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Fist fight breaks out in Italian parliament

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1110/111028-fist_fight.html

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28th October, 2011

THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111028-fist_fight.html

Italian politicians got into a fist fight on Wednesday in a discussion over Italy's tough economic reforms. Legislators from Silvio Berlusconi's coalition party exchanged blows with members of the opposition FLI party. Parliament was suspended for several minutes after the fight broke out. The heated debate was about Italy's painful austerity measures, although things got out of control over comments FLI speaker Gianfranco Fini made on television about the wife of coalition member Umberto Bossi. Mr Fini joked that Mr Bossi's wife had taken early retirement from a teaching job when she was 39. UDC party member Amedeo Ciccanti said: "We need to calm down because Italians are more irritated than us about this."

The raising of the retirement age and changing the pension system are currently very painful subjects in Italy. The European Union (EU) wants Italy to cut its huge public debt as part of the battle to save the euro. Italy's generous pension scheme is in the firing line of these cuts. Mr Berlusconi and Mr Bossi reached a compromise on raising Italy's retirement age on Tuesday night. The overnight deal made by Mr Bossi means that Italy will gradually raise the retirement age for all workers to 67 by 2025. This will bring it in line with similar measures being taken by other EU countries. Currently, Italian men and women retire at 65 in the public sector, although some women in the private sector retire earlier.

WARM-UPS

1. FIGHTS: Walk around the class and talk to other students about fights. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

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

Italians / politicians / fist fight / coalition / austerity / coalition / early retirement / pension system / public debt / in the firing line / compromise / gradually / measures

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. FIGHTS: Who do you fight/argue with? Complete this table and share what you wrote. Change partners and share again.

	What about?	Who wins and why?
Parents		
Best friends		
Customer service		
Other students		
Teachers		
Strangers		

4. ANGER: Students A **strongly** believe anger will one day disappear from humans; Students B **strongly** believe we will always be angry. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. ITALIAN: What are your favourite Italian things? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- pasta and pizza
- romance
- cars
- wine
- football
- fashion
- art
- opera

6. FIST: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'fist'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111028-fist_fight.html

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Members of the public had a fight with Italian politicians. | T / F |
| b. After the fight, parliament was suspended for the rest of the day. | T / F |
| c. The fight was over comments made about a politician's wife. | T / F |
| d. A politician told his peers to consider what Italians thought about them. | T / F |
| e. The European Union wants Italy to lower its retirement age. | T / F |
| f. There was no compromise involving the Italian president. | T / F |
| g. Italy's retirement age will be much higher than other EU countries. | T / F |
| h. Some women in the private sector retire before public sector workers. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| 1. fist fight | a. annoyed |
| 2. tough | b. slowly |
| 3. exchanged | c. difficult |
| 4. measures | d. presently |
| 5. irritated | e. swapped |
| 6. painful | f. steps |
| 7. huge | g. upsetting |
| 8. compromise/deal | h. punch up |
| 9. gradually | i. agreement |
| 10. currently | j. enormous |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Italian politicians got | a. retirement |
| 2. tough economic | b. debate |
| 3. exchanged | c. a compromise |
| 4. heated | d. debt |
| 5. taken early | e. reforms |
| 6. The raising of the | f. line |
| 7. cut its huge public | g. retirement age |
| 8. in the firing | h. into a fist fight |
| 9. reached | i. line with |
| 10. bring it in | j. blows |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111028-fist_fight.html

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Italian politicians got into a fist fight on Wednesday in a discussion over Italy's (1) _____ economic reforms. Legislators from Silvio Berlusconi's coalition party exchanged (2) _____ with members of the opposition FLI party. Parliament was suspended for (3) _____ minutes after the fight broke out. The (4) _____ debate was about Italy's painful austerity measures, although things got out of (5) _____ over comments FLI speaker Gianfranco Fini made on television about the wife of coalition member Umberto Bossi. Mr Fini joked that Mr Bossi's wife had taken (6) _____ retirement from a teaching job when she was 39. UDC party member Amedeo Ciccanti said: "We need to (7) _____ down because Italians are more (8) _____ than us about this."

