

Anti-McDonald's McDavids beat Goliath (Wed 16 Feb)

WARM UPS

CHAT: Talk in pairs or groups about McDonald's / McLibel 2 / David and Goliath / Ellen Brokovitch / healthy hamburgers / Ronald McDonald / We're lovin' it...Change topic / partner frequently to energize the class.

MCDONALD'S BRAINSTORM: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with McDonald's. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

DAVID AND GOLIATH BRAINSTORM: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words or examples you associate with David and Goliath. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH MCDONALD'S?; Talk about these opinions from the famous 'What's wrong with McDonald's leaflet with your partner:

- a. McDonald's try to cultivate an image of being a 'caring' and 'green' company.
- b. Children are lured in (dragging their parents behind them) with the promise of toys and other gimmicks.
- c. McDonald's promote their food as 'nutritious', but the reality is that it is junk food.
- d. Meat is the cause of the majority of food poisoning incidents.
- e. Workers in the fast food industry are paid low wages. McDonald's do not pay overtime rates even when employees work very long hours.
- f. Forests throughout the world - vital for all life - are being destroyed at an appalling rate.
- g. Every year McDonald's use thousands of tons of unnecessary packaging, most of which ends up littering our streets.
- h. The menus of the burger chains are based on the torture and murder of millions of animals.
- i. Staff turnover at McDonald's is high, making it virtually impossible for workers to unionize and fight for a better deal, which suits McDonald's who have always been opposed to Unions.
- j. Methane emitted by cattle reared for the beef industry is a major contributor to the 'global warming' crisis.
- k. McDonald's only interest is money, making profits from whoever and whatever they can.

THE LEAFLET: Talk about the "What's wrong with McDonald's?" campaign leaflet (<http://www.mcspotlight.org/campaigns/current/mckids.html>)

PRE READING EXERCISES

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

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

- a. Two British conservationists won a court case against McDonald's. T / F
- b. The two conservationists' nickname is the McLibel 2. T / F
- c. The McLibel 2 distributed leaflets in London entitled "What's wrong with McDonald's. T / F
- d. McDonald's sued the pair for libel, spending \$10 million on lawyers. T / F
- e. The McLibel 2 were imprisoned for seven years. T / F
- f. It was a huge public relations disaster for McDonald's. T / F
- g. McDonald's served unhealthy food, exploited children, were cruel to animals, and paid low wages. T / F
- h. It is now more difficult to publicly criticize powerful organizations. T / F

SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | | |
|-----|------------------|----------------------|
| (a) | conservationists | prosecuted |
| (b) | campaigned | infamous |
| (c) | distributed | financial assistance |
| (d) | sued | circulated |
| (e) | legal aid | condemn |
| (f) | damages | examination |
| (g) | damn | compensation |
| (h) | notorious | crusaded |
| (i) | proceedings | activists |
| (j) | scrutiny | action |

PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases based on the article

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (a) | a true case of | the pair for libel |
| (b) | immoral | launched legal proceedings |
| (c) | They distributed | responsible for animal cruelty |
| (d) | The hamburger chain sued | children |
| (e) | The pair never paid | operating practices |
| (f) | exploit | David and Goliath |
| (g) | culpably | effect |
| (h) | in breach of | leaflets in the streets of London |
| (i) | The two conservationists had | the right to a fair trial |
| (j) | detrimental | a penny |

DEFINITIONS: Students match the following words with the **most likely** definitions (Please think about the headline!):

(a) **David and Goliath** (n)

- (i) a hamburger restaurant chain
- (ii) a story about a small person defeating a giant

(b) **libel laws** (n)

- (i) laws that prevent one person / company saying damaging lies against another
- (ii) laws that require restaurants to sell healthy food

(c) **immoral** (adj)

- (i) something that everyone knows is bad and unethical
- (ii) the ability to live or be remembered forever

(d) **sued** (v)

- (i) a way of frying old burgers quickly to kill all bacteria
- (ii) took someone to court to win damages, compensation or recover a reputation

(e) **damningly** (adv)

- (i) to block a river's natural course to create more land for cows to graze
- (ii) very very very strongly condemned someone or something

(f) **nutritional** (adj)

- (i) having a positive number of elements which are good for our health
- (ii) to describe something you are 100% sure something will happen

(g) **exploit** (v)

- (i) to campaign against something in the streets, usually with leaflets
- (ii) take advantage of people weaker than yourself and use them to make money for yourself

(h) **notorious** (adj)

- (i) something that is very well known, but for negative or bad reasons.
- (ii) the style of speaking in a courtroom

(i) **scrutiny** (n)

- (i) a disease that originates from eating too many hamburgers
- (ii) very very close examination of something or someone

(j) **detrimental** (adj)

- (i) something that causes harm or injury to someone or something
- (ii) something that creates benefits to someone or something

GAP FILL

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BNE: In a true case of David and Goliath, two British _____ have won a court case in the European Court of Human Rights against the British government's _____ laws. Helen Steel, 39 & Dave Morris, 50, also known as the McLibel 2, campaigned in the early 1990s against what they saw as McDonald's' immoral operating practices. They _____ leaflets in the streets of London _____ "What's wrong with McDonald's – Everything they don't want you to know". They were also awarded 35,000 euros (\$45,000) between them.

