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## Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

# Internet war of words over Gaza

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0901/090110-gaza_war.html

## Contents

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# THE ARTICLE

Internet sites and international media have reported a bitter war of words over the conflict in Gaza. People across the world are expressing their rage and anger at the situation. They are using social networking websites, newspapers and TV news channels such as the BBC to air their views. Moderators, the people who filter e-mails and telephone calls for racist or venomous comments, are struggling to cope. They are snowed under with a deluge of posts and calls, many full of hate. The AFP news agency reports a French website that had to shut down its reader comments page. Clemence Lemaistre of 20minutes.fr reported a vicious cycle of posts against Jews that "unleashed a stream of anti-Muslim remarks," so all reader contributions were rejected.

The Internet and TV debate shows have become a battleground for international public opinion. News agencies report that the BBC's Have Your Say programme received thousands of comments and calls after asking the question, "Can Israel do anything it wants?" Many of these were rejected for breaking hate-speech laws and using racially offensive, obscene and harmful language. According to sources, BBC producers and presenters have been encouraged to 'stay away' from the topic unless it is the main theme of one of its shows. The biggest problem is for social networking sites like Facebook and YouTube. These sites do not check any posts that appear online. They have to rely on members to alert them to posts that go too far and encourage hatred and racism.

# WARM-UPS

**1. GAZA:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about Gaza. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share your findings.

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

*Internet sites / war of words / racist comments / struggling to cope / comments pages / debates / battlegrounds / offensive language / social networking / going too far*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. MODERATOR:** You are a moderator on an Internet site. Many people are posting about Gaza. Complete the table below with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote.

| Talking about… | What is OK | What isn't OK |
|---|---|---|
| other nationalities | | |
| other religions | | |
| world leaders | | |
| God | | |
| history | | |
| regional leaders | | |

**4. HARMFUL POSTS:** Students A **strongly** believe Internet sites should monitor every post they receive; Students B **strongly** believe Internet sites should allow any kind of post. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. MEDIA:** What is the role of media in the Gaza conflict? Talk about these things with your partner(s). Can you give examples of each one? Change partners and talk again.

- to educate people
- to show the worst pictures
- to allow discussion and debate
- to tell the truth

- to change public opinion
- to support one side in the war
- to help bring peace
- to sell more advertising

**6. WAR OF WORDS:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the phrase 'war of words'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a. | People are using the Internet to verbally attack other people. | T / F |
| b. | Moderators say it's easy to delete all of the racist messages. | T / F |
| c. | A French site shut down its comments page because of abusive posts. | T / F |
| d. | All of the posts on the French site were against Jewish people. | T / F |
| e. | Hamas and Israeli troops fought a battle on a TV debate show. | T / F |
| f. | A BBC television show said Israeli could do anything it wants to do. | T / F |
| g. | BBC bosses advised presenters to avoid talking about the Gaza War. | T / F |
| h. | Posts on Facebook are moderated by members, not by the site itself. | T / F |

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

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | bitter | | a. | disrespectful |
| 2 | air | | b. | manage |
| 3. | cope | | c. | flood |
| 4. | deluge | | d. | break acceptable limits |
| 5. | unleashed | | e. | most important |
| 6. | debate | | f. | hate-filled |
| 7. | offensive | | g. | let loose |
| 8. | main | | h. | depend |
| 9. | rely | | i. | voice |
| 10. | go too far | | j. | discussion |

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

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | a bitter war | | a. | and anger |
| 2 | expressing their rage | | b. | laws |
| 3. | air their | | c. | public opinion |
| 4. | snowed under with a | | d. | views |
| 5. | unleashed a stream of anti- | | e. | from the topic |
| 6. | a battleground for international | | f. | of words |
| 7. | breaking hate-speech | | g. | Muslim remarks |
| 8. | presenters have been encouraged to 'stay away' | | h. | too far |
| 9. | They have to rely on members | | i. | deluge of posts |
| 10. | posts that go | | j. | to alert them |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Internet sites and international media have reported a bitter war of _____ over the conflict in Gaza. People across the world are expressing their rage and _____ at the situation. They are using social networking websites, newspapers and TV news channels such as the BBC to _____ their views. Moderators, the people who filter e-mails and telephone calls for _____ or venomous comments, are struggling to cope. They are snowed under with a deluge of _____ and calls, many full of hate. The AFP news agency reports a French website that had to _____ down its reader comments page. Clemence Lemaistre of 20minutes.fr reported a vicious _____ of posts against Jews that "unleashed a stream of anti-Muslim remarks," so all reader contributions were _____.