calm
heated
blows
control
irritated
tough
several
early

The (9) _____ of the retirement age and changing the pension system are currently very (10) _____ subjects in Italy. The European Union (EU) wants Italy to cut its (11) _____ public debt as part of the battle to save the euro. Italy's (12) _____ pension scheme is in the firing line of these cuts. Mr Berlusconi and Mr Bossi reached a (13) _____ on raising Italy's retirement age on Tuesday night. The overnight (14) _____ made by Mr Bossi means that Italy will gradually raise the retirement age for all workers to 67 by 2025. This will bring it in (15) _____ with similar measures being taken by other EU countries. Currently, Italian men and women retire at 65 in the public sector, although some women in the private sector retire (16) _____.

generous
line
painful
compromise
earlier
raising
huge
deal

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111028-fist_fight.html

Italian _____ fist fight on Wednesday in a discussion over Italy's tough economic reforms. Legislators from Silvio Berlusconi's coalition party _____ members of the opposition FLI party. Parliament was _____ minutes after the fight broke out. The heated debate was about Italy's painful austerity measures, although things _____ over comments FLI speaker Gianfranco Fini made on television about the wife of coalition member Umberto Bossi. Mr Fini joked that Mr Bossi's wife had _____ from a teaching job when she was 39. UDC party member Amedeo Ciccanti said: "We need to calm down because Italians are _____ about this."

The raising of the retirement age and changing the pension system are _____ subjects in Italy. The European Union (EU) wants Italy to cut its huge public debt as part of _____ the euro. Italy's generous pension scheme is _____ of these cuts. Mr Berlusconi and Mr Bossi reached a compromise on raising Italy's retirement age on Tuesday night. The _____ by Mr Bossi means that Italy will gradually raise the retirement age for all workers to 67 by 2025. This will _____ similar measures being taken by other EU countries. Currently, Italian men and women retire at 65 in the public sector, although some women in _____ retire earlier.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111028-fist_fight.html

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'fist' and 'fight'.

fist	fight
-------------	--------------

- 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. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• tough• blows• broke• control• joked• calm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• painful• battle• firing• deal• similar• earlier
--	--

STUDENT FIGHTS SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111028-fist_fight.html

Write five GOOD questions about fights in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

FIGHTS & RETIREMENT DISCUSSION

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

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the term 'fist fight'?
- c) What do you think of fist fights?
- d) What do you think of politicians fighting each other live on TV in their country's parliament?
- e) How dangerous are fist fights?
- f) What do you know about and think of Italian politics?
- g) Should the politicians be arrested for fighting in public?
- h) How often are things heated in your country's parliament?
- i) What do you think of austerity measures?
- j) Who's responsible for governments having to make painful cuts?

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FIGHTS & RETIREMENT DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What subjects are painful in your country right now?
- c) At what age do you think people should retire?
- d) What message does a fist fight between politicians send to kids?
- e) Is it OK to increase the retirement age because people are healthier and living longer?
- f) What do you think will happen to the euro?
- g) When was the last time you made a compromise?
- h) When was the last time you had a fight?
- i) When do you think you'll retire?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Italian president Silvio Berlusconi?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1110/111028-fist_fight.html

Italian politicians got (1) _____ a fist fight on Wednesday in a discussion over Italy's tough economic reforms. Legislators from Silvio Berlusconi's coalition party (2) _____ blows with members of the opposition FLI party. Parliament was (3) _____ for several minutes after the fight broke out. The heated debate was about Italy's painful austerity measures, although things got (4) _____ of control over comments FLI speaker Gianfranco Fini made on television about the wife of coalition member Umberto Bossi. Mr Fini joked that Mr Bossi's wife had (5) _____ early retirement from a teaching job when she was 39. UDC party member Amedeo Ciccanti said: "We need to calm down because Italians are more (6) _____ than us about this."

