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Fidel Castro to return to power

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8 August, 2006

THE ARTICLE

Fidel Castro to return to power

Cuban President Fidel Castro may return to power within a few weeks. He is currently in hospital following last week's intestinal surgery, which forced him to hand over the presidential reins to his younger brother Raul. It is the first time in 47 years Castro has ceded power and was a move that fueled great speculation among Cuban exiles that it marked the beginning of the end for the communist regime. Details of President Castro's operation and his general health are being kept a closely guarded secret to prevent rumormongers and Cuba's enemies from making political capital of them. The US was quick to fan the embers of change. American Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urged the Cuban people to push for democracy and said: "The United States wants to be a partner and a friend to the Cuban people as they move through this period of difficulty and as they move ahead."

Cuba's Vice-President Carlos Lage stated: "Fidel's going to be around for another 80 years." Lage added that Castro's return would expose a White House policy of "lies" behind speculation that he would be forever incapacitated. Get-well wishes have been pouring in from across South America. In a televised address, Venezuela's Hugo Chavez - a close Castro ally - gave an optimistic assessment of the president's health. "This morning I learnt that he's...talking more than he should - because he talks a lot you know," Mr. Chavez said. "We have reliable information of your quick and notable recuperation," he added. Colombia's largest rebel group the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia expressed its solidarity with Castro. "We hope you'll recover in the shortest time possible," it said in a statement. Fidel Castro is one of the world's longest-ruling leaders and has outlasted nine US presidents.

WARM-UPS

1. FIDEL CASTRO: Walk around the class and find out as much information as you can about Fidel Castro and Cuba. When you have finished, find a new partner and share what you found out.

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

Presidents / power / surgery / speculation / communism / secrets / change / moving ahead / lies / get-well wishes / allies / optimism / recuperation / rebels

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

3. REVOLUTIONS: With your partner(s), talk about the following revolutions. Decide on the biggest importance of each. Change partner(s) and share what you talked about. (You may need to use the Internet to find out information.)

- Cuban Revolution
- French Revolution
- Russian Revolution
- Cedar Revolution
- Orange Revolution
- Peoples' Revolution
- Industrial Revolution
- American Revolution
- Sexual Revolution
- Digital Revolution

4. QUICK DEBATE: Students A believe Fidel Castro is a great leader. Students B believe Fidel Castro is little more than a tyrant. Debate this with your partners. Change partners often.

5. AFTERLIFE: With your partner(s), talk about what life might be like after these leaders are no longer in power. Which leader(s) would you most like to go?

- Fidel Castro (Cuba)
- George W. Bush (USA)
- Vladimir Putin (Russia)
- Kim Jong Il (North Korea)
- Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe)
- Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (Iran)
- King Mswati III (Swaziland)
- The leader of your country

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

7. REVOLUTIONARY: Imagine you are the new revolutionary leader of your country. Talk with the other "revolutionaries" in the class about the changes you are going to make.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- a. Fidel Castro may soon return to power following a stomach operation. T / F
- b. It is the first time he has ceded power in 47 years as president. T / F
- c. The very latest details of his health are being aired on Cuban TV. T / F
- d. Condoleezza Rice said Castro was a partner and a friend. T / F
- e. Cuba's vice-president said Castro would live to be 80 years old. T / F
- f. Venezuela's president is pessimistic about Castro's hopes of recovery. T / F
- g. Colombia's largest rebel group sent Castro a message of solidarity. T / F
- h. As Cuba's leader, Castro has seen nine US presidents come and go. T / F

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

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| a. intestinal | convalescence |
| b. reins | fuel |
| c. ceded | implored |
| d. fan | lay bare |
| e. urged | control |
| f. expose | flooding |
| g. incapacitated | gastric |
| h. pouring | ridden out |
| i. recuperation | relinquished |
| j. outlasted | immobilized |

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

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. forced him to hand | power |
| b. Castro has ceded | Castro ally |
| c. it marked the beginning | capital |
| d. making political | have been pouring in |
| e. fan the | with Castro |
| f. expose a White House | over the presidential reins |
| g. Get-well wishes | of the end |
| h. a close | information |
| i. reliable | embers of change |
| j. expressed its solidarity | policy of "lies" |

Fidel Castro to return to power – 8 August, 2006 (harder)

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Fidel Castro to return to power

Cuban President Fidel Castro may return to power within a few weeks. He is currently in hospital following last week's intestinal surgery, which forced him to hand over the presidential _____ to his younger brother Raul. It is the first time in 47 years Castro has _____ power and was a move that fueled great speculation among Cuban _____ that it marked the beginning of the end for the communist regime. Details of President Castro's operation and his general health are being kept a _____ guarded secret to prevent rumormongers and Cuba's enemies from making political _____ of them. The US was quick to fan the _____ of change. American Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urged the Cuban people to _____ for democracy and said: "The United States wants to be a partner and a friend to the Cuban people as they move through this _____ of difficulty and as they move ahead."

period
exiles
reins
embers
capital
push
ceded
closely

Cuba's Vice-President Carlos Lage stated: "Fidel's going to be _____ for another 80 years." Lage added that Castro's return would _____ a White House policy of "lies" behind speculation that he would be forever _____. Get-well wishes have been _____ in from across South America. In a televised address, Venezuela's Hugo Chavez - a close Castro _____ - gave an optimistic assessment of the president's health. "This morning I learnt that he's...talking more than he should - because he talks a lot you know," Mr. Chavez said. "We have _____ information of your quick and notable recuperation," he added. Colombia's largest rebel group the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia expressed its _____ with Castro. "We hope you'll recover in the shortest time possible," it said in a statement. Fidel Castro is one of the world's longest-ruling leaders and has _____ nine US presidents.