entitled *distributed* *conservationists* *libel*

The hamburger chain sued the pair for libel, spending \$10 million on lawyers. The McLibel 2 had no money for legal representation, and the British legal system did not at that time allow legal aid in libel cases. McDonald's won the case and were awarded \$70,000 in damages. The pair never _____ a penny of it. It was a huge public relations disaster for McDonald's. The presiding judge _____ stated, "McDonald's marketing has "pretended to a positive nutritional benefit which their food (high in fat & salt etc) did not match"; that McDonald's "exploit children" with their advertising strategy; are "_____ responsible for animal cruelty"; and "pay low wages, helping to _____ wages in the catering trade."

damningly *depress* *paid* *culpably*

A McLibel 2 media release declared that "the _____ and long running McLibel case was in breach of the right to a fair trial and right to freedom of expression. The two conservationists had _____ legal proceedings against the UK government arguing that the marathon 'McLibel trial' which lasted 313 days - the longest trial of any kind in English legal history - and UK libel laws, _____ the European Convention on Human Rights Article 6 (right to a fair trial) and Article 10 (right to freedom of expression)." The McLibel 2 stated, "We hope that this will result in greater public _____ and criticism of powerful organizations whose practices have a detrimental effect on society and the environment

scrutiny *notorious* *launched* *breached*

DISCUSSION:

- a. What do you think of this article?
- b. Do you like McDonald's?
- c. Is McDonald's a good or bad company?
- d. Do big companies ever lie?
- e. What other David and Goliath cases do you know?
- f. What do you think of the McLibel 2?
- g. What's wrong with McDonald's?
- h. What do you want to know about McDonald's?
- i. Do you believe the stories that often circulate about McDonald's burgers being made of dog meat, or horses feet...?
- j. Does the McDonald's Happy Set and free toy exploit children / parents?
- k. Which multi-national companies do you dislike / hate and why?
- l. Are there any huge companies you respect?
- m. Do you think McDonald's is a good employer?
- n. McDonald's likes to think of itself as a caring company. Can you think of any good things it has done for the world (except pay its shareholders and executives lots and lots and lots of money)?
- o. Do people have the right to hand out leaflets criticizing a big (or small) company?
- p. If you became an activist, what company would you target and why?
- q. Have you seen the movie *Supersize Me* – the one about the guy who eats McDonald's three times a day for a month and then has many health problems?
- r. Teacher / Student additional questions.

HOMEWORK

LETTER TO RONALD: Write a letter to Ronald McDonald asking him for his opinion on various matters.

“WHAT’S WRONG WITH COMPANY X?”: Create your own article about a company you believe practices immoral operations. Be careful about leafleting and being taken to court!

INTERNET / WEB LINKS:

McDonald's dot com:

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

The McLibel trial:

<http://www.mcspotlight.org/case/>

McSpotlight – a web site that keeps an eye on McDs:

<http://www.mcspotlight.org/>

A list of URLs on the McLibel case:

<http://www.spunk.org/library/food/mcdonlds/>

A rant against the McLibel 2:

<http://www.rru.com/~meo/rants/mcbozo.html>

“What’s wrong with McDonald’s?” – the original leaflet.

<http://www.mcspotlight.org/case/pretrial/factsheet.html>

“What’s wrong with McDonald’s?” – a more up-to-date leaflet.

http://www.mcspotlight.org/campaigns/translations/trans_uk.html

Take a peek at the wonderful movie Supersize Me:

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

FULL TEXT

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BNE: In a true case of David and Goliath, two British **conservationists** have won a court case in the European Court of Human Rights against the British government's **libel** laws. Helen Steel, 39 & Dave Morris, 50, also known as the McLibel 2, campaigned in the early 1990s against what they saw as McDonald's' immoral operating practices. They **distributed** leaflets in the streets of London **entitled** “What’s wrong with McDonald’s – Everything they don’t want you to know”. They were also awarded 35,000 euros (\$45,000) between them.

The hamburger chain sued the pair for libel, spending \$10 million on lawyers. The McLibel 2 had no money for legal representation, and the British legal system did not at that time allow legal aid in libel cases. McDonald's won the case and were awarded \$70,000 in damages. The pair never **paid** a penny of it. It was a huge public relations disaster for McDonald's. The presiding judge **damningly** stated, “McDonald's marketing has “pretended to a positive nutritional benefit which their food (high in fat & salt etc) did not match”; that McDonald's “exploit children” with their advertising strategy; are “**culpably** responsible for animal cruelty”; and “pay low wages, helping to **depress** wages in the catering trade.”

A McLibel 2 media release declared that “the **notorious** and long running McLibel case was in breach of the right to a fair trial and right to freedom of expression. The two conservationists had **launched** legal proceedings against the UK government arguing that the marathon 'McLibel trial' which lasted 313 days - the longest trial of any kind in English legal history - and UK libel laws, **breached** the European Convention on Human Rights Article 6 (right to a fair trial) and Article 10 (right to freedom of expression).” The McLibel 2 stated, “We hope that this will result in greater public **scrutiny** and criticism of powerful organizations whose practices have a detrimental effect on society and the environment