The raising of the retirement age and changing the pension system are (7) _____ very painful subjects in Italy. The European Union (EU) wants Italy to cut its huge public debt (8) _____ part of the battle to save the euro. Italy's generous pension scheme is in the (9) _____ line of these cuts. Mr Berlusconi and Mr Bossi (10) _____ a compromise on raising Italy's retirement age on Tuesday night. The overnight deal made by Mr Bossi means that Italy will (11) _____ raise the retirement age for all workers to 67 by 2025. This will bring it in line (12) _____ similar measures being taken by other EU countries. Currently, Italian men and women retire at 65 in the public sector, although some women in the private sector retire earlier.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. | (a) unto | (b) onto | (c) to | (d) into |
| 2. | (a) changed | (b) exchanged | (c) charged | (d) chained |
| 3. | (a) suspended | (b) suspension | (c) suspends | (d) suspense |
| 4. | (a) in | (b) up | (c) out | (d) down |
| 5. | (a) done | (b) worked | (c) taken | (d) presented |
| 6. | (a) irritant | (b) irritated | (c) irritates | (d) irrational |
| 7. | (a) currently | (b) currant | (c) currency | (d) concurrent |
| 8. | (a) was | (b) has | (c) is | (d) as |
| 9. | (a) axing | (b) firing | (c) watering | (d) punching |
| 10. | (a) harvested | (b) upped | (c) catapulted | (d) reached |
| 11. | (a) gradient | (b) graded | (c) gradually | (d) graduate |
| 12. | (a) with | (b) of | (c) by | (d) over |

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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 out more about fights between politicians. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. RETIREMENT AGE: Make a poster about retirement age around the world. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. FIGHT: Write a magazine article about the fight in Italy's parliament. Include imaginary interviews with President Silvio Berlusconi and an average Italian. What do they think of the fighting politicians

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to Silvio Berlusconi. Ask him three questions about Italy. Give him three of your opinions on Italy. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| 1. fist fight | a. punch up |
| 2. tough | b. difficult |
| 3. exchanged | c. swapped |
| 4. measures | d. steps |
| 5. irritated | e. annoyed |
| 6. painful | f. upsetting |
| 7. huge | g. enormous |
| 8. compromise/deal | h. agreement |
| 9. gradually | i. slowly |
| 10. currently | j. presently |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Italian politicians got | a. into a fist fight |
| 2. tough economic | b. reforms |
| 3. exchanged | c. blows |
| 4. heated | d. debate |
| 5. taken early | e. retirement |
| 6. The raising of the | f. retirement age |
| 7. cut its huge public | g. debt |
| 8. in the firing | h. line |
| 9. reached | i. a compromise |
| 10. bring it in | j. line with |

GAP FILL:

Fist fight breaks out in Italian parliament

Italian politicians got into a fist fight on Wednesday in a discussion over Italy's (1) **tough** economic reforms. Legislators from Silvio Berlusconi's coalition party exchanged (2) **blows** with members of the opposition FLI party. Parliament was suspended for (3) **several** minutes after the fight broke out. The (4) **heated** debate was about Italy's painful austerity measures, although things got out of (5) **control** over comments FLI speaker Gianfranco Fini made on television about the wife of coalition member Umberto Bossi. Mr Fini joked that Mr Bossi's wife had taken (6) **early** retirement from a teaching job when she was 39. UDC party member Amedeo Ciccanti said: "We need to (7) **calm** down because Italians are more (8) **irritated** than us about this."

The (9) **raising** of the retirement age and changing the pension system are currently very (10) **painful** subjects in Italy. The European Union (EU) wants Italy to cut its (11) **huge** public debt as part of the battle to save the euro. Italy's (12) **generous** pension scheme is in the firing line of these cuts. Mr Berlusconi and Mr Bossi reached a (13) **compromise** on raising Italy's retirement age on Tuesday night. The overnight (14) **deal** made by Mr Bossi means that Italy will gradually raise the retirement age for all workers to 67 by 2025. This will bring it in (15) **line** with similar measures being taken by other EU countries. Currently, Italian men and women retire at 65 in the public sector, although some women in the private sector retire (16) **earlier**.

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d 2 - b 3 - a 4 - c 5 - c 6 - b 7 - a 8 - d 9 - b 10 - d 11 - c 12 - a

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