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Saudi king in \$32bn divorce case

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15 June, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Saudi king in \$32bn divorce case

BNE: One of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia's three wives is seeking a huge divorce payment from him. It could be the biggest payout in divorce settlement history. Janan Harb, 57, lives in London's fashionable Knightsbridge district. She is claiming the king did not give her enough money to live on after their separation. She is demanding a "just settlement". This means she wants a chunk of his \$32bn fortune. Her friend said: "What she is doing is without precedent in the Middle East. But she wants to see justice done."

Ms. Harb won the first round in her legal battle on June 14. A London court decided her case could be heard in public, in a London court. King Fahd's lawyers say this is impossible because the king is the ruler of a country. The King's advisers do not want the royal finances to be aired in public. They feel details of the royal family's extravagant lifestyle would cause great embarrassment to the king. They said Ms. Harb had already received a very large payment in 2001 to keep quiet about her royal relationship.

WARM-UPS

1. I'M THE POOREST: Have you ever been (Are you now) very poor? What is it like to be very poor? Talk with your partner(s) and pretend that you are the poorest person in the class. Be sure to tell the saddest, sorriest story you can. You must always have a poorer story than your partner(s).

Talk about these things in your poor life:

- Food
- Clothes and shoes
- Newspapers
- Family
- Studying English
- Transport
- Entertainment
- Other

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

Having 3 wives (or husbands) / King Fahd / Saudi Arabia / divorce / \$32 billion / legal battles / extravagant lifestyle / royal relationships

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

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

4. DIVORCE OPINIONS: Talk with your partner(s) about how far you agree with these opinions:

- a. Divorce is OK.
- b. Divorce payments are not OK.
- c. Couples should agree on the financial details of divorces before they marry.
- d. The mother should keep the children in divorce cases.
- e. Divorce cases should never be heard in public courts. It's a private matter.
- f. Hollywood divorces are the most interesting.
- g. I don't understand why people get married after three or more divorces.
- h. I wouldn't want to marry a divorced man or woman.

5. REASONS FOR DIVORCE: Which of these are reasons for divorce?

- Having sex with another person
- Insanity
- Boredom
- Domestic violence
- Finding someone nicer
- A partner never shares the TV remote controller
- A partner never remembers the other's birthday
- Gambling, drinking or drug use

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Saudi Arabia's King Fahd wants \$32bn from his ex-wife. | T / F |
| b. One of King Fahd's wives may soon become very rich. | T / F |
| c. Ms. Harb said the king didn't give her enough money to live on. | T / F |
| d. Divorce payments are very common in Saudi Arabia. | T / F |
| e. A London court decided the divorce could be heard in public. | T / F |
| f. Rulers of countries do not have to appear in foreign courts. | T / F |
| g. The king is a little embarrassed about his finances. | T / F |
| h. The king already paid his wife lots of money to keep quiet. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| a. seeking | slice |
| b. payment | fight |
| c. fashionable | example |
| d. chunk | going after |
| e. precedent | lavish |
| f. battle | trendy |
| g. ruler | told |
| h. aired | alimony |
| i. extravagant | liaison |
| j. relationship | leader |

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

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. seeking a | settlement |
| b. enough money to | in public |
| c. a just | done |
| d. she wants a chunk | of a country |
| e. she wants to see justice | live on |
| f. won the first round in | huge divorce payment |
| g. her case could be | embarrassment to the king |
| h. the ruler | her legal battle |
| i. to be aired | of his \$32bn fortune |
| j. cause great | heard in public |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

SYNONYM FILL: Place the number of the synonym group in the correct gap (It is not important to guess a correct word - any of the synonyms from each group could be put into the relevant gap).

Saudi king in \$32bn divorce case

BNE: One of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia's three wives is seeking a _____ divorce payment from him. It could be the biggest payout in divorce settlement history. Janan Harb, 57, lives in London's _____ Knightsbridge district. She is claiming the king did not give her enough money to live on after their separation. She is demanding a "just settlement". This means she wants a _____ of his \$32bn fortune. Her friend said: "What she is doing is without precedent in the Middle East. But she wants to see justice done."

Ms. Harb won the first round in her legal battle on June 14. A London court _____ her case could be heard in public, in a London court. King Fahd's lawyers say this is impossible because the king is the _____ of a country. The King's advisers do not want the royal finances to be aired in public. They feel details of the royal family's _____ lifestyle would cause great embarrassment to the king. They said Ms. Harb had already received a very large payment in 2001 to keep quiet about her royal relationship.

1

chunk
slice
part
piece

2

decided
ruled
judged
established

3

huge
gigantic
enormous
massive

4

extravagant
lavish
flashy
fantastic

5

fashionable
trendy
stylish
swish

6

ruler
leader
head
king

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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. SYNONYM FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the synonym fill. 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 DIVORCE SURVEY: In pairs / groups write down questions about divorce and the King Fahd case.

