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Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

## **Bush under pressure over New Orleans**

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**3 September, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Bush under pressure over New Orleans**

**BNE:** President Bush is under pressure because of his lack of action after Hurricane Katrina. He has been unable to deal with the most basic issues in responding to one of America's greatest ever disasters. He was very defensive in front of TV cameras yesterday. He casually said he was "satisfied" with the national response to the tragedy. Many people in the affected areas are asking why it took him five days to visit the area. He did not even visit New Orleans, perhaps to avoid the anger and rage of the city's refugees.

In New Orleans, law and order have broken down. Armed gangs control the streets. Soldiers have shoot-to-kill orders to prevent looting. Tens of thousands of people are still stranded without food, water and medical supplies. Old people are quietly dying in the superdome, where they were told to take refuge from the hurricane. The world's only superpower seems powerless to cope with the growing crisis. Even though authorities predicted the scale of destruction, the response has been slower than that for a Third World disaster.

## **WARM-UPS**

**1. NEW ORLEANS:** You are a citizen of New Orleans. You have no food, water or electricity. You are a refugee in your own city. Talk to the other “refugees” in the class about life in the city.

**2. KATRINA:** Have you been following the news of Hurricane Katrina? What are your thoughts on what you see on television? Are you surprised? What do you think of President Bush’s leadership? In pairs / groups, decide what should be done about the following:

- President Bush
- Anarchy in New Orleans
- Relief efforts
- Looting
- The future of New Orleans
- Poor people dying
- The shoot to kill policy
- Floods in New Orleans

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

*President Bush Hurricane Katrina / disasters / TV cameras / New Orleans / rage / refugees / anarchy / armed gangs / looting / superpower / Third World*

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

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

**5. COMMENTS:** Here are some comments about New Orleans. What do you think about them?

- a. “President Bush has shown he has little leadership.”
- b. “People are dying while police are shooting looters. This is wrong.”
- c. “America cannot cope because too many troops are in Iraq.”
- d. “Help is slow in arriving because most refugees are poor and black.”
- e. “Tsunami victims received aid within 48 hours. Why do New Orleans citizens have to wait more than four days?”
- f. “The Government cut budgets to protect New Orleans from the sea. The money went to the war in Iraq.”
- g. “I never expected to see the Third World in America.”
- h. “Bush should resign.”

**6. QUICK DEBATE:** Students A think the US Government is doing enough to help the hurricane victims. Students B think the US Government is doing too little to help the hurricane victims. 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. President Bush is under pressure because of his lack of action.    | T / F |
| b. President Bush was defensive in front of TV cameras.               | T / F |
| c. President Bush said he was not satisfied with relief efforts.      | T / F |
| d. It took President Bush five days to visit affected areas.          | T / F |
| e. Soldiers have shoot-to-kill orders to prevent looting.             | T / F |
| f. Stranded people have enough food and water.                        | T / F |
| g. The world's only superpower seems powerless to cope.               | T / F |
| h. The Third World receives disaster relief quicker than New Orleans. | T / F |

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

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| a. lack        | shelter        |
| b. deal with   | content        |
| c. greatest    | stop           |
| d. satisfied   | handle         |
| e. avoid       | collapsed      |
| f. broken down | damage         |
| g. prevent     | absence        |
| h. take refuge | forecasted     |
| i. predicted   | biggest        |
| j. destruction | stay away from |

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

- |                                |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. President Bush is under     | ever disasters                   |
| b. He has been unable to deal  | from the hurricane               |
| c. one of America's greatest   | rage of the city's refugees      |
| d. he was "satisfied" with the | without food                     |
| e. to avoid the anger and      | orders to prevent looting        |
| f. law and order               | with the most basic issues       |
| g. Soldiers have shoot-to-kill | national response to the tragedy |
| h. people are still stranded   | pressure                         |
| i. take refuge                 | the growing crisis               |
| j. powerless to cope with      | have broken down                 |

## **WHILE READING / LISTENING**

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

### **Bush under pressure over New Orleans**

**BNE:** President Bush is \_\_\_\_\_ pressure because of his lack of action after Hurricane Katrina. He has been unable to deal with the most \_\_\_\_\_ issues in responding to one of America's greatest ever \_\_\_\_\_. He was very defensive in \_\_\_\_\_ of TV cameras yesterday. He casually said he was "satisfied" with the \_\_\_\_\_ response to the tragedy. Many people in the affected \_\_\_\_\_ are asking why it took him five days to visit the area. He did not even visit New Orleans, perhaps to \_\_\_\_\_ the anger and rage of the city's \_\_\_\_\_.

In New Orleans, \_\_\_\_\_ and order have broken down. Armed \_\_\_\_\_ control the streets. Soldiers have shoot-to-kill \_\_\_\_\_ to prevent looting. Tens of thousands of people are still \_\_\_\_\_ without food, water and medical supplies. Old people are quietly dying in the superdome, where they were told to take \_\_\_\_\_ from the hurricane. The world's only superpower seems powerless to \_\_\_\_\_ with the growing crisis. Even though authorities \_\_\_\_\_ the scale of destruction, the response has been slower than that for a Third World \_\_\_\_\_.

