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US rapper says President Bush is racist

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5 September, 2005

THE ARTICLE

US rapper says President Bush is racist

BNE: On live television, American rapper Kanye West said President George W. Bush was a racist. He made his comments, which were not on the TV show's script, on a fundraiser for victims of Hurricane Katrina. Mr. West simply stated: "George Bush doesn't care about black people." West also attacked the media for the way it reports black people, declaring: "I hate the way they portray us in the media. If you see a black family, it says they're looting. See a white family, it says they're looking for food."

Mr. West is not alone in criticizing the White House. Civil rights leader Jesse Jackson strongly attacked Mr. Bush, saying skin color was the reason for the slow relief efforts. Reverend Jackson said the sight of thousands of dehydrated black citizens stranded on a flooded highway was like a slave ship. However, the president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Bruce Gordon, said it was not time for "finger-pointing". He stressed: "Right now, the NAACP is in what I call a life-saving mode."

WARM-UPS

1. HELLO PRESIDENT BUSH: Take part in short role plays. Students A are President George W. Bush; Students B are victims of the hurricane still in New Orleans after six days. Students B are very angry with President Bush. Take turns in being President and victim.

2. RACE: In pairs / groups, talk about the following races. What images do you have of each race?

- Black
- White
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Aborigine
- Arab
- African
- Other

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

Live television / Kanye West / racism / Hurricane Katrina / black people / poor people / media / looting / the White House / slave ships / finger-pointing

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

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

5. SKIN COLOR: In pairs / groups, talk about these opinions about skin color and relief efforts for Hurricane Katrina. Do you agree with them?

- a. To say U.S. President George W. Bush is a racist is ridiculous. He is not a racist.
- b. George Bush has many black people in his cabinet. He cannot be racist.
- c. If Katrina had destroyed the white city of Boston, relief would have arrived immediately.
- d. The media have spent too much time focusing on black people and looting instead of focusing on hungry and dying people.
- e. Kanye West just wanted to hit the headlines. That's his job as a rapper.
- f. Race is not the reason for the slow relief efforts. Bad leadership in the White House is the real cause.
- g. Money is the reason for slow relief efforts. When the World Trade Centre was attacked, help arrived with amazing speed. New Orleans is poor.
- h. All American citizens are treated equally, regardless of skin color.

6. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think President George W. Bush is not racist. Students B think President George W. Bush is racist. 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. An American hip hop singer has accused President Bush of racism. T / F
- b. The singer said Mr. Bush was a racist to his face on TV news. T / F
- c. The rapper spoke for 35 minutes about racial problems. T / F
- d. The rapper said the media always showed black people as criminals. T / F
- e. The rapper is alone in accusing President Bush of racism. T / F
- f. A black leader said skin color was the reason for slow relief efforts. T / F
- g. The black leader compared TV images of New Orleans to slave ships. T / F
- h. Another black leader also pointed the finger at President Bush. T / F

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

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| a. rapper | urged |
| b. attacked | stealing |
| c. portray | cause |
| d. looting | blame |
| e. looking | criticized |
| f. reason | non-white |
| g. dehydrated | searching |
| h. colored | hip-hop artist |
| i. stressed | thirsty |
| j. finger-pointing | show |

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

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. live | script |
| b. the TV show's | portray us in the media |
| c. a fundraiser for | "finger-pointing" |
| d. attacked the media for the | victims of Hurricane Katrina |
| e. I hate the way they | rights leader |
| f. Mr. West is not alone in | television |
| g. civil | ship |
| h. skin | way it reports black people |
| i. slave | criticizing the White House |
| j. it was not time for | color |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

WHICH WORD? Strike through the incorrect word in the *italicized* pairs.

US rapper says President Bush is racist

BNE: On *dead / live* television, American rapper Kanye West said President George W. Bush was a racist. He made his *commands / comments*, which were not on the TV show's *script / scraps*, on a fundraiser for victims of Hurricane Katrina. Mr. West simply *shouted / stated*: "George Bush doesn't care about black people." West also attacked the *media / medium* for the way it reports black people, declaring: "I hate the way they portray us in the media. If you see a black family, it says they're looting. See a white family, it says they're *looking / looting* for food."

Mr. West is not *alone / lonely* in criticizing the White House. Civil rights leader Jesse Jackson *strongly / weakly* attacked Mr. Bush, saying skin color was the reason for the slow *relief / relieving* efforts. Reverend Jackson said the sight of thousands of dehydrated black citizens *stranded / standard* on a flooded highway was like a *slave / cruise* ship. However, the president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Bruce Gordon, said it was not time for "finger-pointing". He stressed: "Right now, the NAACP is in what I call a life-saving *mode / model*."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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. WHICH WORD? In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the relationships between the correct and incorrect words. Were the words 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 "RACISM" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about the racism that exists in America and other countries.

