

Spain legalizes same sex marriage

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Today's contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
After Reading	6
Discussion	7
Speaking	8
Listening Gap Fill	9
Homework	10
Answers	11

1 July, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Spain legalizes same sex marriage

BNE: Spain legalized same sex marriages on June 30, becoming the fourth country to do so after Belgium, Canada and the Netherlands. Canada passed a similar law on June 28, following Belgium in 2003 and Holland in 2000. The new Spanish law is in line with public opinion: around 70 per cent of Spaniards support legalizing gay marriage. This is despite opposition from the Catholic Church, which voiced fierce and vehement protests against the new law throughout the legislative process. The law gives same sex unions identical status as heterosexual ones, including inheritance rights, pensions and the right to adopt children.

The vote in the 350-seat Spanish Congress passed smoothly, with 187 in favor, 147 against and four abstentions. Spain's Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero sponsored the law. The Catholic Church was left smarting from the decision. Supporters of the bill were ecstatic upon hearing it had been passed. They deliriously hugged and kissed outside the building, while some openly wept. Gay rights activist Fernando Martinez was overcome with joy. He said: The unjust discrimination has come to an end. Our humiliation is over. The hypocrisy is over. Society, at last, recognizes us for who we are, normal people." The first marriages of gay couples will legally begin from July 15.

WARM-UPS

1. MARRIAGE: In pairs / groups, make a list of all of the advantages of getting married. Change partners and compare your lists. When you have finished, talk about whether same sex couples should be allowed to get married and experience each of the advantages on your list - the same as in marriages between men and women. Take a class vote on whether same sex marriages should be legalized in your country.

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

Spain / same sex marriages / public opinion / the Catholic Church / heterosexual people / adopting children / ecstasy / hugs and kisses / gay rights / hypocrisy

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

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

4. TWO-MINUTE GAY DEBATES: With a partner, take part in these fun 2-minute debates. Students A strongly believe in the opinions on the left, Students B support the opinions on the right. Change partners often.

- a. Gay people are not normal. vs. Gay people are as normal as anyone else.
- b. Homosexuality is a sin against God. vs. That's 2,000-year-old nonsense.
- c. Same sex marriage is totally natural. vs. Marriage is between men and women.
- d. Gay partners are loving parents. vs. Children need a mother and a father.
- e. Society isn't ready for same sex marriage. vs. This is the 21st century.
- f. Discrimination against gay couples must end now. vs. It can never end.
- g. Gay people should never kiss in public. vs. Don't be so ridiculous.
- h. Gay people should not be allowed to join the army. vs. Gay people can fight.

5. SAME SEX SOCIETY: In pairs / groups, talk about which of these things are "OK" for same sex partners to do in your society.

- Get married
- Kiss in public
- Adopt children
- Hold hands in public
- Live together
- Tell people they are a gay couple
- Wear matching clothes
- Join the army together
- Inherit property
- Other

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Spain is the first country in the world to legalize same sex marriage. | T / F |
| b. Most Spanish people disagree with same sex marriage. | T / F |
| c. The Catholic Church said it accepted same sex marriage. | T / F |
| d. Spain's new law allows homosexual partners to adopt children. | T / F |
| e. The Spanish Prime Minister opposed the new law. | T / F |
| f. The Catholic Church thought it was a smart decision. | T / F |
| g. Supporters of the law were ecstatic and delirious. | T / F |
| h. Same sex partners can get married from as early as next year. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| a. legalized | euphoric |
| b. in line | judicial |
| c. vehement | without a hitch |
| d. legislative | consistent |
| e. inheritance | rapturously |
| f. smoothly | zealous |
| g. ecstatic | deceitfulness |
| h. smarting | sanctioned |
| i. deliriously | bequest |
| j. hypocrisy | licking its wounds |

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

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. becoming the fourth country | vehement protests |
| b. in line with | hugged and kissed |
| c. voiced fierce and | smarting from the decision |
| d. inheritance | discrimination |
| e. the right to adopt | to do so |
| f. 147 against and four | rights |
| g. The Catholic Church was left | public opinion |
| h. They deliriously | is over |
| i. unjust | children |
| j. Our humiliation | abstentions |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

WHICH WORD?: Circle the correct word from the pairs in bold.

Spain legalizes same sex marriage

BNE: Spain **legalized** / **decriminalized** same sex marriages on June 30, becoming the fourth country to do so after Belgium, Canada and the Netherlands. Canada **possessed** / **passed** a similar law on June 28, following Belgium in 2003 and Holland in 2000. The new Spanish law is in **line** / **angle** with public opinion: around 70 per cent of Spaniards **support** / **oppose** legalizing gay marriage. This is despite **support** / **opposition** from the Catholic Church, which voiced fierce and **vehement** / **vehicular** protests against the new law throughout the legislative process. The law gives same sex **onions** / **unions** identical status as heterosexual ones, including inheritance rights, pensions and the right to **adopt** / **adapt** children.

