

## **Miss Universe pageant angers Thais**

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## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Miss Universe pageant angers Thais**

**BNE:** An international beauty pageant being held in Thailand has upset many Thai people. Contestants in the Miss Universe 2005 contest posed for photographs in the centre of Bangkok wearing bikinis. Thai people are angry that the background for the photo shoot was of one of Thailand's most important temples. Thailand is a deeply Buddhist country and the photos have angered religious leaders. Newspapers have also attacked the pictures and the contest. Many headlines have said the competition is too commercial and has no interest in local culture.

Many Thais believe the pageant's organizers should show more respect to Thai culture. Preecha Kanthiya, a spokesman for the Department for Religious Affairs, said if organizers want to promote Thai culture, "they should ask the contestants to wear traditional Thai costumes". Thailand's Prime Minister has asked Thais to understand the photo shoot was an unfortunate mistake. He said: "I think the contestants did not intend to insult Thai culture. They just wanted to shoot pictures of beautiful places, but did not realize that the temple is sacred."

## WARM-UPS

**1. HEADLINE:** In pairs / groups, make a newspaper headline that includes the words "pageant", "Thai culture", "angry" and "bikini". Talk about this headline and make a story from it. Change partners and "swap" your headlines and stories. See how close your story was to the article in this lesson.

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

*Beauty contests / Buddhism / Thailand / bikinis / photographs / mistakes / traditional costumes / beautiful places*

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

**3. THAILAND:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with Thailand. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

**4. MISS UNIVERSE:** Which of the points below are most important when judging a beauty contest?

- Face
- Figure
- Smile
- Intelligence
- Warm personality
- Bikini style
- Hair
- Skin condition
- Personal ambitions
- Personal hopes for the world

**5. TWO-MINUTE PAGEANT DEBATES:** Face another student and engage in these fun 2-minute debates. Your teacher will time you and tell you to change partners.

- a. It should be "Ms." and not "Miss" Universe. vs. "Miss" is the traditional word.
- b. Married women should be allowed to enter the contest. vs. It's for single ladies only.
- c. Wearing bikinis in public in a religious country is bad. vs. Hey, it's 2005.
- d. Beauty pageants are ridiculous. vs. Beauty pageants are very exciting
- e. Beauty contests are unfair to ordinary looking women. vs. Life is unfair.
- f. Miss Universe is a racist contest. White women usually win. vs. It's open to all races.
- g. Beauty pageants are sexist. vs. The women who enter pageants don't think so.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. The Miss Universe pageant will not be held in Thailand.            | T / F |
| b. Women in bikinis posed for photos in front of an important temple. | T / F |
| c. Photos of religious leaders have made Buddhists angry.             | T / F |
| d. The pageant has lots of interesting commercials on TV.             | T / F |
| e. Thais believe the pageant has respected Thai culture.              | T / F |
| f. A spokesman suggested the women wear their own national dress.     | T / F |
| g. The Thai Prime Minister said Thai people should be angrier.        | T / F |
| h. The Thai Prime Minister said an unfortunate mishap occurred.       | T / F |

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

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| a. pageant     | mishap         |
| b. contestants | criticized     |
| c. posed       | competitors    |
| d. deeply      | dress          |
| e. attacked    | very           |
| f. show        | representative |
| g. spokesman   | understand     |
| h. costumes    | contest        |
| i. mistake     | exhibit        |
| j. realize     | stood          |

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

- |                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| a. international        | shoot            |
| b. posed                | respect          |
| c. photo                | mistake          |
| d. Thailand is a deeply | beauty pageant   |
| e. local                | is sacred        |
| f. show more            | Thai culture     |
| g. promote              | culture          |
| h. wear traditional     | Buddhist country |
| i. an unfortunate       | Thai culture     |
| j. the temple           | for photographs  |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words in the column on the right into the spaces in the text.

