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## **Paul McCartney's Beijing Olympics boycott**

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**30 November, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Paul McCartney's Beijing Olympics boycott**

Sir Paul McCartney has sparked outrage in China after calling for a boycott of Chinese goods and the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008. He also vowed never to perform in China again. His comments came after viewing a secretly filmed BBC documentary, which showed gruesome footage of cats and dogs being boiled, skinned alive and mercilessly slaughtered, allegedly at a Chinese fur market. McCartney, an outspoken animal rights campaigner, said: "This is barbaric. It's like something out of the Dark Ages." He added: "I wouldn't even dream of going over there to play, in the same way I wouldn't go to a country that supported apartheid. This is just disgusting. It's against every rule of humanity." The Chinese Embassy in London has dismissed the film as fake.

The undercover video footage was aired on British television on November 28. It is full of gruesome and disturbing scenes purportedly showing cats and dogs being tossed on the ground to break their bones, plunged into boiling water and skinned alive in medieval-looking machines. In Sir Paul's remonstrance, he called the Chinese "uncivilized" and a "sick, sick people". He said: "How can the host nation of the Olympics be seen allowing animals to be treated in this terrible way?" A Chinese diplomat in London refuted McCartney's claims, stating: "Though cats and dogs are not endangered, we do not encourage their ill treatment...I do not agree with Mr. McCartney's point of view...a boycott of Chinese goods and the Olympics is simply not justifiable." He added: "Sir Paul should be calling for a boycott of the fashion industry using fur in the European and American markets."

## WARM-UPS

**1. ANGRY WORLD:** Write down the names of three countries you often get angry with. Talk to your partner(s) about why these countries make you angry. What do they need to do to get into your good books?

**2. BOYCOTT:** What would it take for you to boycott the following? Talk about this with your partner(s). How much of a problem would it be to boycott these things? What would you do in place of the things you boycotted?

- Leather
- Your favorite sports team
- Studying English
- McDonald's
- Buying newspapers
- The Internet
- Listening to your favorite band
- School
- Using trains
- Your idea \_\_\_\_\_

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

*Paul McCartney / China / Chinese goods / Beijing Olympics / BBC / cats / dogs / fur / apartheid / boiling water / endangered animals / boycotts / fashion industry*

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

**4. COMMENTS ON FUR:** What do you think of these comments on fur? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- a. Fur is worn by beautiful animals and ugly people.
- b. There is absolutely no need in the world for people to buy fur for fashion.
- c. Paul McCartney is a hero for championing the rights of cats and dogs.
- d. Paul McCartney should spend more time campaigning for children's rights.
- e. People have always worn fur and always will. End of story.
- f. The fur industry is booming. Anti-fur campaigners are fighting a losing battle.
- g. Fashion companies have an ethical and moral obligation to shun the use of fur.
- h. Using fur is no different from using leather.

**5. FUR:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with fur. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**6. QUICK DEBATE:** Have a quick debate with your partner. Students A think China is worse for killing dogs and cats, Students B think the USA and Europe are worse for allowing the sale of fur and being the biggest markets for fur in the world.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- a. Paul McCartney has been banned from attending the Beijing Olympics. T / F
- b. McCartney is angry that cats and dogs are killed in China for their fur. T / F
- c. McCartney said he often dreams of performing in concert in China. T / F
- d. China apologized for a video showing cats and dogs being killed. T / F
- e. The video was filmed in association with the Chinese fur trade. T / F
- f. Paul McCartney said Chinese were uncivilized and a sick people. T / F
- g. A Chinese diplomat said cats and dogs are threatened in China. T / F
- h. The diplomat asked McCartney to boycott fur in Western fashion. T / F

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

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| a. sparked        | acceptable     |
| b. gruesome       | butchered      |
| c. slaughtered    | shown          |
| d. barbaric       | supposedly     |
| e. Dark Ages      | outburst       |
| f. aired          | repudiated     |
| g. purportedly    | grisly         |
| h. remonstrations | cruel          |
| i. refuted        | ignited        |
| j. justifiable    | medieval times |

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

- |                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a. Sir Paul McCartney has sparked | as fake                               |
| b. He also vowed                  | cats and dogs being boiled            |
| c. gruesome footage of            | and skinned alive                     |
| d. It's like something out        | for a boycott of the fashion industry |
| e. dismissed the film             | outrage in China                      |
| f. The undercover video footage   | of the Dark Ages                      |
| g. plunged into boiling water     | treated in this terrible way          |
| h. we do not encourage            | was aired on British television       |
| i. allowing animals to be         | never to perform in China again       |
| j. Sir Paul should be calling     | their ill treatment                   |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

