

White man attacked for having dreadlocks

5th April, 2016



A heated debate is currently going on in the USA about whether it is OK for white people to have dreadlocks. The controversy follows a video going viral of a black female student

confronting a white male student over the fact that he had dreadlocks. The video shows the black female student questioning the white guy about his locks. She tells him that he cannot sport such a hairstyle because it is part of her culture. He replied that people in ancient Egypt had the same hairstyle and that it did not belong to just one culture. San Francisco State University said: "We are taking the matter seriously and will promptly and thoroughly investigate this incident through applicable university channels."

Dreadlocks are rope-like bunches of hair that is woven together. They have been in existence for thousands of years. Historians are not sure exactly where they first originated. Anthropologists have found evidence of the hairstyle in ancient Egypt, Europe, the Pacific islands, Australia and Papua New Guinea, as well as among many African peoples. Writer Jamia Wilson suggested there was an issue with white people wearing dreadlocks. She said black people often have negative experiences in society because of them and questioned white people with dreadlocks go through the same thing. She said: "Hairstyles are not innocuous. There are gendered and racial connotations and stereotypes attached to them."

Sources: *Independent.co.* / *CNN.com* / *WashingtonPost.com*

Writing

Hairstyles belong to one culture and should not be copied by other cultures. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

debate / dreadlocks / controversy / viral / hairstyle / ancient Egypt / seriously / existence / historians / hairstyle / negative experiences / innocuous / stereotypes

True / False

- An argument over dreadlocks is taking place in the USA. T / F
- A black male student criticized a white student for having dreadlocks. T / F
- The white student said dreadlocks belonged to many cultures. T / F
- The students' university said it would not investigate this incident. T / F
- Dreadlocks originated about 50 years ago. T / F
- Anthropologists do not know where dreadlocks first originated. T / F
- A writer wondered if white people with dreadlocks had problems in life. T / F
- The writer said hairstyles were completely innocuous. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. heated | a. wear |
| 2. controversy | b. precisely |
| 3. sport | c. relevant |
| 4. promptly | d. entwined |
| 5. applicable | e. experience |
| 6. woven | f. fiery |
| 7. exactly | g. hidden meanings |
| 8. evidence | h. dispute |
| 9. go through | i. swiftly |
| 10. connotations | j. proof |

Discussion – Student A

- Do white people wear dreadlocks to look cool?
- What negative experiences might black people with dreadlocks have?
- Does society look at people with dreadlocks differently, depending on their skin colour?
- What "racial connotations" are there with hairstyles?
- What are the issues of white people having dreadlocks?
- Do you agree that "hairstyles are not innocuous"?
- What stereotypes are there of people with dreadlocks?
- What questions would you ask the students?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. A heated debate is currently | a. viral |
| 2. a video going | b. experiences |
| 3. people in ancient | c. that is woven together |
| 4. We are taking the | d. going on |
| 5. thoroughly investigate | e. of the hairstyle |
| 6. Dreadlocks are rope-like bunches of hair | f. this incident |
| 7. They have been in existence | g. connotations |
| 8. Anthropologists have found evidence | h. Egypt |
| 9. black people often have negative | i. matter seriously |
| 10. racial | j. for thousands of years |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- Do different hairstyles belong to different cultures?
- Should white people be able to have dreadlocks?
- What is your favourite hairstyle?
- Do dreadlocks and other hairstyles belong to all cultures?
- What do you think of dreadlocks?
- What advice do you have for the two students?
- What should the university do about this?

Spelling

- A heated tedeba is currently going on
- The vsrerctoyno follows a video going viral
- We are taking the matter rsueoliys
- nieacnt Egypt
- ylmpport and thoroughly
- investigate this ndntici
- hair that is vnoew together
- in itscexnee for thousands of years
- where they first idaogernit
- Anthropologists have found idenvece
- gnvtiae experiences
- tpeestsryeo attached to them

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. h	3. a	4. i	5. c
6. d	7. b	8. j	9. e	10. g

Role Play

Role A – Dreadlocks

You think dreadlocks are the best hairstyle. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their styles aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): a ponytail, being bald or straight hair.

Role B – Ponytail

You think a ponytail is the best hairstyle. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their styles aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): dreadlocks, being bald or straight hair.

Role C – Bald / shaven

You think being bald is the best hairstyle. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their styles aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): a ponytail, dreadlocks or straight hair.

Role D – Straight

You think straight hair is the best hairstyle. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their styles aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): a ponytail, being bald or dreadlocks.

Speaking – Hairstyles

Rank these hairstyles with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| • dreadlocks | • braids |
| • close crop | • bald / shaven |
| • bob | • straight |
| • ponytail | • shaggy |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.