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British royal finances online

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23 June, 2005

THE ARTICLE

British royal finances online

BNE: A public report of British Queen Elizabeth's finances went online* today. It is a first for Buckingham Palace to publish details of royal income and expenditure on the Internet. The report states that the Queen's spending for the fiscal year 2003/2004 topped \$67 million, which represents a 1.7% increase on the previous year. It says: "This slight increase relates mainly to expenditure attributed to more State visits, major overseas tours and ceremonial costs." The Royals have been under public pressure to trim their spending. The British people have demanded greater scrutiny of royal finances to avoid the excesses of earlier years. The royal press secretary says the new report achieves "the greatest possible clarity and transparency in the finances of the Monarchy".

The annual cost of the Royals to the British taxpayer was \$1.12 per person, which Buckingham Palace considered excellent value for money. The Queen's accountant said that as a rule of thumb the cost incurred by each Briton for funding the monarchy should be the equivalent of a loaf of bread. However, milk has replaced bread this year as the denomination for comparison. The report states: "For the last couple of years, we have indicated that the annual cost per person in the country...was equivalent to the cost of a loaf of bread. With the passage of time, the loaf of bread has become stale and this year's expenditure per person, per annum, amounts to 61 pence (\$1.12) or less than the price of two pints (1 liter) of milk."

*<http://www.royal.gov.uk/output/page3263.asp>

WARM-UPS

1. HI. I'M THE QUEEN: (Or the king.) Imagine you are the king or queen (or emperor / empress / sultan / sultana) of your country. In pairs / groups, talk about your royal life. Focus on money – where you get it from and what you spend it on. Do you like your people? Should they give you more money? Is it hard for a royal to make ends meet? Do you worry about money? ...

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

Britain's Queen Elizabeth / Buckingham Palace / royal income / royal spending / overseas tours / ceremonial costs / rules of thumb / loaves of bread / cartons of milk

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

4. ROYAL QUICK OPINIONS: To what degree do you agree or disagree with these short opinions? Change the statements so they match your own opinion and provide support for any changes you make.

- a. Monarchies should be abolished.
- b. Kings and queens should work.
- c. Queens should go shopping in supermarkets.
- d. Royals are better than common people.
- e. Privilege is unfair and un-21st century.
- f. Taxpayers shouldn't fund royal families.
- g. Queen Elizabeth should sell some diamonds and give the money to charity.
- h. Royals should have a weekly TV show about their week's news.
- i. It is good to die in war for one's king or queen and country.
- j. Royals have special blood.

5. ROYAL FAMILIES: In pairs / groups, talk about royal families around the world. Does (did) your country have a royal family? Do you like them? Do you have a favorite? Do you think they are good value for money? Which royal family is the best in the world? If your country doesn't have a royal family, would you like one? Change partners every two minutes.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. A secret report of British royal finances has been leaked online. | T / F |
| b. The British Queen spent \$6.7 million last year. | T / F |
| c. British people asked their royal family to reduce its spending. | T / F |
| d. A royal press secretary says the royal finances are for anyone to see. | T / F |
| e. British taxpayers each spend \$112 a year to finance their monarchy. | T / F |
| f. Buckingham Palace said the British royal family is good value. | T / F |
| g. Royal accountants use bread prices to compare the cost of royals. | T / F |
| h. The Queen drinks a liter of milk every day. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| a. expenditure | shouldered |
| b. trim | examination |
| c. scrutiny | openness |
| d. excesses | out-of-date |
| e. transparency | reduce |
| f. a rule of thumb | annually |
| g. incurred | a general guide |
| h. denomination | spending |
| i. stale | unit |
| j. per annum | wastefulness |

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| a. income | year |
| b. fiscal | for comparison |
| c. pressure to trim | greater scrutiny |
| d. people have demanded | their spending |
| e. greatest possible clarity and | value for money |
| f. excellent | has become stale |
| g. as a rule | and expenditure |
| h. the denomination | of a loaf of bread |
| i. equivalent to the cost | transparency |
| j. the loaf of bread | of thumb |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

ODD WORD OUT: Circle the word in each group of three (in *italics*) that does not fit.

British royal finances online

BNE: A public report of British Queen Elizabeth's finances went online today. It is a first for Buckingham Palace to *publish / issue / author* details of royal income and expenditure on the Internet. The report states that the Queen's spending for the *tax / physical / fiscal* year 2003/2004 *topped / tapped / tipped* \$67 million, which represents a 1.7% increase on the previous year. It says: "This *slight / humungous / miniscule* increase relates mainly to expenditure *attributed to / pinned on / trait* more State visits, major overseas tours and ceremonial costs." The Royals have been under public pressure to *prune / trim / shapely* their spending. The British people have demanded greater *examination / scrutiny / scruples* of royal finances to avoid the excesses of earlier years. The royal press secretary says the new report achieves "the greatest possible *clarity / accuracy / calamity* and transparency in the finances of the Monarchy".

