

Kenya's First Lady runs amok (Thu 5 May, 2005)

WARM-UPS

CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics look most interesting:

bad behaviour / personal respect / good manners / screaming at people / slapping someone in the face / psychiatric help / embarrassing family members / first ladies / the mainstream press

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

FIRST LADY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with first ladies. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

EMBARRASSING: Do you have any embarrassing family members? Is anyone in your family a little strange? Talk with your partner about these relatives, their personalities, and the embarrassing or shocking things they have done.

BAD BEHAVIOUR: Look at the following list of bad behaviour. (1) In pairs / groups, talk about whether you or a family member has acted in such badly behaved fashion:

- spitting at people
- kicking someone
- shouting at someone
- farting or belching loudly
- throwing wine over someone
- using foul language
- poking someone with a finger
- pulling someone's hair
- screaming insults at someone
- slapping someone in the face

(2) Ask your partner what would be their reaction if any of the following people were badly behaved:

grandmother / boss / best friend / yourself / brother or sister / mother / father

An example question: *What would you think if your grandmother slapped someone?*

FIRST LADY OPINIONS: Talk with a partner about the degree to which you agree or disagree with these opinions about Kenya's First Lady Kibaki and first ladies in general.

- a. Fantastic. It's wonderful to see such a high profile figure making a fool of herself.
- b. First ladies are not elected. They should have no public role whatsoever.
- c. First Lady Kibaki has shamed her country.
- d. There is no problem with any woman wanting to defend her family's name.
- e. First Lady Kibaki should be arrested for slapping a cameraman.
- f. President Mwai Kibaki should apologize to the international community for his wife's tantrums.
- g. Sounds like Ms Kibaki needs psychiatric help.
- h. Some newspapers go too far and push high profile figures over the edge.
- i. Having a first lady is better than having a Queen.
- j. A first lady should behave impeccably at all times.

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PRE-READING

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

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

- a. Kenya's First Lady is always a very demure woman. T / F
- b. Many Kenyans are embarrassed at the actions of their first lady. T / F
- c. First Lady Lucy Kibaki tried to pull the plug on a neighbour's party. T / F
- d. Lucy's children managed to calm her down. T / F
- e. First Lady Lucy Kibaki is a comedian in Kenya. T / F
- f. Kenyan newspapers tread carefully with their headlines and editorials. T / F
- g. Ms Kibaki loves Kenya's tabloid newspapers. T / F
- h. She wants the media to address her husband by his rightful presidential title. T / F

SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | | |
|----|------------------|--------------|
| a. | volatile | outburst |
| b. | ran amok | pathetically |
| c. | rampages | explosive |
| d. | tirade | deep |
| e. | pacify | tabloids |
| f. | laughingstock | shenanigans |
| g. | escapades | tempests |
| h. | profound | calm |
| i. | pitifully | joke |
| j. | mainstream press | went berserk |

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

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|------------------------|
| a. | quite | insults at |
| b. | night-time | into his home |
| c. | brought | of a laughingstock |
| d. | she stormed | press |
| e. | shouted | psychiatric help |
| f. | become something | shame on their country |
| g. | we wish to express | rampages |
| h. | seek | unprecedented |
| i. | Lucy handled | our profound disgust |
| j. | mainstream | herself pitifully |

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READING:

SYNONYM FILL: There are six gaps in the article. There are six groups of synonyms below the article. 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.

Kenya's First Lady runs amok

BNE: In quite unprecedented behaviour, Kenya's volatile First Lady, Lucy Kibaki, _____ in Nairobi on May 1, screaming at journalists and diplomats to respect her family. Her night-time rampages have shocked many Kenyans, who believe she has brought shame on their country. Her first _____ was at the home of Kenya's World Bank director Makhtar Diop. She stormed into his home at midnight and demanded he turn his music down and shouted insults at his mother. Her own two children, guests at the party, were unable to _____ her as she tried to disconnect the equipment. The negative press she received following this incident resulted in her occupying the pressroom of the Nation newspaper for five hours, demanding a reporter be arrested and slapping a cameraman.

The first lady has become something of a _____ in the media and with Kenyans. The Standard newspaper carried the headline "Lucy on the Loose" and devoted five pages to her _____. Its editorial stated: "We wish to express our profound disgust at the conduct of the First Lady." It also suggested she seek psychiatric help. The Kenya Times said: "Lucy handled herself _____." Kenyan lawmakers urged President Mwai Kibaki to "take charge of his family". Ms Kibaki's reply was that her role as First Lady is misunderstood by Kenyans and that she wants respect for her husband from "the nasty mainstream press". She said the media "must start respecting the President by addressing him through his rightful title... His Excellency the President or Mr President".

