

www.**Breaking News English**.com

Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

The Breaking News English.com Resource Book

“1,000 Ideas & Activities For Language Teachers”

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/book.html>

Africa gets first elected female president

URL: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0511/051112-liberia-e.html>

Contents

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

12 November, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Africa gets first elected female president

After a hard and closely fought election, Liberia's Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf will soon become Africa's first ever democratically elected female president. Ms. Johnson Sirleaf is Liberia's former finance minister and studied economics at Harvard University. With 97 percent of the vote already counted, she has 59.4 percent of the votes. This is an unbeatable lead over her rival George Weah, the former world soccer player of the year. Liberia's "Iron Lady" said: "Africa is ready for a female president....Women have the education, the character, the [ability], and the [honesty] to lead the nation."

Supporters of Mr. Weah are angry and are claiming the election was spoiled by fraud. There were violent clashes in front of polling stations and peacekeepers in riot gear fired tear gas to keep people calm. Mr. Weah has asked protestors to avoid using violence. More unrest may return Liberia to the civil war which recently killed a quarter of a million Liberians. Ms. Johnson-Sirleaf said she was not worried about the protests or the possibility of civil war. She said she was eager to "start the process of renewal and rebuilding". She also said she would make Africans proud of her performance.

WARM-UPS

1. I'M PRESIDENT: You are now president of your country (or of any other country). Walk around the class and talk to the other "presidents" about their jobs. What are their plans for the week? What are their biggest problems? What do they think of other presidents and world leaders?

2. WOMEN LEADERS: Are women or men better world leaders? Discuss this with your partner(s). Talk about the following female leaders:

- Angela Merkel (Germany)
- Helen Clark (New Zealand)
- Aung San Suu Kyi (Myanmar)
- Gloria Arroyo (Philippines)
- Chandrika Kumaratunga (Sri Lanka)
- Yuliya Tymoshenko (Ukraine)
- Margaret Thatcher (U.K.)
- Benazir Bhutto (Pakistan)
- Indira Gandhi (India)
- Golda Meir (Israel)

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

Elections / democracy / female leaders / Harvard / finance ministers / Liberia / George Weah / women / honesty / civil war / rebuilding / Africans / pride

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

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

5. AFRICAN LEADERS: Are African leaders different from other world leaders? What challenges do they face that other world leaders do not? Discuss this with your partner(s). Talk about the following African leaders:

- Hosni Mubarak (Egypt)
- Thabo Mbeki (South Africa)
- Robert Mugabe (Zimbabwe)
- Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf (Liberia)
- Joseph Kabila (Congo)
- Paul Kagame (Rwanda)
- Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria)
- Muammar al-Qaddafi (Libya)
- King Mswati III (Swaziland)
- Other

Write down one adjective that best describes each of the leaders. Explain to your partner(s) why you chose your adjectives. Decide on whose adjective for each leader is best.

6. HILLARY OR CONDI? Have a quick debate with your partner. Which woman would be best as the next U.S. President – Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice or New York senator Hillary Clinton? Students A choose Condi, Students B argue for Hillary.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- a. Liberia had a hard and closely fought election. T / F
- b. The Harvard-educated, ex-finance minister is set to become president. T / F
- c. Her main election rival was a former world soccer player of the year. T / F
- d. Liberia's new leader is nicknamed the "Gold Lady". T / F
- e. Her opponent has said the election was a fair contest. T / F
- f. Peacekeepers fired fear gas outside polling stations. T / F
- g. A recent civil war in Liberia saw over a million people die. T / F
- h. Liberia's new leader wants to make Africa proud of her performance. T / F

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

- | | |
|------------|-----------|
| a. fought | rule |
| b. female | fight |
| c. former | opponent |
| d. rival | woman |
| e. lead | angry |
| f. angry | concerned |
| g. clashes | contested |
| h. calm | anxious |
| i. worried | ex- |
| j. eager | peaceful |

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

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| a. a hard and closely | finance minister |
| b. Africa's first ever democratically | tear gas to keep people calm |
| c. Liberia's former | the nation |
| d. an unbeatable lead over | renewal and rebuilding |
| e. lead | of her performance |
| f. There were violent | fought election |
| g. peacekeepers in riot gear fired | a quarter of a million Liberians |
| h. the civil war which recently killed | her rival George Weah |
| i. start the process of | elected female president |
| j. make Africans proud | clashes |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

Africa gets first elected female president

After a hard and _____ fought election, Liberia's Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf will _____ become Africa's first ever democratically elected female president. Ms. Johnson Sirleaf is Liberia's _____ finance minister and studied economics at Harvard University. With 97 percent of the vote already _____, she has 59.4 percent of the votes. This is an unbeatable _____ over her rival George Weah, the former world soccer player of the year. Liberia's "Iron Lady" said: "Africa is _____ for a female president....Women have the education, the _____, the [ability], and the [honesty] to lead the _____."