### Paul McCartney's Beijing Olympics boycott

Sir Paul McCartney has sparked \_\_\_\_\_ in China after calling for a boycott of Chinese goods and the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008. He also \_\_\_\_\_ never to perform in China again. His comments came after viewing a secretly filmed BBC documentary, which showed gruesome \_\_\_\_\_ of cats and dogs being boiled, skinned alive and \_\_\_\_\_ slaughtered, allegedly at a Chinese fur market. McCartney, an \_\_\_\_\_ animal rights campaigner, said: "This is barbaric. It's like something out of the Dark Ages." He added: "I wouldn't even \_\_\_\_\_ of going over there to play, in the same way I wouldn't go to a country that \_\_\_\_\_ apartheid. This is just disgusting. It's against every rule of humanity." The Chinese Embassy in London has \_\_\_\_\_ the film as fake.

*dismissed*  
*footage*  
*outrage*  
*outspoken*  
*dream*  
*vowed*  
*supported*  
*mercilessly*

The undercover video footage was \_\_\_\_\_ on British television on November 28. It is full of gruesome and disturbing scenes purportedly showing cats and dogs being \_\_\_\_\_ on the ground to break their bones, \_\_\_\_\_ into boiling water and skinned alive in medieval-looking machines. In Sir Paul's \_\_\_\_\_, he called the Chinese "uncivilized" and a "sick, sick people". He said: "How can the \_\_\_\_\_ nation of the Olympics be seen allowing animals to be treated in this terrible way?" A Chinese diplomat in London refuted McCartney's claims, stating: "Though cats and dogs are not endangered, we do not \_\_\_\_\_ their ill treatment...I do not agree with Mr. McCartney's point of view...a boycott of Chinese goods and the Olympics is simply not \_\_\_\_\_." He added: "Sir Paul should be \_\_\_\_\_ for a boycott of the fashion industry using fur in the European and American markets."

*justifiable*  
*plunged*  
*encourage*  
*aired*  
*remonstrations*  
*calling*  
*tossed*  
*host*

## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **Paul McCartney's Beijing Olympics boycott**

Sir Paul McCartney has sparked outrage in China after \_\_\_\_\_ a boycott of Chinese goods and the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008. He also \_\_\_\_\_ never to perform in China again. His comments came after viewing a secretly filmed BBC documentary, which showed \_\_\_\_\_ footage of cats and dogs being boiled, skinned alive and mercilessly slaughtered, \_\_\_\_\_ at a Chinese fur market. McCartney, an outspoken animal rights campaigner, said: "This is \_\_\_\_\_. It's like something out of the Dark Ages." He added: "I wouldn't even dream of going over there to play, in the same way I wouldn't go to a country that supported apartheid. This is just \_\_\_\_\_. It's against every rule of humanity." The Chinese Embassy in London has \_\_\_\_\_ the film as fake.

The undercover video footage was \_\_\_\_\_ on British television on November 28. It is full of gruesome and disturbing scenes \_\_\_\_\_ showing cats and dogs being tossed on the ground to break their bones, \_\_\_\_\_ into boiling water and skinned alive in medieval-looking machines. In Sir Paul's \_\_\_\_\_, he called the Chinese "uncivilized" and a "sick, sick people". He said: "How can the host nation of the Olympics be seen allowing animals to be treated in this terrible way?" A Chinese diplomat in London \_\_\_\_\_ McCartney's claims, stating: "Though cats and dogs are not endangered, we do not encourage their \_\_\_\_\_....I do not agree with Mr. McCartney's point of view...a boycott of Chinese goods and the Olympics is simply not \_\_\_\_\_." He added: "Sir Paul should be calling for a boycott of the fashion industry using fur in the European and American markets."

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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. STUDENT "FUR" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about the fur trade and whether the world should act against China.

- 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:

- |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| • outrage | • aired   |
| • perform | • bones   |
| • boiled  | • host    |
| • dream   | • ill     |
| • rule    | • point   |
| • fake    | • markets |

## **DISCUSSION**

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

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Do you want to watch the BBC documentary?
- c. What do you think of the fact that the sale of cat fur and dog fur products is not illegal in Great Britain?
- d. Paul McCartney will go to Spain, where there is bull fighting, and his friends wear fur. Do you think he is a hypocrite?
- e. Why do we need fashion?
- f. Do you think Sir Paul should focus on human rights rather than animal rights?
- g. Do you think killing animals for fur is any different from killing animals for meat?
- h. Do you think Paul McCartney should apologize for saying the Chinese are "sick, sick people"?
- i. What do you think of Paul McCartney's comparison of China to apartheid regimes?
- j. Is the Chinese official correct in saying American and European consumers are more to blame for buying fur?