- 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:

- live
- comments
- simply
- media
- portray
- looting
- alone
- skin color
- dehydrated
- president
- finger-pointing
- mode

DISCUSSION

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

- a. What was your initial reaction to this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What adjectives describe your feelings about this article?
- d. What do you think of Kanye West's comments?
- e. What do you think is the reason for the slow relief response?
- f. What would you think if you were still trapped in New Orleans without water after six days?
- g. How do you think this crisis will affect Mr. Bush's Presidency?
- h. Do you think the media have focused too much on looting?
- i. Do you think President Bush should meet Mr. West?
- j. Do you think there's a lot of racism in America?

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. Are black people and white people viewed differently in the media?
- d. Have the pictures you have seen on television or in newspapers changed your image of America?
- e. Have you heard any good news about the rescue efforts?
- f. Do you think President Bush is a racist?
- g. Do you think this tragedy will change race relations in America?
- h. Do you think looting is a serious crime in such a tragedy?
- i. What do you think of the shoot-to-kill policy for looters?
- 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

RACE:

In groups, spend one minute brainstorming all of the words you can think of for each of the groups of people in the table below. Ask a secretary to write down the words.

BLACK	WHITE
CHINESE	ARAB

After you have finished, talk about the words. What do they say about your thoughts on each race? Are these thoughts fair? Do the words show any differences between the four races? Are these differences fair?

Change partners and explain your findings to your new groups.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

US rapper says President Bush is racist

BNE: On live television, American _____ Kanye West said President George W. Bush was a _____. He made his comments, which were not on the TV show's script, on a fundraiser for _____ of Hurricane Katrina. Mr. West simply stated: "George Bush doesn't _____ about black people." West also attacked the _____ for the way it reports black people, declaring: "I hate the way they portray us in the media. If you see a black family, it says they're _____. See a white family, it says they're _____ for food."

Mr. West is _____ in criticizing the White House. Civil rights leader Jesse Jackson strongly attacked Mr. Bush, saying _____ was the reason for the slow relief efforts. Reverend Jackson said the _____ of thousands of dehydrated black citizens stranded on a flooded highway was like a _____. However, the president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Bruce Gordon, said it was not time for "_____ -pointing". He stressed: "Right now, the NAACP is in what I call a _____ - _____ mode."

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 racial mix of people in New Orleans. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. LETTER: Write a letter to American rap artist Kanye West. Tell him what you think of his comments about President George W. Bush. Show your letters to your classmates in your next lesson.

4. DIARY / JOURNAL ENTRY: Imagine you have been stranded on a stretch of flooded highway in New Orleans for six days. You have no food and water and it's very hot. You see helicopters flying overhead but none comes to rescue you. Write your diary / journal entry for one day on the highway. Read what you wrote to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| a. rapper | hip-hop artist |
| b. attacked | criticized |
| c. portray | show |
| d. looting | stealing |
| e. looking | searching |
| f. reason | cause |
| g. dehydrated | thirsty |
| h. colored | non-white |
| i. stressed | urged |
| j. finger-pointing | blame |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. live | television |
| b. the TV show's | script |
| c. a fundraiser for | victims of Hurricane Katrina |
| d. attacked the media for the | way it reports black people |
| e. I hate the way they | portray us in the media |
| f. Mr. West is not alone in | criticizing the White House |
| g. civil | rights leader |
| h. skin | color |
| i. slave | ship |
| j. it was not time for | "finger-pointing" |

WHICH WORD?

US rapper says President Bush is racist

BNE: On ~~dead~~ / *live* television, American rapper Kanye West said President George W. Bush was a racist. He made his ~~commands~~ / *comments*, which were not on the TV show's *script* / ~~scraps~~, on a fundraiser for victims of Hurricane Katrina. Mr. West simply ~~shouted~~ / *stated*: "George Bush doesn't care about black people." West also attacked the *media* / ~~medium~~ for the way it reports black people, declaring: "I hate the way they portray us in the media. If you see a black family, it says they're looting. See a white family, it says they're *looking* / ~~looting~~ for food."

Mr. West is not *alone* / ~~lonely~~ in criticizing the White House. Civil rights leader Jesse Jackson *strongly* / ~~weakly~~ attacked Mr. Bush, saying skin color was the reason for the slow *relief* / ~~relieving~~ efforts. Reverend Jackson said the sight of thousands of dehydrated black citizens *stranded* / ~~standard~~ on a flooded highway was like a *slave* / ~~cruise~~ ship. However, the president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Bruce Gordon, said it was not time for "finger-pointing". He stressed: "Right now, the NAACP is in what I call a life-saving *mode* / ~~model~~."