does not agree with the Kuwaiti constitution, which says there must be equality between the sexes. Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah immediately told reporters: "I congratulate the women of Kuwait for having achieved their political rights." Women may not be able to vote until 2009 because officials need to tie up loose ends from Monday's law.

WARM-UPS

1. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics you are interested in, which do not look interesting and which look really boring:

Kuwait / women / elections / Emirates / marathons / voting / first time / Islamic teachings / sexual equality / congratulations / loose ends / 2009

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

2. KUWAIT: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with Kuwait. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

3. 2-MINUTE DEBATES: With a partner, engage in these fun 2-minute debates. Students A firmly believe in the opinions on the left, Students B strongly support the opinions on the right. Change partners often.

- a. A woman's place is in the home. vs. Women can do whatever they like.
- b. It is OK for women to fight in the army. vs. Women are too gentle to fight in wars.
- c. A man should always hold a door open for a lady. vs. That's sexist.
- d. Women should buy flowers for men. vs. Men would rather have something useful.
- e. Women are the best leaders. vs. Men have always been the best leaders.
- f. The word "mankind" should become "personkind". vs. That's stupid.
- g. Men who cry are not real men. vs. It's natural for men to cry.
- h. Women should never read maps. vs. Women are good at reading maps.
- i. Men who wear cosmetics look good. vs. A man who wears make-up is not a man.

4. POLITICAL EQUALITY: Are women and men equal in your country? When did women get the vote? Has there ever been a female president / prime minister? Are there the same numbers of men and women in your country's government? Can women do any job?

5. WOMEN WORLD LEADERS: What do you know about the following women leaders? All are / were (or were elected as) presidents or prime ministers of their countries.

Chandrika Kumaratunge (Sri Lanka), Indira Gandhi (India), Golda Meir (Israel), Isabel Peron (Argentina), Margaret Thatcher (U.K.), Corazon Aquino (Philippines), Benazir Bhutto (Pakistan), Mary Robinson (Ireland), Helen Clark (New Zealand), Aung San Suu Kyi (Myanmar), Khaleda Zia (Bangladesh), Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (Philippines), Mame Madior Boye (Senegal)

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Kuwaiti women can now vote, but only in village elections. | T / F |
| b. This is the first time Kuwaiti women can vote. | T / F |
| c. Politicians ran a marathon before making their decisions. | T / F |
| d. Kuwait is the first Persian Gulf nation where women can vote. | T / F |
| e. Islamist politicians were opposed to women voting. | T / F |
| f. Islamist politicians think women are great leaders. | T / F |
| g. Kuwait's prime minister voted supported the new law. | T / F |
| h. Officials have to tie up loose ends before women can vote. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| a. passed | applauded |
| b. marathon | conservative |
| c. cheered | won |
| d. neighbouring | introduced |
| e. traditional | bordering |
| f. leadership | finish everything |
| g. achieved | long |
| h. tie up loose ends | authority |

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

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| a. vote in local | ten-hour discussion |
| b. a new law | politics |
| c. a marathon | and national elections |
| d. 35 votes | opposed the new law |
| e. Islamist politicians | loose ends |
| f. enter | between the sexes |
| g. equality | was passed |
| h. tie up | in favour |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the correct spaces in the article.

BNE: Women in Kuwait can now _____ in local and national elections. On Monday (May 16), a new _____ was passed in the Kuwaiti parliament to give women the vote for the very first time. Law makers had a _____ ten-hour discussion to come to a decision. Of course, all of the politicians who _____ the bill were men. There were 35 votes in favour of giving women the vote, 23 against, and one person decided not to vote. Supporters of the new law _____ loudly at the news. Kuwait's women now join women from _____ Qatar, Oman and Bahrain in having the vote.

neighbouring
vote
marathon
cheered
law
passed

Traditional Islamist politicians _____ the new law. They believe Islamic teachings say women should not _____ politics or have positions of leadership. However, this does not agree with the Kuwaiti _____, which says there must be _____ between the sexes. Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah immediately told reporters: "I _____ the women of Kuwait for having achieved their political rights." Women may not be able to vote until 2009 because officials need to tie up _____ ends from Monday's law.

constitution
loose
enter
congratulate
equality
opposed

AFTER READING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**local**' and '**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 and talk about your answers to this exercise. After you agree, check your answers against the text.

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

5. STUDENT KUWAIT SURVEY: In pairs / groups write down questions about Kuwait's new law and women getting the vote.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make a mini-presentation to another group / the class 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:

now

marathon

men

one person

cheered

Bahrain

traditional

leadership

constitution

equality

congratulate

loose ends

LANGUAGE

AS FOR ME:

The following phrases are from the article and have been changed a little.

1. Fill the gaps with the words from the bottom. Are your answers the same as your partner's?
2. Write down any new vocabulary from your partner(s).
3. Fill the gaps again so that this time the sentences are true statements about yourself or your opinions.
4. After you have finished, talk about these true statements with your partner(s).

I _____ vote in my country's _____ .

I _____ for the very first time _____ .

I sometimes have a marathon _____ .

I always cheer loudly when _____ .

I am opposed to _____ .

Equality between the sexes is _____ .

I congratulated _____ for _____ .

