

Michael Jackson trial (Monday, January 31, 2005)

WARM UPS

CHAT: Talk about Michael Jackson / Neverland / high profile celebrity court cases / the charges against Jackson / superstars / media frenzy / fair trial / innocence...

SUPERSTAR: In pairs list all the advantages and disadvantages of being a rock super star like Michael Jackson. Rank which are the best advantages and which the worst disadvantages. Look at the disadvantages and decide whether you would still like to be a superstar.

OPINIONS: Discuss the following with your partner / group. Find out which are the most commonly held opinions:

- (a) Michael Jackson is guilty of the charges.
- (b) The media frenzy is terrible and may affect the final decision.
- (c) If he is guilty he should get the same sentence as an ordinary person.
- (d) A 40-year-old man inviting children to sleep over at his house, and in the same bed is not normal – He must be guilty.
- (e) Who cares? It doesn't affect my life.
- (f) Superstars and idols have a responsibility to be role models. Jackson should have behaved better.
- (g) Michael has brought so much joy to the world he should be given special treatment.
- (h) The real motive behind this case is someone trying to get money from Michael Jackson.
- (i) If he is guilty, he should be severely punished and used as an example for all child molesters.
- (j) He will receive a fair trial.
- (k) It is difficult to keep an open mind in a case such as this.

PRE READING EXERCISES

WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries, or a search engine, to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... of the words 'high', and 'profile'.

TRUE / FALSE: Predict from the headline whether these statements are true or false:

- (a) People have waited for Michael Jackson's trial for a long time. T / F
- (b) The world isn't so interested in this case. T / F
- (c) He could spend up to six months in prison. T / F
- (d) He is being accused of giving a thirteen-year-old boy alcohol and then seducing him in bed. T / F
- (e) Jackson has accepted some of the charges against him. T / F
- (f) Jackson does not believe he will get a fair trial. T / F
- (g) Many of his fans believe he is guilty. T / F
- (h) Jackson's plea to the world is, "please keep an open mind." T / F

PRE-READING EXERCISES

SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | | |
|-----|--------------|-------------|
| (a) | high profile | fascinate |
| (b) | trial | truth |
| (c) | grip | charged |
| (d) | molestation | well-known |
| (e) | accused | freed |
| (f) | acquitted | torment |
| (g) | justice | abuse |
| (h) | nightmare | clean hands |
| (i) | fans | court case |
| (j) | innocence | supporters |

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

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------|---------------|
| (a) | It has been a long | all charges |
| (b) | high | frenzy |
| (c) | child | world |
| (d) | Jackson has denied | system |
| (e) | he believes in | time coming |
| (f) | American legal | profile trial |
| (g) | media | detail |
| (h) | report every tiny | molestation |
| (i) | a news hungry | seats |
| (j) | on the edge of their | justice |

DEFINITIONS: Match the following words with the most likely definitions:

(a) **high profile** (adj)

- (i) relating to something that is attracting a lot of attention and publicity in the newspapers and on TV
- (ii) a resume / CV that shows someone has an excellent education and career history

(b) **molestation** (n)

- (i) the secret area where spies meet before going on a dangerous mission
- (ii) to do sexual things to someone against their wishes

(c) **grip** (v)

- (i) to have a tight hold of something so that it can't escape or fall
- (ii) to complain non-stop when you are taken shopping and you want to go home

(d) **trial** (n)

- (i) an event in which people listen to evidence about a crime and decide if someone is guilty or not guilty
- (ii) something that is free which you can try out three times before making a decision to buy it

(e) **guilty** (adj)

- (i) to be judged that someone committed a crime
- (ii) a piece of office equipment for cutting paper

(f) **conspiracy** (n)

- (i) an agreement by several people to commit a crime
- (ii) the selling of illegal / fake CDs, DVDs, computer software and brand bags on the street

(g) **seducing** (n)

- (i) to recline the front seats in a family car and go to sleep
- (ii) to try to encourage another person to have sexual relations with you

(h) **acquitted** (v)

- (i) to be found not guilty of a crime, free from all charges.
- (ii) to quit your job and then change your mind

(i) **open mind** (n)

- (i) when it is easy to tell someone's character or thoughts
- (ii) thinking about all opinions and facts equally and fairly

(j) **innocence** (n)

- (i) a sweet smelling stick that is burnt in homes and temples
- (ii) being not guilty

GAP-FILL: Put the missing words under each paragraph into the gaps.

Michael Jackson trial (Mon 31 Jan)

BNE: It has been a long time _____, but Michael Jackson's high profile trial for child molestation starts Monday and is set to grip the world's _____ until it finishes. The trial could last up to six months, and if he is found guilty he could spend as many as 20 years in prison. The superstar pop singer is on _____ for ten accounts of child molestation and conspiracy. He is being accused of giving a thirteen-year-old boy alcohol and then seducing him in bed. Jackson has _____ all charges on his website, saying he would be "acquitted and vindicated when the truth is told". He said he believes in justice and the _____ of the American legal system, and wants to receive fair treatment the same as any ordinary citizen. He also said his life has been a _____ since being arrested in December 1993 at his 'Neverland' ranch in California. Journalists from all over the world are camped outside the court in the small town of Santa Maria in a media frenzy, and will report every tiny _____ of the case to a news hungry world. His millions of fans will be on the edge of their seats throughout the trial and all believe in his innocence. Jackson's plea to the world is, "please keep an _____ mind and let me have my day in court."

nightmare attention detail coming trial fairness open denied

DISCUSSION:

- (a) Do you like Michael Jackson?
- (b) What are your earliest memories of Michael Jackson?
- (c) What one word would you use to describe Michael Jackson, and why?
- (d) What do you think of his cosmetic surgery and skin colour changes?
- (e) He is loved by millions. Is he a good man?
- (f) Do you think he'll get a fair trial?
- (g) Will the media circus happening outside the courtroom affect the jurors' decision?
- (h) Is it possible for the jurors to keep an open mind in such a high profile trial?
- (i) Would you like to be a juror in this case?
- (j) He has admitted sleeping (only sleeping) next to children. What's your take on that?
- (k) Do you think it's possible the boy (or his parents) in this case is trying to get money?
- (l) Will you be on the edge of your seat watching this case unfold?
- (m) Do you have an open mind?
- (n) Is the American justice system a fair one Will MJ get a fair trial?
- (o) Teacher / Student additional questions

INTERNET / WEB LINKS:

Official MJ web site:

<http://www.michaeljackson.com/>

MJ news and information:

<http://mjsource.com/>

A dedicated fan site:

<http://www.mjsite.com/>

The case against?:

<http://www.thesmokinggun.com/archive/010605jackson.html>

MJ is innocent:

<http://mj-kop0.tripod.com/>

Michael Jackson age progression photo:

<http://www.forartist.com/forensic/modification/mj/jackson.htm>

HOMEWORK

MJ POSTER: Create a poster about the life of Michael Jackson.

LETTER TO MICHAEL: Write a letter to Michael Jackson telling him your thoughts on his trial.

FULL TEXT

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