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

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you think everyone should boycott the Beijing Olympics?
- d. Do you think Paul McCartney is over-reacting?
- e. The Chinese government says the BBC video is a hoax. What do you think of this?
- f. Do you think there is a difference between killing cats and dogs for fashion and killing foxes and minks?
- g. What kind of people buy fur?
- h. Do you think using fur is any different from using leather?
- i. Do you think the International Olympic Committee should change the venue of the 2008 Olympics?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?



## SPEAKING

**CAT & DOG FUR ROLE PLAY:** Should China stop killing cats and dogs? 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.

Role A – SIR PAUL McCARTNEY

You are outraged at what you saw in the video. You think the fur trade should be banned. It is no longer acceptable in the twentieth Century. Synthetic fur is warmer and cheaper to produce. You think fur is worn by beautiful animals and ugly people.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY FUR SHOULD BE BANNED.

Role B – CHINESE EMBASSY OFFICIAL

You think Paul McCartney is a hypocrite. He wore fur when he was in the Beatles. He also took hard drugs. No one should listen to him. His rock star friends wear fur but he doesn't boycott them. He loves America – the world's biggest market for fur. He should stay out of world politics and stick to singing. The video is a fake.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY PAUL McCARTNEY IS WRONG.

Role C – INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE CHIEF

You are very worried the BBC video will make people associate the Beijing Olympics with boiled cats and skinned dogs. You want to change venue unless China immediately stops killing cats and dogs. You also want China to clean up its human rights act before the Olympics.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY FUR SHOULD BE BANNED.

Role D – CHINESE CITIZEN

You are fed up with people, especially the Western media, attacking China. The USA and European countries have many human rights issues. China doesn't bomb other countries every few years. China doesn't think it owns the world. The UK is a small, unimportant country. Paul McCartney owes the Chinese people a huge apology

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY THE UK AND USA ARE BAD.

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

Discuss whether or not the venue of the Beijing Olympics should be changed and whether China should apologize for scenes shown in the BBC video.

## **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 Sir Paul McCartney's outburst against China. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

**3. FUR:** Make a poster outlining the different arguments for or against the use of fur. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all think of similar things?

**4. LETTER:** Write a letter to the Chinese president telling him what you think of the BBC's allegations. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

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

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| a. sparked        | ignited        |
| b. gruesome       | grisly         |
| c. slaughtered    | butchered      |
| d. barbaric       | cruel          |
| e. Dark Ages      | medieval times |
| f. aired          | shown          |
| g. purportedly    | supposedly     |
| h. remonstrations | outburst       |
| i. refuted        | repudiated     |
| j. justifiable    | acceptable     |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a. Sir Paul McCartney has sparked | outrage in China                      |
| b. He also vowed                  | never to perform in China again       |
| c. gruesome footage of            | cats and dogs being boiled            |
| d. It's like something out        | of the Dark Ages                      |
| e. dismissed the film             | as fake                               |
| f. The undercover video footage   | was aired on British television       |
| g. plunged into boiling water     | and skinned alive                     |
| h. we do not encourage            | their ill treatment                   |
| i. allowing animals to be         | treated in this terrible way          |
| j. Sir Paul should be calling     | for a boycott of the fashion industry |

### GAP FILL:

#### Paul McCartney's Beijing Olympics boycott

Sir Paul McCartney has sparked **outrage** in China after calling for a boycott of Chinese goods and the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008. He also **vowed** never to perform in China again. His comments came after viewing a secretly filmed BBC documentary, which showed gruesome **footage** of cats and dogs being boiled, skinned alive and **mercilessly** slaughtered, allegedly at a Chinese fur market. McCartney, an **outspoken** animal rights campaigner, said: "This is barbaric. It's like something out of the Dark Ages." He added: "I wouldn't even **dream** of going over there to play, in the same way I wouldn't go to a country that **supported** apartheid. This is just disgusting. It's against every rule of humanity." The Chinese Embassy in London has **dismissed** the film as fake.

The undercover video footage was **aired** on British television on November 28. It is full of gruesome and disturbing scenes purportedly showing cats and dogs being **tossed** on the ground to break their bones, **plunged** into boiling water and skinned alive in medieval-looking machines. In Sir Paul's **remonstrations**, he called the Chinese "uncivilized" and a "sick, sick people". He said: "How can the **host** nation of the Olympics be seen allowing animals to be treated in this terrible way?" A Chinese diplomat in London refuted McCartney's claims, stating: "Though cats and dogs are not endangered, we do not **encourage** their ill treatment...I do not agree with Mr. McCartney's point of view...a boycott of Chinese goods and the Olympics is simply not **justifiable**." He added: "Sir Paul should be **calling** for a boycott of the fashion industry using fur in the European and American markets."