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Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

## **Saudi Arabia's King Fahd passes away**

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**2 August, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Saudi Arabia's King Fahd passes away**

**BNE:** Saudi Arabia's King Fahd died on Monday of respiratory problems. His half-brother Crown Prince Abdullah, the de facto leader of Saudi Arabia since the King's debilitating stroke a decade ago, has been installed as the new monarch. The King's funeral will take place today and will be attended by many of the world's dignitaries. King Fahd reputedly had extremely close links with President Bush's family and was once a close ally of Saddam Hussein. The situation changed when the King granted the U.S. military the right to use Saudi Arabia as a base in the two wars against Iraq. This incurred the wrath of Al-Qaeda who became bent on toppling the Saudi royal family.

King Fahd was 84 years old. His health had rapidly deteriorated since being admitted to hospital with pneumonia on May 27. The Saudi Information Minister announced the news of the King's death on state television: "With deep sorrow and pain, the Royal Court mourns the death of The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd, due to illness." He will also be mourned around the Islamic world. Pakistan will hold a week of national mourning, with flags flying at half mast. This week's Arab summit in Egypt will be postponed for a few days. The Arab League Secretary General said the King was a true visionary who played a pivotal role in the Middle East, and whose death would be deeply felt.

## **WARM-UPS**

**1. SAUDI CITIZEN:** You are a citizen of Saudi Arabia. Walk around the classroom and talk with the other "citizens" of your country about the death of your king. What does it mean for your kingdom? How will his death change your life?

**2. SAUDI SEARCH:** Your job is to find out as much information as you can in five minutes about Saudi Arabia and King Fahd. Ask as many students as you can (and your teacher) for information. Once the five minutes is up, sit down with your partner(s). Share and talk about what you found out. Discuss what information was new, interesting, worrying, pleasing etc. What information are you happy you found out?

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

*Saudi Arabia / King Fahd / respiratory problems / monarchs / funerals / Iraq wars / pneumonia / the Holy Mosques of Mecca / periods of mourning / the Middle East*

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

**4. FUNERAL:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "funeral". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**5. A KING'S LIFE:** Would you like to be a king (or queen)? In pairs / groups, answer this question. Discuss what you think life as a Saudi King is like. Some of the following words may be useful in your conversations:

- a. Daily duties
- b. International role
- c. Palace life
- d. Dreams
- e. Friends and enemies
- f. Religion
- g. The war on terror
- h. Al-Qaeda
- i. Entertainment
- j. Other

Change partners and compare what you talked about.

**6. QUICK DEBATE:** Students A think Saudi Arabia is helping defeat terrorism. Students B think Saudi Arabia is fueling terrorism. Change partners often.

## 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 has died of cancer.                        | T / F |
| b. The King had been in tip-top condition up until his sudden death.   | T / F |
| c. King Fahd had very close family ties with U.S. President Bush.      | T / F |
| d. Al-Qaeda hated King Fahd.   | T / F |
| e. The King was admitted to hospital with pneumonia on May 27.         | T / F |
| f. King Fahd was the custodian of the two Holy Mosques in Mecca.       | T / F |
| g. Saudi Arabia will be the only country to officially mourn the king. | T / F |
| h. The King played a pivotal role in the Middle East.                  | T / F |

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

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| a. respiratory  | fury           |
| b. de facto     | critical       |
| c. debilitating | guardian       |
| d. dignitaries  | breathing      |
| e. wrath        | shelved        |
| f. deteriorated | incapacitating |
| g. custodian    | conference     |
| h. summit       | actual         |
| i. postponed    | worsened       |
| j. pivotal      | VIPs           |

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

- |                           |                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. the de facto           | wrath of Al-Qaeda          |
| b. debilitating           | television                 |
| c. attended by many       | leader                     |
| d. incurred the           | mast                       |
| e. bent on toppling       | deteriorated               |
| f. His health had rapidly | role in the Middle East    |
| g. state                  | of the world's dignitaries |
| h. custodian of the two   | the Saudi Royal family     |
| i. flags flying at half   | Holy Mosques               |
| j. played a pivotal       | stroke                     |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**ODD WORD OUT:** Strike through the incorrect word in each group of three in italics.

### Saudi Arabia's King Fahd passes away

**BNE:** Saudi Arabia's King Fahd died on Monday of *breathing / respiratory / recalcitrant* problems. His half-brother Crown Prince Abdullah, the *de facto / actual / factual* leader of Saudi Arabia since the King's debilitating stroke a decade ago, has been *announced / instilled / installed* as the new monarch. The King's funeral will take place today and will be attended by many of the world's dignitaries. King Fahd reputedly had extremely close *shaves / ties / links* with President Bush's family and was once a close ally of Saddam Hussein. The situation changed when the King *granted / grunted / allowed* the U.S. military the right to use Saudi Arabia as a base in the two wars against Iraq. This incurred the wrath of Al-Qaeda who became bent on *toppling / traversing / ousting* the Saudi royal family.