The vote in the 350-seat Spanish Congress passed **smoothly** / **smooching**, with 187 in favor, 147 against and four **abstain** / **abstentions**. Spain's Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero sponsored the law. The Catholic Church was left **smarting** / **sprightly** from the decision. Supporters of the bill were **ecstatic** / **ecstasy** upon hearing it had been passed. They deliriously hugged and kissed outside the building, while some openly **wept** / **wedded**. Gay rights activist Fernando Martinez was overcome with joy. He said: The **just** / **unjust** discrimination has come to an end. Our **humiliation** / **humbleness** is over. The **hypocrisy** / **hypnotism** is over. Society, at last, recognizes us for who we are, normal people." The first marriages of gay couples will legally begin from July 15.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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 any relationships you can see in each pair of words.

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

5. STUDENT SAME SEX SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about same sex marriage.

- 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:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| • becoming | • abstentions |
| • Canada | • sponsored |
| • line | • smarting |
| • Spaniards | • deliriously |
| • fierce | • humiliation |
| • inheritance | • normal |

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 story?
- c. What are your feelings about this story?
- d. Do you agree with same sex marriages?
- e. Do you think your country will pass same sex marriages into law?
- f. Do you think gay people should have the same rights as straight people?
- g. Do you think gay couples should be allowed to adopt children?
- h. Why are there no kissing scenes between gay couples in movies?
- i. What would you think if your child wanted a same sex marriage?
- j. Do you think society will ever completely accept same sex unions?

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. What do you think about gay people?
- d. Do you think it's OK for gay couples to kiss in public on the street?
- e. Have you ever been to a gay bar or gay festival?
- f. Do you think the teachings about marriage in the Bible and other holy books are out of date or still totally relevant?
- g. Do you think attending a same sex wedding would be different from attending a wedding between a man and a woman?
- h. What do you think about the words "homosexual", "gay" and "lesbian"?
- i. If a married gay man became President of the USA, would his partner be the "First Gentleman"?
- 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

ROLE PLAY: This role play is to discuss whether or not same sex marriages should become law. Team up with classmates who have been assigned the same role as you. Develop your roles and discuss ideas and “strategies” before the role play begins.

Introduce yourself to the other role players before the role play begins.

Role A

You have been with your same sex partner for ten years. You want to stay with your partner for the rest of your life. You have bought a house together. You want children. When you die, you want all of your money to go to your partner. You believe the Bible and other holy books are way out of date.

Role B

You are a top church official. You believe marriage is a union between a man and a woman only. You believe there can be no such thing as a marriage between a man and a man or a woman and a woman. You think same sex marriages will corrupt children. The holy books say homosexuality is a sin.

Role C

You are the owner of a wedding planning company. You really hope same sex marriages become law in your country, as it will be great for your business. You don't believe in any God and don't think it's important what it says in holy books. You think marriage between any people is a wonderfully happy thing – something to be celebrated.

Role D

You are very upset. Your lover of ten years has just run off with another partner of the same sex. You didn't know your partner was homosexual. You have suddenly developed a disliking for homosexual people. You cannot accept same sex marriages because it might mean your ex-partner might get married to his / her new love.

Change roles and repeat the role play. Comment in groups about the differences between the two role plays.

In pairs / groups, discuss whether you really believe in what you said while you were in your roles.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Spain legalizes same sex marriage

BNE: Spain legalized same sex marriages on June 30, becoming the fourth country ____ ____ ____ ____ Belgium, Canada and the Netherlands. Canada _____ on June 28, following Belgium in 2003 and Holland in 2000. The new Spanish law ____ ____ ____ ____ public opinion: around 70 per cent of Spaniards support legalizing gay marriage. This is despite opposition from the Catholic Church, which _____ protests against the new law throughout the legislative process. The law gives same sex unions _____ heterosexual ones, including _____, pensions and the right to adopt children.

The vote in the 350-seat Spanish Congress passed smoothly, with 187 in favor, 147 against ____ ____ ____ _____. Spain's Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero sponsored the law. The Catholic Church was _____ the decision. Supporters of the _____ upon hearing it had been passed. They _____ kissed outside the building, while _____. Gay rights activist Fernando Martinez was overcome with joy. He said: The _____ has come to an end. Our _____. The hypocrisy is over. Society, at last, recognizes us for who we are, normal people." The first marriages of gay couples _____ from July 15.

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 same sex marriage in Spain. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. INEQUALITY: Create a fact sheet about the discrimination and inequality faced by homosexuals and same sex couples in your society. What rights are they denied that "normal" citizens enjoy? Show your fact sheets to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. Tell him your opinions on his government passing same sex marriages into law. Read your letter to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| a. legalized | sanctioned |
| b. in line | consistent |
| c. vehement | zealous |
| d. legislative | judicial |
| e. inheritance | bequest |
| f. smoothly | without a hitch |
| g. ecstatic | euphoric |
| h. smarting | licking its wounds |
| i. deliriously | rapturously |
| j. hypocrisy | deceitfulness |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. becoming the fourth country | to do so |
| b. in line with | public opinion |
| c. voiced fierce and | vehement protests |
| d. inheritance | rights |
| e. the right to adopt | children |
| f. 147 against and four | abstentions |
| g. The Catholic Church was left | smarting from the decision |
| h. They deliriously | hugged and kissed |
| i. unjust | discrimination |
| j. Our humiliation | is over |

WHICH WORD?:

Spain legalizes same sex marriage

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