*air*

*cycle*

*posts*

*words*

*rejected*

*racist*

*anger*

*shut*

The Internet and TV _____ shows have become a battleground for international public _____. News agencies report that the BBC's Have Your Say programme received thousands of _____ and calls after asking the question, "Can Israel do anything it wants?" Many of these were rejected for breaking hate-speech _____ and using racially offensive, obscene and harmful _____. According to sources, BBC producers and presenters have been encouraged to 'stay away' from the _____ unless it is the main theme of one of its shows. The biggest problem is for social networking sites like Facebook and YouTube. These sites do not check any posts that _____ online. They have to _____ on members to alert them to posts that go too far and encourage hatred and racism.

*language*

*comments*

*rely*

*debate*

*appear*

*laws*

*opinion*

*topic*

# LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

Internet sites and international media have reported _____ words over the conflict in Gaza. People across the world are expressing their rage _____ situation. They are using social networking websites, newspapers and TV news channels such as the BBC _____. Moderators, the people who filter e-mails and telephone calls for racist or venomous comments, are _____. They are snowed under with a deluge of posts and calls, many full of hate. The AFP news agency reports a French website _____ down its reader comments page. Clemence Lemaistre of 20minutes.fr reported a vicious cycle of posts against Jews that "_____ of anti-Muslim remarks," so all reader contributions were rejected.

The Internet and TV debate shows have become a battleground for international public opinion. News _____ the BBC's Have Your Say programme received thousands of comments and calls after asking the question, "Can Israel _____?" Many of these were rejected for breaking hate-speech _____ racially offensive, obscene and harmful language. According to sources, BBC producers and presenters have been encouraged _____ the topic unless it is the main theme of one of its shows. The biggest problem is for social networking sites like Facebook and YouTube. These sites _____ posts that appear online. They have to rely on members to alert them to posts _____ and encourage hatred and racism.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

| war | words |
|-----|-------|
|     |       |

- 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. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

| | |
|---|---|
| • bitter | • opinion |
| • situation | • thousands |
| • air | • breaking |
| • cope | • stay away |
| • shut | • check |
| • stream | • go too far |

# STUDENT GAZA SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about Gaza in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

|  | STUDENT 1 _____ | STUDENT 2 _____ | STUDENT 3 _____ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Q.1. |  |  |  |
| Q.2. |  |  |  |
| Q.3. |  |  |  |
| Q.4. |  |  |  |
| Q.5. |  |  |  |

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

# GAZA DISCUSSION

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

a) What did you think when you read the headline?

b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'Gaza'?

c) How often do you follow the news of what's happening in Gaza?

d) What three adjectives would you choose to describe the current situation?

e) What are people saying about Gaza to express their rage and anger?

f) Would you be interested in being a moderator for a website dealing with comments about Gaza?

g) Have you ever expressed your anger or rage online?

h) When was the last time you were snowed under with things to do?

i) Who do you think is in the right and in the wrong in Gaza?

j) How do you think the situation could be brought to an end?

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# GAZA DISCUSSION

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

a) Did you like reading this article?

b) Have you seen any TV shows on which people debated the Gaza situation? What did they say? Did you agree?

c) What's your answer to the BBC question, "Can Israel do anything it wants?"

d) How do you feel when people use abusive and offensive language?

e) What do you think Gaza will be like in a month from now?

f) How much of the background to the Gaza War do you understand?

g) Do you think there'll ever be peace in the Middle East?

h) What should Facebook do to stop harmful posts appearing on its site?

i) Have you ever said or written anything that went too far?

j) What questions would you like to ask Israel and Hamas' leaders?

# LANGUAGE

Internet sites and international media have reported a (1) _____ war of words over the conflict in Gaza. People across the world are expressing their rage and (2) _____ at the situation. They are using social networking websites, newspapers and TV news channels such as the BBC to (3) _____ their views.  Moderators, the people who filter e-mails and telephone calls for racist or venomous comments, are struggling to cope. They are (4) _____ under with a deluge of posts and calls, many full of hate. The AFP news agency reports a French website that had to shut (5) _____ its reader comments page. Clemence Lemaistre of 20minutes.fr reported a vicious cycle of posts against Jews that "unleashed a stream (6) _____ anti-Muslim remarks," so all reader contributions were rejected.

The Internet and TV debate shows have become a battleground for international (7) _____ opinion. News agencies report that the BBC's Have Your Say programme received thousands of comments and calls after (8) _____ the question, "Can Israel do anything it wants?" Many of these were rejected for breaking hate-speech laws and using racially offensive, obscene and (9) _____ language. According to sources, BBC producers and presenters have been encouraged to 'stay (10) _____ ' from the topic unless it is the (11) _____ theme of one of its shows. The biggest problem is for social networking sites like Facebook and YouTube. These sites do not check any posts that appear online. They have to rely (12) _____ members to alert them to posts that go too far and encourage hatred and racism.

**Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | (a) | tangy | (b) | salty | (c) | crunchy | (d) | bitter |
| 2. | (a) | anger | (b) | angry | (c) | angered | (d) | angers |
| 3. | (a) | wind | (b) | air | (c) | oxygen | (d) | breeze |
| 4. | (a) | rained | (b) | hailed | (c) | snowed | (d) | winded |
| 5. | (a) | in | (b) | out | (c) | down | (d) | up |
| 6. | (a) | for | (b) | of | (c) | from | (d) | by |
| 7. | (a) | publish | (b) | publicly | (c) | publicity | (d) | public |
| 8. | (a) | asking | (b) | asked | (c) | asker | (d) | asks |
| 9. | (a) | harms | (b) | harmful | (c) | harmed | (d) | harm |
| 10. | (a) | up | (b) | everywhere | (c) | here | (d) | away |
| 11. | (a) | mainly | (b) | mains | (c) | main | (d) | mane |
| 12. | (a) | on | (b) | in | (c) | at | (d) | of |

# WRITING:

Write about **Gaza** for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

_____

# 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 out more about the situation in Gaza. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. POSTS:** Make a poster about what kind of posts are allowed and aren't allowed on Internet sites. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. BATTLEGROUND:** Write a magazine article about an Internet site struggling to cope with the deluge of harmful posts on its site. Include imaginary interviews with the site owner (who wants strict controls over which posts go online) and someone who believes every post should be allowed online.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. WAR OF WORDS:** Write an imaginary conversation between someone who supports Israel's actions in Gaza and someone who opposes them.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s). Role play your conversation in front of the class.

**6. LETTER:** Write a letter to the boss of an Internet site or news agency. Ask him/her three questions about his/her policy on accepting posts and calls. Give him/her three suggestions on what to do about the huge number of harmful posts and telephone calls. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

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

## SYNONYM MATCH:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | bitter | a. | hate-filled |
| 2 | air | b. | voice |
| 3. | cope | c. | manage |
| 4. | deluge | d. | flood |
| 5. | unleashed | e. | let loose |
| 6. | debate | f. | discussion |
| 7. | offensive | g. | disrespectful |
| 8. | main | h. | most important |
| 9. | rely | i. | depend |
| 10. | go too far | j. | break acceptable limits |

## PHRASE MATCH:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | a bitter war | a. | of words |
| 2 | expressing their rage | b. | and anger |
| 3. | air their | c. | views |
| 4. | snowed under with a | d. | deluge of posts |
| 5. | unleashed a stream of anti- | e. | Muslim remarks |
| 6. | a battleground for international | f. | public opinion |
| 7. | breaking hate-speech | g. | laws |
| 8. | presenters have been encouraged to 'stay away' | h. | from the topic |
| 9. | They have to rely on members | i. | to alert them |
| 10. | posts that go | j. | too far |

## GAP FILL:

### Internet war of words over Gaza

Internet sites and international media have reported a bitter war of **words** over the conflict in Gaza. People across the world are expressing their rage and **anger** at the situation. They are using social networking websites, newspapers and TV news channels such as the BBC to **air** their views.  Moderators, the people who filter e-mails and telephone calls for **racist** or venomous comments, are struggling to cope. They are snowed under with a deluge of **posts** and calls, many full of hate. The AFP news agency reports a French website that had to **shut** down its reader comments page. Clemence Lemaistre of 20minutes.fr reported a vicious **cycle** of posts against Jews that "unleashed a stream of anti-Muslim remarks," so all reader contributions were **rejected**.

The Internet and TV **debate** shows have become a battleground for international public **opinion**. News agencies report that the BBC's Have Your Say programme received thousands of **comments** and calls after asking the question, "Can Israel do anything it wants?" Many of these were rejected for breaking hate-speech **laws** and using racially offensive, obscene and harmful **language**. According to sources, BBC producers and presenters have been encouraged to 'stay away' from the **topic** unless it is the main theme of one of its shows. The biggest problem is for social networking sites like Facebook and YouTube. These sites do not check any posts that **appear** online. They have to **rely** on members to alert them to posts that go too far and encourage hatred and racism.

## LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d      2 - a      3 - b      4 - c      5 - c      6 - b      7 - d      8 - a      9 - b      10 - d      11 - c      12 - a