

Turkmenistan eye operation festival (Thurs 24 Feb)

WARM-UPS

CHAT: Talk in pairs or groups about Turkmenistan / USSR / national holidays / lamb / eyes / birthdays / cults / ...Change topic / partner frequently to energize the class.

EYE BRAINSTORM: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'eye. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

MY LEADER: Write down the three best and worst points about the leader (s) of your country. Talk to different members of your class about what you wrote. Do you love them? Would you have a special thanksgiving meal to celebrate their successful eye operation.

CULT OPINIONS: In pairs / groups, discuss the following opinions:

- a. A dictator could never become leader of my country.
- b. It's a wonderful thing that the people of a country love its leader.
- c. There's nothing wrong with being made president for life if you are a kind leader.
- d. Mr. Niyazov is a dictator and should be overthrown.
- e. Leaders such as Mr. Niyazov will not be around twenty years from now after democracy sweeps the world.
- f. World governments should not do business with Turkmenistan unless Mr. Niyazov holds free and fair elections.
- g. Mr. Niyazov has banned all opposition and is similar to Saddam Hussein.
- h. It's fantastic that people celebrate the successful eye operation of their leader.

PRE-READING IDEAS

WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... of the words 'eye' and 'operation'.

TRUE / FALSE: Predict whether the following statements about the article are true or false:

- a. Turkmenistan has a national holiday to celebrate successful eye operations. T / F
- b. Turkmenistanis are today celebrating the successful eye operation of their leader. T / F
- c. Turkmenistan is an ex-Soviet republic. T / F
- d. Lambs are being sacrificed for special thanksgiving meals. T / F
- e. Turkmenistan's president has built a cult personality around himself. T / F
- f. The president will continue in power until 2009. T / F
- g. The president is the brother of Kim Jong Il of North Korea. T / F
- h. He will be able to see well enough after he recovers from eye surgery to follow a more democratic leadership style. T / F

SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | | |
|-----|---------------|-------------|
| (a) | nations | aka |
| (b) | operation | former |
| (c) | also known as | fall |
| (d) | celebrations | messenger |
| (e) | ex | surgery |
| (f) | sacrificed | iron fist |
| (g) | hard line | blanket |
| (h) | collapse | countries |
| (i) | widespread | festivities |
| (j) | prophet | slaughtered |

PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases based on the article

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| (a) | successful | place |
| (b) | also | cult |
| (c) | celebrations are taking | were being heard in mosques |
| (d) | ex-Soviet | of communism |
| (e) | Special prayers | in his honor |
| (f) | special thanksgiving | coverage on state television |
| (g) | in power since the collapse | eye operation |
| (h) | personality | meals |
| (i) | received widespread | republic |
| (j) | traditional birthday parades held | known as |

GAP FILL

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BNE: Some nations really _____ their leaders. The people of Turkmenistan are today celebrating the successful eye operation of their leader President Saparmurat Niyazov, also _____ as Turkmenbashi the Great. Holiday-like celebrations are taking _____ all over the ex-Soviet republic. Special prayers were being heard in mosques nationwide, and lambs were being sacrificed for special thanksgiving meals. The _____ line president of the gas-rich nation has been in power since the collapse of communism. He was named president for _____ in 1999 and has built a personality cult around himself, similar to that of Kim Jong Il of North Korea. The operation, on his left eye, was _____ out by a German eye specialist, and received widespread coverage on state television. Unfortunately, his operation meant he was unable to attend the traditional birthday parades _____ in his honor. He turned 65 last Saturday. On his 63rd birthday his government ministers declared him to be a prophet of God. Let's _____ he will be able to see well enough after he recovers from eye surgery to follow a more democratic leadership style.

life known held hope carried hard love place

DISCUSSION:

- a. What do you think of this article?
- b. Does Mr. Niyazov sound like a good person?
- c. Do you have good eyesight?
- d. Have you ever had surgery or stayed in hospital?
- e. Do you love your leader?
- f. Do you love (or respect a lot) any world leader?
- g. Do you love people like Nelson Mandela?
- h. What national holidays are there in your country that involve special meals?
- i. Do you ever watch blanket coverage of state occasions in your country?
- j. Do you celebrate the birthday of your leader?
- k. What would happen in your country if your leader declared himself/herself president for life?
- l. What do you think of North Korea's Kim Jong Il?
- m. Has your country ever experienced personality cults / brainwashing leaders?
- n. Would you like to go to Turkmenistan?
- o. Teacher / Student additional questions.

HOMEWORK

VOCAB 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.

INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on Turkmenistan. Share your findings with your class next lesson.

CULT: Create a poster on a cult.

LETTER TO MR. NIYAZOV: Write a letter to Turkmenistani president Niyazov telling him your thoughts on his leadership style.

FULL TEXT

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BNE: Some nations really **love** their leaders. The people of Turkmenistan are today celebrating the successful eye operation of their leader President Saparmurat Niyazov, also **known** as Turkmenbashi the Great. Holiday-like celebrations are taking **place** all over the ex-Soviet republic. Special prayers were being heard in mosques nationwide, and lambs were being sacrificed for special thanksgiving meals. The **hard** line president of the gas-rich nation has been in power since the collapse of communism. He was named president for **life** in 1999 and has built a personality cult around himself, similar to that of Kim Jong Il of North Korea. The operation, on his left eye, was **carried** out by a German eye specialist, and received widespread coverage on state television. Unfortunately, his operation meant he was unable to attend the traditional birthday parades **held** in his honor. He turned 65 last Saturday. On his 63rd birthday his government ministers declared him to be a prophet of God. Let's **hope** he will be able to see well enough after he recovers from eye surgery to follow a more democratic leadership style.