*avoid*  
*national*  
*disasters*  
*refugees*  
*under*  
*areas*  
*front*  
*basic*  
*orders*  
*predicted*  
*cope*  
*stranded*  
*law*  
*refuge*  
*gangs*  
*disaster*

## **AFTER READING / LISTENING**

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

- 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 your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. 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 "NEW ORLEANS" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about New Orleans and President Bush's response.

- 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:

- |             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| • under     | • broken down |
| • unable    | • looting     |
| • greatest  | • medical     |
| • satisfied | • superdome   |
| • five days | • powerless   |
| • rage      | • Third World |

## **DISCUSSION**

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

- a. What did you think when you first read this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What were your feelings after you read the article?
- d. Do you think President Bush is doing enough to help?
- e. Is President Bush a good leader when there is an emergency?
- f. Are you surprised by America's response to the disaster?
- g. Do you think the Iraq War has slowed down relief efforts?
- h. Do you think race is a factor in the government's slow response?
- i. There are more police trying to stop looters than trying to help dying people. What do you think about this?
- j. Do you think President Bush will survive?

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

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What should President Bush be doing now?
- d. Will you donate money to help the people in the affected areas?
- e. What are the most shocking images you have seen on television?
- f. Why do you think refugees in Niger received aid quicker than the people of New Orleans?
- g. What do you think life is like in New Orleans?
- h. Do you think authorities should have prepared better for the disaster?
- i. What message would you give to the people of New Orleans?
- 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**

**CITIZEN INTERVIEW:** In pairs / groups, write down questions you would like to ask an average New Orleans citizen about his/her experience of Katrina. The following ideas may be useful:

- The hurricane
- Water
- Electricity
- Food and water
- Destruction
- President George W. Bush
- Anarchy and looting
- Day five
- Evacuation
- The future

Take turns in role playing the interviewer and the New Orleans citizen. Change partners and discuss what you heard from previous partners.



## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **Bush under pressure over New Orleans**

**BNE:** President Bush is \_\_\_\_\_ pressure because of his lack of action after Hurricane Katrina. He has been unable to \_\_\_\_\_ with the most basic issues in responding to one of America's greatest ever disasters. He was very defensive in \_\_\_\_\_ of TV cameras yesterday. He casually said he was "satisfied" with the national \_\_\_\_\_ to the tragedy. Many people in the \_\_\_\_\_ areas are asking why it took him five days to visit the area. He did not even visit New Orleans, perhaps to \_\_\_\_\_ the anger and rage of the city's refugees.

In New Orleans, law \_\_\_\_\_ have broken down. Armed gangs control the streets. Soldiers have shoot-to-kill orders to prevent \_\_\_\_\_. Tens of thousands of people are still \_\_\_\_\_ without food, water and medical supplies. Old people are quietly dying in the superdome, where they were told to take \_\_\_\_\_ from the hurricane. The world's only superpower seems powerless to cope with the growing \_\_\_\_\_. Even though authorities predicted the \_\_\_\_\_ of destruction, the response has been slower than that for a Third World \_\_\_\_\_.

## **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 conditions in New Orleans. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. LETTER:** Write a letter to U.S. President George W. Bush. Tell him what you think of his response to the catastrophe in the Gulf States. Read your letters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

**4. DIARY / JOURNAL:** You are a resident of New Orleans. Write the diary / journal entry for one day in your life since Hurricane Katrina hit. Read what you wrote to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

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

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| a. lack        | absence        |
| b. deal with   | handle         |
| c. greatest    | biggest        |
| d. satisfied   | content        |
| e. avoid       | stay away from |
| f. broken down | collapsed      |
| g. prevent     | stop           |
| h. take refuge | shelter        |
| i. predicted   | forecasted     |
| j. destruction | damage         |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. President Bush is under     | pressure                         |
| b. He has been unable to deal  | with the most basic issues       |
| c. one of America's greatest   | ever disasters                   |
| d. he was "satisfied" with the | national response to the tragedy |
| e. to avoid the anger and      | rage of the city's refugees      |
| f. law and order               | have broken down                 |
| g. Soldiers have shoot-to-kill | orders to prevent looting        |
| h. people are still stranded   | without food                     |
| i. take refuge                 | from the hurricane               |
| j. powerless to cope with      | the growing crisis               |

### GAP FILL:

#### Bush under pressure over New Orleans

**BNE:** President Bush is **under** pressure because of his lack of action after Hurricane Katrina. He has been unable to deal with the most **basic** issues in responding to one of America's greatest ever **disasters**. He was very defensive in **front** of TV cameras yesterday. He casually said he was "satisfied" with the **national** response to the tragedy. Many people in the affected **areas** are asking why it took him five days to visit the area. He did not even visit New Orleans, perhaps to **avoid** the anger and rage of the city's **refugees**.

In New Orleans, **law** and order have broken down. Armed **gangs** control the streets. Soldiers have shoot-to-kill **orders** to prevent looting. Tens of thousands of people are still **stranded** without food, water and medical supplies. Old people are quietly dying in the superdome, where they were told to take **refuge** from the hurricane. The world's only superpower seems powerless to **cope** with the growing crisis. Even though authorities **predicted** the scale of destruction, the response has been slower than that for a Third World **disaster**.