King Fahd was 84 years old. His health had rapidly *declined / reclined / deteriorated* since being admitted to hospital with pneumonia on May 27. The Saudi Information Minister *renounced / announced / broke* the news of the King's death on state television: "With deep sorrow and pain, the Royal Court mourns the death of The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd, due to illness." He will also be mourned *around / overall / throughout* the Islamic world. Pakistan will hold a week of national mourning, with flags *flying at / lowered to / folded up* half mast. This week's Arab summit in Egypt will be *shelved / booked / postponed* for a few days. The Arab League Secretary General said the King was a true visionary who played a *pivotal / critical / nautical* role in the Middle East, and whose death would be deeply felt.

## **AFTER READING / LISTENING**

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

- 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. ODD WORD OUT:** 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 "SAUDI ARABIA" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about Saudi Arabia and King Fahd.

- 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:

de facto

stroke

dignitaries

ally

granted

wrath

deteriorated

state

custodian

mast

summit

pivotal

## **DISCUSSION**

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

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What do you think of the Saudi Royal family?
- d. What do you know about the Saudi Royal family?
- e. What roles does Saudi Arabia play in the Middle East?
- f. How important is Saudi Arabia in world politics?
- g. What do you think of the close ties between the Bush family and the Saudi royal family?
- h. Do you think Saudi Arabia is a help or hindrance to the war on terror?
- i. What tensions do you know of in Saudi Arabia?
- j. How difficult do you think it is for a Saudi king to steer a course between traditional Islam and globalization?

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

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. Would you like to live (do you like living) in Saudi Arabia?
- d. What aspects of Saudi Arabia do you think are interesting?
- e. How do you think Saudi Arabia will change under the more conservative King Abdullah?
- f. Was King Fahd brave to allow U.S. troops on Saudi soil?
- g. What social reforms should King Fahd have made?
- h. Do you think the Saudi Royal family will survive as a monarchy?
- i. Do you think Saudi Arabia will become more open or more conservative?
- 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

**PIVOTAL ROLES:** In pairs / groups, discuss the pivotal roles the following world leaders (or those of your own choosing) have played in shaping today's world. What are their achievements? What are their failings? What do they need to do to be recognized as a great world leader?

LEADER	ACHIEVEMENTS	FAILINGS	UNDONE WORK
King Fahd			
George W. Bush			
Pervez Musharraf			
Kofi Annan			
Vladimir Putin			
Junichiro Koizumi			
Thabo Mbeki			
Luiz Lula da Silva			
Other			
Other			

Change partners and explain what you discussed with your previous partner(s).



## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **Saudi Arabia's King Fahd passes away**

**BNE:** Saudi Arabia's King Fahd died on Monday of \_\_\_\_\_ problems. His half-brother Crown Prince Abdullah, the \_\_\_\_\_ leader of Saudi Arabia since the King's debilitating stroke a decade ago, has been installed as the new \_\_\_\_\_. The King's funeral will take place today and will be attended by many of the world's \_\_\_\_\_. King Fahd reputedly had extremely close links with President Bush's family and was once a close \_\_\_\_\_ of Saddam Hussein. The situation changed when the King \_\_\_\_\_ the U.S. military the right to use Saudi Arabia as a base in the two wars against Iraq. This \_\_\_\_\_ the wrath of Al-Qaeda who became bent on \_\_\_\_\_ the Saudi royal family.

King Fahd was 84 years old. His health had rapidly \_\_\_\_\_ since being admitted to hospital with pneumonia on May 27. The Saudi Information Minister \_\_\_\_\_ the news of the King's death on state television: "With deep sorrow and pain, the Royal Court \_\_\_\_\_ the death of The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd, due to illness." He will also be \_\_\_\_\_ around the Islamic world. Pakistan will hold a week of national mourning, with flags flying at \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_. This week's Arab summit in Egypt will be postponed for a few days. The Arab League Secretary General said the King was a true \_\_\_\_\_ who played a \_\_\_\_\_ role in the Middle East, and whose death would be deeply felt.

## **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 the late King Fahd. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. SAUDI ARABIA:** Make a poster about Saudi Arabia. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

**4. DIARY / JOURNAL:** Imagine you are king or queen of your country or another country. Write the entry in your journal / diary for one day in your life. Read your diary / journal entry to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

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

### SYNONYM MATCH:

a. respiratory	breathing
b. de facto	actual
c. debilitating	incapacitating
d. dignitaries	VIPs
e. wrath	fury
f. deteriorated	worsened
g. custodian	guardian
h. summit	conference
i. postponed	shelved
j. pivotal	critical

### PHRASE MATCH:

a. the de facto	leader
b. debilitating	stroke
c. attended by many	of the world's dignitaries
d. incurred the	wrath of Al-Qaeda
e. bent on toppling	the Saudi Royal family
f. His health had rapidly	deteriorated
g. state	television
h. custodian of the two	Holy Mosques
i. flags flying at half	mast
j. played a pivotal	role in the Middle East

### ODD WORD OUT:

#### Saudi Arabia's King Fahd passes away

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