The *anniversary / yearly / annual* cost of the Royals to the British taxpayer was \$1.12 per person, which Buckingham Palace considered *excellent / dirge / top-notch* value for money. The Queen's accountant said that as a rule of thumb the cost *incurred / footed / handed* by each Briton for *funding / finding / financing* the monarchy should be the equivalent of a loaf of bread. However, milk has replaced bread this year as the *denomination / measure / religion* for comparison. The report states: "For the last couple of years, we have indicated that the annual cost per person in the country...was equivalent to the cost of a loaf of bread. With the *passage / passing / pass* of time, the loaf of bread has become *rancid / stale / out-of-date* and this year's expenditure per person, per annum, *amounts / comes / goes* to 61 pence (\$1.12) or less than the price of two pints (1 liter) of milk."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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. ODD WORD OUT: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about any relationships you can find between the correct words and the odd word out?

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

5. STUDENT MONARCHY SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about monarchy and who should pay for it.

- 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:

- report
- first
- topped
- trim
- excesses
- transparency
- annual
- thumb
- denomination
- equivalent
- stale
- amounts

DISCUSSION

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

- a. What was your initial reaction to this headline?
- b. Did the headline arouse your interest in the story?
- c. Are you interested in knowing about the British Queen's finances?
- d. Should all monarchies around the world make public their finances?
- e. Is it right that taxpayers should finance royal families?
- f. Should royal families go shopping in supermarkets and buy clothes from discount stores?
- g. What do you think of the fact that President George W. Bush takes more holidays than Britain's Queen Elizabeth?
- h. Do you think members of royal families work hard?
- i. Should members of royal families do more for charities?
- j. Should royalty represent their country at the United Nations?

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

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. Do you think a monarchy is good for a country?
- d. Do you like your royal family? / Would you like a royal family?
- e. Which royal family would you like to be a member of and why?
- f. Do you think the idea of a royal family belongs in the 21st century?
- g. Is \$1.12 a year per taxpayer excellent value for money to keep a royal family?
- h. Would you rather pay \$1.12 to help fund a royal family or buy a liter of milk?
- i. Who is the world's greatest royal?
- 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

ROYAL RULES OF THUMB: In pairs / groups, decide on some rules of thumb that members of the royal family from country X should adhere to. The rules should be general guidelines as to what is and isn't OK to spend money on.

| AREA OF SPENDING | RULES OF THUMB |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Clothes | |
| Jewelry (USA) Jewellery (UK) | |
| Cars | |
| Overseas tours | |
| Garden parties | |
| Servants | |
| Palaces | |
| Presents for VIPs | |
| Other | |
| Other | |

Change partners and compare the rules of thumb you decided on with your previous partner(s). Give each other feedback on the rules.

Talk with your new partners so that you agree on the rules of thumb.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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_____ of the Royals to the British taxpayer was \$1.12 per person, which Buckingham Palace _____ for money. The Queen's accountant said that as a _____ the cost incurred by each Briton for funding the monarchy should be _____ a loaf of bread. However, milk has replaced bread this year as _____ comparison. The report states: "For the last couple of years, we have indicated that _____ person in the country...was equivalent to the cost of a loaf of bread. With _____, the loaf of bread has become stale and this year's expenditure _____, _____, amounts to 61 pence (\$1.12) or less than the price of two pints (1 liter) of milk."

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 the finances of the British royal family (or any other royal family). Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. MONARCHY: Create an information poster showing why a monarchy is a good thing or a bad thing for a country. Show your poster to your classmates in your next lesson. Did everyone have similar ideas?

4. DIARY / JOURNAL: Imagine you are king or queen (or emperor / empress / sultan / sultana). Write the entry in your diary for a shopping expedition you went on recently. Where did you go? What did you buy? Why? Read your entry to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| a. expenditure | spending |
| b. trim | reduce |
| c. scrutiny | examination |
| d. excesses | wastefulness |
| e. transparency | openness |
| f. a rule of thumb | a general guide |
| g. incurred | shouldered |
| h. denomination | unit |
| i. stale | out-of-date |
| j. per annum | annually |

PHRASE MATCH:

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| a. income | and expenditure |
| b. fiscal | year |
| c. pressure to trim | their spending |
| d. people have demanded | greater scrutiny |
| e. greatest possible clarity and | transparency |
| f. excellent | value for money |
| g. as a rule | of thumb |
| h. the denomination | for comparison |
| i. equivalent to the cost | of a loaf of bread |
| j. the loaf of bread | has become stale |

ODD WORD OUT:

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