I have many loose ends to tie up. I have to _____ .

my team scores a goal
highly important
finish everything by Friday
last week
only ever
passing his driving test

national elections
argument with my mother
my brother
nuclear weapons
flew in an airplane

DISCUSSION

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

- a. What did you think when you saw the headline of this article?
- b. Do you like reading about politics?
- c. What do you think of Kuwaiti women getting the vote?
- d. Do you think other Arabic countries will allow their women to vote?
- e. Western countries often speak badly of Islamic countries. What do you think about this?
- f. Is your country perfect?
- g. When did women get the vote in your country?
- h. Is feminism big in your country?
- i. Who is boss in your family, your mother or father?
- j. Which is the stronger sex, male or female?

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

- a. Did you like reading the article?
- b. What do you know about Kuwait?
- c. Would you like to visit or live in Kuwait?
- d. Some Islamists say a woman should stay at home. What do you think of this?
- e. Some Islamists say women should not become leaders. What do you say to this?
- f. Do the women in your country have the same rights as men?
- g. What do women in your country complain about?
- h. What do men complain about in your country?
- i. When do you think a woman will become head of an Arab state?
- 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

ROLE PLAY: Role play the following people in a discussion on sexual equality. Team up with classmates who have been assigned the same role to develop your roles and discuss ideas and “strategies” before the role play begins.

Introduce yourself to the other role players before the role play begins.

Role A (Woman)

You believe men are the stronger sex. You think they should always be the leaders. You think your country will be stronger if men work and women look after the men and children. You think men are better at voting and women don't need to vote. You think feminists are not real women.

Role B (Woman)

You are head of a feminist organization in your country. You are a strong, strong woman. You have always beaten men in everything you have done – at school and at work. You are CEO of a multi-national corporation. You play rugby. You believe it is essential all women vote to create equality. Women died for universal suffrage.

Role C (A man)

You believe that men are physically stronger, so it is their role to be leaders. You think it is the job of women to have babies and look after their men and children. You think feminists are damaging society. If women go to work, their children have to stay at home, alone.

Role D

You are a twenty-first century man. You strongly believe that women and men are equal. However, you do think it is a man's and not a woman's job to vote. You want to be a house husband – stay at home while your partner works. You love housework. You hate sexist men – you think they are selfish and lazy.

Change roles and repeat the role play. Comment in groups about the differences between the two role plays.

After the role play, talk about whether you believed what you were saying in your roles.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Kuwaiti women get the vote

BNE: Women in Kuwait can now vote in _____. On Monday (May 16), a new law was passed in the Kuwaiti parliament to give women the vote _____. Law makers had a marathon ten-hour discussion to come to a decision. Of course, all of the politicians who passed the bill were men. There were _____ of giving women the vote, 23 against, and one person decided not to vote. Supporters of the new law cheered loudly at the news. Kuwait's women _____ neighbouring Qatar, Oman and Bahrain in having the vote.

Traditional Islamist politicians _____. They believe Islamic teachings say women should not enter politics or have positions of leadership. However, this _____ with the Kuwaiti constitution, which says there must be equality _____. Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah immediately told reporters: "I congratulate the women of Kuwait for having achieved their political rights." Women may not be able to vote until 2009 because officials need to _____ from Monday's law.

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 Kuwait. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE: Make a poster about the history of women and the vote in your country. Show it to your classmates in your next lesson. Discuss with your classmates the most interesting points in your posters.

4. LETTER: Write a letter to the Prime Minister of Kuwait telling him your thoughts on the law that has just been passed that gives women the vote. Show your letter to the class next lesson. Did your classmates write similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE

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

SYNONYM MATCH

a. passed	introduced
b. marathon	long
c. cheered	applauded
d. neighbouring	bordering
e. traditional	conservative
f. leadership	authority
g. achieved	won
h. tie up loose ends	finish everything

PHRASE MATCH:

a. vote in local	and national elections
b. a new law	was passed
c. a marathon	ten-hour discussion
d. 35 votes	in favour
e. Islamist politicians	opposed the new law
f. enter	politics
g. equality	between the sexes
h. tie up	loose ends

GAP FILL:

Kuwaiti women get the vote

BNE: Women in Kuwait can now **vote** in local and national elections. On Monday (May 16), a new **law** was passed in the Kuwaiti parliament to give women the vote for the very first time. Law makers had a **marathon** ten-hour discussion to come to a decision. Of course, all of the politicians who **passed** the bill were men. There were 35 votes in favour of giving women the vote, 23 against, and one person decided not to vote. Supporters of the new law **cheered** loudly at the news. Kuwait's women now join women from **neighbouring** Qatar, Oman and Bahrain in having the vote.

Traditional Islamist politicians **opposed** the new law. They believe Islamic teachings say women should not **enter** politics or have positions of leadership. However, this does not agree with the Kuwaiti **constitution**, which says there must be **equality** between the sexes. Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah immediately told reporters: "I **congratulate** the women of Kuwait for having achieved their political rights." Women may not be able to vote until 2009 because officials need to tie up **loose** ends from Monday's law.

LANGUAGE - AS FOR ME:

I *only ever* vote in my country's *national elections*.

I *flew in an airplane* for the very first time *last week*

I sometimes have a *marathon argument* with my mother.

I always cheer loudly when *my team scores a goal*

I am opposed to *nuclear weapons*.

Equality between the sexes is *highly important*.

I congratulated *my brother* for *passing his driving test*.

I have many loose ends to tie up. I have to *finish everything* by Friday.