ally
solidarity
expose
outlasted
pouring
incapacitated
reliable
around

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Fidel Castro to return to power

Cuban President Fidel Castro may return to power _____ weeks. He is currently in hospital following last week's intestinal surgery, which forced him to hand over the presidential reins to his younger brother Raul. It is the first time in 47 years Castro _____ and was a move that fueled great speculation among Cuban exiles that it marked the beginning _____ communist regime. Details of President Castro's operation and his general health are being kept a closely guarded secret to prevent _____ and Cuba's enemies from making _____ them. The US was quick to _____ of change. American Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urged the Cuban people to push for democracy and said: "The United States wants to be a partner and a friend to the Cuban people as they move through this period of difficulty and as they move ahead."

Cuba's Vice-President Carlos Lage stated: "Fidel's going _____ another 80 years." Lage added that Castro's return would expose a White House policy of "lies" behind speculation that he would be _____. Get-well wishes have been pouring in from across South America. In a televised address, Venezuela's Hugo Chavez - a _____ - gave an optimistic assessment of the president's health. "This morning I learnt that he's...talking more than he should - because he talks a lot you know," Mr. Chavez said. "We have reliable information of your quick and _____," he added. Colombia's largest rebel group the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia _____ with Castro. "We hope you'll recover in the shortest time possible," it said in a statement. Fidel Castro is one of the world's longest-ruling leaders and _____ US presidents.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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. STUDENT "CASTRO" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about Cuban leader Fidel Castro and life under his revolution.

- 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:

- intestinal
- reins
- fueled
- capital
- embers
- partner
- around
- incapacitated
- pouring
- notable
- solidarity
- outlasted

DISCUSSION

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

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think about a leader being in power for 47 years?
- c. What do you think about Fidel Castro?
- d. What do you think of Castro "temporarily" handing over power to his brother Raul?
- e. What do you think Cuban people feel about Fidel Castro?
- f. What do you think George W. Bush and Fidel Castro would talk about were they ever to meet?
- g. Do you think Fidel Castro has been good for Cuba?
- h. Many people romanticize about Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and their revolution. Do you?
- i. Would you wear a Fidel Castro or Che Guevara T-shirt?
- j. What will happen to Cuba when Castro dies?

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

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Who do you like better, Fidel Castro or George W. Bush (and why)?
- d. Why do many world leaders look upon Castro as a hero while many others view him as a monster?
- e. What would Cuba be like today if Castro hadn't come along?
- f. Do you think Fidel Castro a dictator?
- g. Castro once said democracy gets in the way of progress. Do you agree with this?
- h. Would you like to meet Fidel Castro?
- i. What questions would you like to ask him and how do you think he'd answer?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

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

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

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SPEAKING

WORLD REVOLUTION: With your partner(s), create an outline for a world revolution. Complete the table below

Name of the revolution	
Revolution motto	
A good leader	
Aim 1	
Obstacles to Aim 1	
Aim 2	
Obstacles to Aim 2	
Aim 3	
Obstacles to Aim 3	
How the world will be a better place after the revolution	

Change partners and exchange your ideas. Decide on who has the best revolutionary ideas.

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 about Cuban leader Fidel Castro and the conflicting opinions people have of him. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. REVOLUTION ARTICLE: Write a newspaper article about a revolution that happened recently (true or false; political, technological, social, etc). Show your article to your classmates in the next lesson. Talk about which articles you liked best and why.

4. LETTER: Write a letter to Fidel Castro. Tell him what you think of his reign in power and his leadership. Give him advice on what he should do from now. Ask him three questions. Read your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions. Which letter did you like best and why?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. intestinal	gastric
b. reins	control
c. ceded	relinquished
d. fan	fuel
e. urged	implored
f. expose	lay bare
g. incapacitated	immobilized
h. pouring	flooding
i. recuperation	convalescence
j. outlasted	ridden out

PHRASE MATCH:

a. forced him to hand	over the presidential reins
b. Castro has ceded	power
c. it marked the beginning	of the end
d. making political	capital
e. fan the	embers of change
f. expose a White House	policy of "lies"
g. Get-well wishes	have been pouring in
h. a close	Castro ally
i. reliable	information
j. expressed its solidarity	with Castro

GAP FILL:

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Cuba's Vice-President Carlos Lage stated: "Fidel's going to be **around** for another 80 years." Lage added that Castro's return would **expose** a White House policy of "lies" behind speculation that he would be forever **incapacitated**. Get-well wishes have been **pouring** in from across South America. In a televised address, Venezuela's Hugo Chavez - a close Castro **ally** - gave an optimistic assessment of the president's health. "This morning I learnt that he's...talking more than he should - because he talks a lot you know," Mr. Chavez said. "We have **reliable** information of your quick and notable recuperation," he added. Colombia's largest rebel group the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia expressed its **solidarity** with Castro. "We hope you'll recover in the shortest time possible," it said in a statement. Fidel Castro is one of the world's longest-ruling leaders and has **outlasted** nine US presidents.