1
laughingstock
joke
mockery
the butt of everyone's jokes

2
pitifully
pathetically
deplorably
woefully

3
ran amok
went berserk
lost it
ran riot

4
escapades
shenanigans
antics
high jinks

5
tirade
outburst
tongue-lashing
ranting

6
pacify
calm
tame
subdue

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DISCUSSION

- a. What did you think of this article?
- b. What adjective describes your feelings about the news in this article?
- c. Which events in this article surprised you?
- d. What do you think of Ms Kibaki's behaviour?
- e. What would you think if First Lady Laura Bush acted similarly?
- f. Should Ms Kibaki be punished for her actions?
- g. Is there more to this story than meets the eye?
- h. Is it OK to try and disconnect someone's stereo equipment if his or her party music is too loud?
- i. What should be the role of a first lady?
- j. Does Ms Kibaki have too much power?
- k. What should her husband do about her actions?
- l. What should the slapped cameraman do about her actions?
- m. Does the mainstream press have a duty to treat a first lady with more respect than other people or are first ladies prime targets for sensationalism?
- n. What do you think, or know, of other first ladies around the world?
- o. Ms Kibaki was just defending her husband and her family name. Isn't this a good thing to do?
- p. Should newspapers always address national leaders using such language as "His Excellency the President or Mr President"?
- q. Are the politicians and their spouses / partners well behaved in your country?
- r. Do the politicians in your country ever become a laughingstock?
- s. Have you ever been a laughing stock?
- t. Have you ever been profoundly disgusted at someone's behaviour?
- u. Did you like this discussion?
- v. 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 the Lucy Kibaki story. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. MY WORST: Write a story about the worst example of you behaving badly. Share it with your classmates in your next lesson to see what they think.

4. KENYAN LAWMAKER: Imagine you are a Kenyan lawmaker. Write a letter to Lucy Kibaki telling her how you feel about her behaviour and reminding her of what is expected from her by the public. Show your classmates what you wrote in your next lesson.

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SPEAKING:

WORDS FROM THE TEXT: In pairs / groups, (1) ask each other about whether you know or have met anyone who has the following characteristics or personality traits. (2) Agree on the kind of psychiatric help / counseling would you offer such people. (3) Role play a counselor / psychiatrist and a patient who has one / some / all of these negative traits.

- a. Someone whose temper is extremely volatile.
- b. Someone who often runs amok and cannot be controlled.
- c. Someone who embarks on night-time rampages, drunken or otherwise.
- d. Someone who continually brings shame on his or her family.
- e. Someone who often launches into tirades against other family members.
- f. Someone who storms around the house ranting and raving.
- g. Someone who has a propensity to slap others around the face.
- h. Someone whose actions constantly make them a laughingstock.
- i. Someone whose conduct in public leaves a lot to be desired.
- j. Someone whose arrogance and vanity makes them believe they should be respected.

TEXT

Kenya's First Lady runs amok

BNE: In quite unprecedented behaviour, Kenya's volatile First Lady, Lucy Kibaki, ran amok in Nairobi on May 1, screaming at journalists and diplomats to respect her family. Her night-time rampages have shocked many Kenyans, who believe she has brought shame on their country. Her first tirade was at the home of Kenya's World Bank director Makhtar Diop. She stormed into his home at midnight and demanded he turn his music down and shouted insults at his mother. Her own two children, guests at the party, were unable to pacify her as she tried to disconnect the equipment. The negative press she received following this incident resulted in her occupying the pressroom of the Nation newspaper for five hours, demanding a reporter be arrested and slapping a cameraman.

The first lady has become something of a laughingstock in the media and with Kenyans. The Standard newspaper carried the headline "Lucy on the Loose" and devoted five pages to her escapades. Its editorial stated: "We wish to express our profound disgust at the conduct of the First Lady." It also suggested she seek psychiatric help. The Kenya Times said: "Lucy handled herself pitifully." Kenyan lawmakers urged President Mwai Kibaki to "take charge of his family". Ms Kibaki's reply was that her role as First Lady is misunderstood by Kenyans and that she wants respect for her husband from "the nasty mainstream press". She said the media "must start respecting the President by addressing him through his rightful title... His Excellency the President or Mr President".