**BNE:** An international beauty pageant being \_\_\_\_\_ in Thailand has \_\_\_\_\_ many Thai people. Contestants in the Miss Universe 2005 contest \_\_\_\_\_ for photographs in the centre of Bangkok wearing bikinis. Thai people are angry that the \_\_\_\_\_ for the photo shoot was of one of Thailand's most important temples. Thailand is a \_\_\_\_\_ Buddhist country and the photos have angered religious leaders. Newspapers have also \_\_\_\_\_ the pictures and the contest. Many \_\_\_\_\_ have said the competition is too commercial and has no interest in local \_\_\_\_\_.

*background*  
*headlines*  
*posed*  
*held*  
*attacked*  
*culture*  
*deeply*  
*upset*

Many Thais believe the pageant's \_\_\_\_\_ should show more respect to Thai culture. Preecha Kanthiya, a \_\_\_\_\_ for the Department for Religious Affairs, said if organizers want to \_\_\_\_\_ Thai culture, "they should ask the contestants to wear traditional Thai \_\_\_\_\_". Thailand's Prime Minister has asked Thais to understand the \_\_\_\_\_ shoot was an unfortunate mistake. He said: "I think the contestants did not \_\_\_\_\_ to insult Thai culture. They just wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ pictures of beautiful places, but did not realize that the temple is \_\_\_\_\_."

*costumes*  
*intend*  
*photo*  
*shoot*  
*spokesman*  
*sacred*  
*organizers*  
*promote*

## AFTER READING

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

- 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. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare and talk about your answers to this exercise. After you agree, check your answers against the text. Research some of the words that are new to you.

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT BEAUTY CONTEST SURVEY:** In pairs / groups write down questions about beauty contests.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make a mini-presentation to another group / the class 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:

- Thailand
- posed
- background
- deeply
- attacked
- local culture
- organizers
- spokesman
- traditional
- mistake
- insult
- realize

## LANGUAGE

### TEXT TEMPLATE:

1. In pairs / groups, fill in the spaces below to make a completely new news story.

**BNE:** A \_\_\_\_\_ being held \_\_\_\_\_ has upset many \_\_\_\_\_. Contestants in the \_\_\_\_\_ contest \_\_\_\_\_ in the centre of \_\_\_\_\_ wearing \_\_\_\_\_. People are angry that \_\_\_\_\_ was of one of \_\_\_\_\_ most important \_\_\_\_\_. Newspapers have also \_\_\_\_\_. Many headlines have said \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Many \_\_\_\_\_ believe \_\_\_\_\_ should \_\_\_\_\_. A spokesperson for \_\_\_\_\_ said if \_\_\_\_\_ want to \_\_\_\_\_, "they should \_\_\_\_\_. The spokesperson said: "\_\_\_\_\_, but did not realize that \_\_\_\_\_."

2. Read your text to another partner/group. They will ask you questions about the story.
3. Make a note of any unknown vocabulary your partner has.
4. Talk about which story was best.

## DISCUSSION

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

- a. What did you think when you saw the headline of this article?
- b. Are you interested in beauty contests?
- c. Do you ever watch beauty contests on TV?
- d. Do you think beauty contests are sexist?
- e. Do you think the pageant should be "Ms." instead of "Miss" Universe?
- f. What are the important points in deciding who is the most beautiful woman in a beauty pageant?
- g. Who do you think is the most handsome man in the world?
- h. Do you think Miss Universe is a useful contest?
- i. Should contestants wear traditional costumes instead of bikinis?
- j. What beautiful places do you know?

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

- a. Did you like reading the article?
- b. Do you like to know who the winner was of a beauty pageant?
- c. Do you think Thai people are right to feel angry?
- d. Do you think Thai people are over-reacting to the video showing young women in bikinis?
- e. Should organizers include more of the host nation's culture?
- f. Who do you think is the most beautiful woman in the world?
- g. What would be the important points in deciding who is the most handsome man in a "Mr. Universe" contest?
- h. Do you want to be more beautiful / handsome?
- i. What changes would you like to make to your face / body?
- 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**

**FAUX PAS:** This is expression that comes from French. It means “false step”. A faux pas happens when someone makes a cultural mistake that upsets local people. The Miss Universe organizers photographing half-naked women in front of a temple was a faux pas. Look at other faux pas below.

