

British Army bullies (Tue 15 Mar, 2005)

WARM-UPS

CHAT: Talk in pairs or groups about the British Army / your country's military / bullying / a soldier's life / army camps / racism in the armed forces ...Change topic / partner frequently to increase conversation.

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

BULLYING: Talk in groups about bullying. Were you bullied at school? What kind of bullying did you see? Who was the biggest bully? Did you bully a younger brother or sister? Is there bullying in your office? What should happen to bullies?

ZERO TOLERANCE: In pairs/groups, create a 'zero tolerance charter'. Write down five reasons why bullying is bad. Share these with other partners/groups, until you have ten reasons. In your original pairs/groups, list these reasons in order of 'seriousness' – the most serious at the top. Show your list to another group and provide feedback.

BULLY OPINIONS: (a) Discuss these opinions with your partner. (b) Add a second half to each opinion by writing a comment after 'but'.

- a. Bullying is a natural part of all societies and cultures. *[but]*
- b. Weak people must fight back against bullies. *[but]*
- c. Bullies are weak people. *[but]*
- d. People who are bullied should report the bullying to parents / teachers / employers. *[but]*
- e. There should be zero tolerance of bullying at all levels of society. *[but]*
- f. Bullying leaves unacceptable mental and physical scars on the victims. *[but]*
- g. A bully that causes his/her victim to commit suicide is a murderer. *[but]*
- h. It is a primary role of schools to stamp out bullying. *[but]*
- i. Boys/Men are bigger bullies than girls/women. *[but]*
- j. Bullying is character building. It makes the victim tougher. *[but]*

PRE-READING IDEAS

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

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

- a. The British military is in crisis today. T / F
- b. A government report criticized the British Army for bullying. T / F
- c. Very few British soldiers complain of bullying. T / F
- d. Four young soldiers died from mysterious gunshot wounds. T / F
- e. A government report accused the British Army of murdering four soldiers. T / F
- f. The report said there were acceptable and normal levels of bullying. T / F
- g. There is more bullying in the British Army than the committee reported. T / F
- h. Bullying in the British Army is now a thing of the past. T / F

SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| (a) military | accusations |
| (b) crisis | inadequate |
| (c) critical | finding |
| (d) allegations | a pickle |
| (e) conclusion | equals |
| (f) harassment | start |
| (g) insufficient | armed forces |
| (h) ascertain | torment |
| (i) implement | find out |
| (j) peers | biting |

PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| (a) The British military is | of hiding |
| (b) government report | data |
| (c) widespread | in crisis today |
| (d) deaths from | causes of these deaths |
| (e) accused the Army | into bullying |
| (f) hiding the true | gunshot wounds |
| (g) failing to | tolerance |
| (h) insufficient statistical | and peers |
| (i) zero | allegations |
| (j) superiors | prevent unacceptable levels of bullying |

GAP FILL

British Army bullies

BNE: The British military is in _____ today following the release of a long-awaited government report into bullying in the Army. The _____ critical report was prompted by widespread allegations by young recruits of bullying, and by the mysterious deaths from gunshot _____ of four young soldiers, aged 17 to 20, at an Army training camp near London, between 1995 and 2002. The committee that produced the report accused the Army of hiding the true _____ of these deaths and recommended police to “think murder” instead of the Army’s conclusion of four suicides. The report criticized the Army for failing to prevent unacceptable _____ of bullying, gang rape, sexual harassment, racism, and other abuses of its soldiers. The committee said it had insufficient statistical data to ascertain how much bullying there really is in the Army, which means the true level has been _____. The committee also accused the Army of encouraging a culture that considered certain new recruits as “weak” and therefore _____ for bullying. It stated, “In recent years, attempts have been made to implement what (the armed forces) termed 'zero tolerance', but much bullying by both superiors and _____ will continue to go unreported unless the culture changes.”

understated peers highly crisis levels causes targets wounds

DISCUSSION:

- a. What was interesting in this article?
- b. What is your image of the British Army?
- c. Are you shocked by the news in this article?
- d. Do bullying, sexual harassment, racism, etc, exist in your country’s military?
- e. Were you bullied at school?
- f. What kind of bullying did you see?
- g. Who was the biggest bully?
- h. Did you bully a younger brother or sister?
- i. Is there bullying in your office?
- j. What should happen to bullies?
- k. Are boys/men bigger bullies than girls/women?
- l. Are boys/men subjected to different kinds of bullying than girls/women?
- m. What should happen to army bullies?
- n. If bullying causes the victim to commit suicide, is the bully a murderer?
- o. Would you like to join the armed forces?
- p. Will bullying ever be stamped out, to become a thing of the past?
- q. Is bullying acceptable in the military to toughen people up?
- r. Which is worse, emotional or physical bullying?
- s. What would you do to stamp out bullying?
- t. Did you like this discussion?
- u. Teacher / Student additional questions.

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 information on bullying. Share your findings with your class next lesson.
- 3. BULLIED:** Imagine you are a new army recruit. Write your diary/journal entry explaining your feelings about being bullied.
- 4. ZERO TOLERANCE:** Create a poster explaining the new "zero tolerance for bullying" scheme that will start in your school / office / company

TEXT

British Army bullies

BNE: The British military is in **crisis** today following the release of a long-awaited government report into bullying in the Army. The **highly** critical report was prompted by widespread allegations by young recruits of bullying, and by the mysterious deaths from gunshot **wounds** of four young soldiers, aged 17 to 20, at an Army training camp near London, between 1995 and 2002. The committee that produced the report accused the Army of hiding the true **causes** of these deaths and recommended police to "think murder" instead of the Army's conclusion of four suicides. The report criticized the Army for failing to prevent unacceptable **levels** of bullying, gang rape, sexual harassment, racism, and other abuses of its soldiers. The committee said it had insufficient statistical data to ascertain how much bullying there really is in the Army, which means the true level has been **understated**. The committee also accused the Army of encouraging a culture that considered certain new recruits as "weak" and therefore **targets** for bullying. It stated, "In recent years, attempts have been made to implement what (the armed forces) termed 'zero tolerance', but much bullying by both superiors and **peers** will continue to go unreported unless the culture changes."