- 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:

- seeking
- biggest
- live on
- just
- chunk
- precedent
- first round
- in public
- ruler
- aired
- embarrassment
- keep quiet

DISCUSSION

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

- a. What was your reaction to this headline?
- b. What do you think this news story?
- c. What kind of person do you think Ms. Harb is?
- d. Do you think she should get a large chunk of the \$32bn?
- e. Is justice being done?
- f. Do you agree with divorce?
- g. Do think polygamy (having more than one husband or wife) is OK?
- h. Do you think this case will change things in Saudi Arabia?
- i. Is divorce OK in your country?
- j. How would you feel about your finances being aired in public?

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

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. Do you think Ms. Harb is a money-grabber?
- c. How much money do you think she should she receive?
- d. Would you marry for money?
- e. Do you think this divorce case should be heard in a London court?
- f. Do you think it's OK for world leaders to have to go to court in other countries?
- g. Do you think King Fahd should just settle with Ms. Harb in private?
- h. Don't you think the large payment paid to Ms Harb in 2001 should be enough to keep her happy?
- i. Do you think Ms. Harb should try and get as much money as she can?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

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

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

PAYMENT JUDGE: You are a judge that has to make decisions regarding divorce payments under a new divorce law. The grounds (reasons) for divorce are listed below. In pairs / groups, put the grounds in order of seriousness (10 is most serious). Decide the percentage split of money for each ground (e.g. "Boredom" might mean a 50-50 split between the husband and wife). Explain your reasons for each split.

| GROUND FOR DIVORCE | RANK | % SPLIT | REASONS FOR PERCENTAGE SPLIT |
|---|------|---------|------------------------------|
| Having sex with another person | | | |
| Insanity | | | |
| Boredom | | | |
| Domestic violence | | | |
| One partner found someone nicer | | | |
| One partner never shares the TV remote controller | | | |
| One partner never remembers the other's birthday | | | |
| Gambling, drinking or drug use | | | |
| The wife was pregnant before marriage | | | |
| One partner doesn't want children | | | |

Change partners and explain what you discussed with your previous partner(s). Give each other feedback on your ideas. Are the percentage splits good or bad? Which of your reasons would be accepted in a real court by a real judge?

Return to your original partners and discuss and agree on any changes you made.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Saudi king in \$32bn divorce case

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Ms. Harb won the _____ in her legal battle on June 14. A London court decided her case could be _____, in a London court. King Fahd's lawyers say this is impossible because the king is the _____. The King's advisers do not want the royal finances to be aired in public. They feel details of the royal family's _____ would cause great embarrassment to the king. They said Ms. Harb had already received a very large payment in 2001 to _____ about her royal relationship.

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 Janan Harb's legal battle. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. DIVORCE: Write an essay on what you think are reasonable grounds for divorce or why divorce should not be allowed. Explain the main points of your essay to your classmates in your next lesson. Did everyone write about similar things?

4. A LETTER: Pretend you are Janan Harb. Write a letter to King Fahd explaining why you want alimony. Explain how much you want. Explain why you think that amount is reasonable and what you want it for. Read your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all ask for similar amounts?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| a. seeking | going after |
| b. payment | alimony |
| c. fashionable | trendy |
| d. chunk | slice |
| e. precedent | example |
| f. battle | fight |
| g. ruler | leader |
| h. aired | told |
| i. extravagant | lavish |
| j. relationship | liaison |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. seeking a | huge divorce payment |
| b. enough money to | live on |
| c. a just | settlement |
| d. she wants a chunk | of his \$32bn fortune |
| e. she wants to see justice | done |
| f. won the first round in | her legal battle |
| g. her case could be | heard in public |
| h. the ruler | of a country |
| i. to be aired | in public |
| j. cause great | embarrassment to the king |

SYNONYM FILL:

Saudi king in \$32bn divorce case

BNE: One of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia's three wives is seeking a **---3---** divorce payment from him. It could be the biggest payout in divorce settlement history. Janan Harb, 57, lives in London's **---5---** Knightsbridge district. She is claiming the king did not give her enough money to live on after their separation. She is demanding a "just settlement". This means she wants a **---1---** of his \$32bn fortune. Her friend said: "What she is doing is without precedent in the Middle East. But she wants to see justice done."

Ms. Harb won the first round in her legal battle on June 14. A London court **---2---** her case could be heard in public, in a London court. King Fahd's lawyers say this is impossible because the king is the **---6---** of a country. The King's advisers do not want the royal finances to be aired in public. They feel details of the royal family's **---4---** lifestyle would cause great embarrassment to the king. They said Ms. Harb had already received a very large payment in 2001 to keep quiet about her royal relationship.