1. In pairs / groups, decide why each of these faux pas are cultural no-nos.
2. What would you think if any of these happened to you in your country? The country/countries in which the act is a faux pas is in brackets / parentheses.
  - a. Someone shaking hands using his / her right hand. (Some African countries)
  - b. Eating with your left hand. (Middle Eastern countries)
  - c. Displaying the soles of your feet. (Thailand)
  - d. Passing food to another person from chopsticks to chopsticks. (Japan)
  - e. Not finishing all of the food on your plate. (Finland)
  - f. Finishing all of the food on your plate. (China)
  - g. Bringing a bottle of wine when you go to someone’s house for dinner. (France)
  - h. Not offering a cup of tea to visitors. (UK)
  - i. Telling someone you think they are older than they really are. (USA)
  - j. Wearing your shoes in someone’s house. (Japan)
3. What cultural faux pas are there in your country?
4. After you have finished, change partners and compare what you spoke about with your previous partner(s).

## LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### Miss Universe pageant angers Thais

**BNE:** An international beauty pageant \_\_\_\_\_ Thailand has upset many Thai people. Contestants in the Miss Universe 2005 contest posed for photographs in the centre of Bangkok wearing bikinis. Thai people are angry that the background for the photo shoot \_\_\_\_\_ Thailand's most important temples. Thailand is a deeply Buddhist country and the photos \_\_\_\_\_ leaders. Newspapers have also attacked the pictures and the contest. Many headlines have said the competition is too commercial \_\_\_\_\_ in local culture.

Many Thais believe the pageant's organizers should \_\_\_\_\_ to Thai culture. Preecha Kanthiya, a spokesman for the Department for Religious Affairs, said if organizers \_\_\_\_\_ Thai culture, "they should ask the contestants to wear traditional Thai costumes". Thailand's Prime Minister \_\_\_\_\_ understand the photo shoot was an unfortunate mistake. He said: "I think the contestants did not intend to insult Thai culture. They just wanted to shoot pictures of beautiful places, \_\_\_\_\_ that the temple is sacred."

## **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 Miss Universe pageant. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. FAUX PAS:** Write a guide for visitors to your country about the how they should behave in your country. Be sure to list the biggest faux pas. Explain the reasons why these things are faux pas. Show your guide to your classmates in the next lesson.

**4. LETTER:** You are very angry by the bikini-wearing contestants posing in front of the Thai temple. Write a letter to the organizers of the Miss Universe contest telling them your views, Tell them what actions they should take to make Thai people happier. Show your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Compare the things you wrote about.

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

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

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| a. pageant     | contest        |
| b. contestants | competitors    |
| c. posed       | stood          |
| d. deeply      | very           |
| e. attacked    | criticized     |
| f. show        | exhibit        |
| g. spokesman   | representative |
| h. costumes    | dress          |
| i. mistake     | mishap         |
| j. realize     | understand     |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| a. international        | beauty pageant   |
| b. posed                | for photographs  |
| c. photo                | shoot            |
| d. Thailand is a deeply | Buddhist country |
| e. local                | culture          |
| f. show more            | respect          |
| g. promote              | Thai culture     |
| h. wear traditional     | Thai costumes    |
| i. an unfortunate       | mistake          |
| j. the temple           | is sacred        |

### GAP FILL:

**BNE:** An international beauty pageant being **held** in Thailand has **upset** many Thai people. Contestants in the Miss Universe 2005 contest **posed** for photographs in the centre of Bangkok wearing bikinis. Thai people are angry that the **background** for the photo shoot was of one of Thailand's most important temples. Thailand is a **deeply** Buddhist country and the photos have angered religious leaders. Newspapers have also **attacked** the pictures and the contest. Many **headlines** have said the competition is too commercial and has no interest in local **culture**.

Many Thais believe the pageant's **organizers** should show more respect to Thai culture. Preecha Kanthiya, a **spokesman** for the Department for Religious Affairs, said if organizers want to **promote** Thai culture, "they should ask the contestants to wear traditional Thai **costumes**". Thailand's Prime Minister has asked Thais to understand the **photo** shoot was an unfortunate mistake. He said: "I think the contestants did not **intend** to insult Thai culture. They just wanted to **shoot** pictures of beautiful places, but did not realize that the temple is **sacred**."