Supporters of Mr. Weah are angry and are _____ the election was spoiled by fraud. There were _____ clashes in front of polling stations and peacekeepers in riot _____ fired tear gas to keep people calm. Mr. Weah has asked protestors to _____ using violence. More unrest may return Liberia to the _____ war which recently killed a quarter of a million Liberians. Ms. Johnson-Sirleaf said she was not worried about the _____ or the possibility of civil war. She said she was _____ to "start the process of renewal and rebuilding". She also said she would make Africans _____ of her performance.

ready
soon
counted
closely
lead
character
nation
former

civil
gear
proud
eager
claiming
avoid
violent
protests

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Africa gets first elected female president

After a hard and closely _____ election, Liberia's Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf will soon become Africa's first ever democratically _____ female president. Ms. Johnson Sirleaf is Liberia's _____ finance minister and studied economics at Harvard University. With 97 percent of _____ already counted, she has 59.4 percent of the votes. This is an unbeatable lead over her _____ George Weah, the _____ world soccer player of the year. Liberia's "Iron Lady" said: "Africa is ready for a female president...Women have the education, the _____, the [ability], and the [honesty] to lead the nation."

Supporters of Mr. Weah are angry and are _____ the election was spoiled by fraud. There were violent clashes in front of _____ stations and peacekeepers in _____ fired tear gas to keep people calm. Mr. Weah has asked protestors to avoid using violence. More _____ may return Liberia to the civil war which recently killed a quarter of a million Liberians. Ms. Johnson-Sirleaf said she was not worried about the _____ or the possibility of civil war. She said she was eager to "start the process of renewal and rebuilding". She also said she would make Africans _____ of her performance.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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 "FEMALE LEADER" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and other female world leaders.

- 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:

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| • closely | • angry |
| • first | • tear |
| • economics | • avoid |
| • counted | • civil war |
| • soccer | • eager |
| • women | • Africans |

DISCUSSION

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

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you know about Liberia?
- c. Have you been following news of the Liberian election?
- d. Do you think having a celebrity in an election makes it more interesting?
- e. What do you think of people who vote for soccer stars, beauty queens and bad actors?
- f. Do you think Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf will be a successful leader?
- g. Do you think America's next President will be female?
- h. Do you think it is important whether a country's leader is male or female?
- i. What do you think are Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's main challenges?
- j. What are your main challenges?

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 do you think of an African country electing a female leader for the first time?
- d. Do you think "Africa is ready for a female president"?
- e. Would you have voted for the soccer star or the economist?
- f. What do you think female leaders talk about when they meet at different world events?
- g. Would you prefer the leader of your country to be male or female?
- h. Which leaders can Africans be proud of?
- i. Are you proud of your country's leader? (Why / Why not?)
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

LEADER: There will be an election in your country soon. You believe you can win. In the column on the right, write down examples of how your experience, personality and ideas support the strong points in the column on the left. Politicians sometimes lie during election campaigns. You may also lie a little.

STRONG POINTS	ME
Leadership	
Great ideas	
Honesty	
Energy	
Strength	
Experience	
Ability	

- In pairs / groups, show each other what you wrote. Give feedback and advice to improve the strong points to make you all sound like better leaders.
- Join new groups. Tell each other why you would make the best leader. Discuss what was said and vote for your group's leader.
- Walk around the classroom campaigning for your group's leader.
- In groups discuss the candidates you heard and decide who sounded best.
- After you have finished, talk about lying politicians. What were the lies they told? Were these lies damaging?

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 Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. FEMALE LEADER: Make a poster about the female leader of a country (past or present). Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to Liberia's new leader Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. Tell her what you think of her election victory. Give her advice for the challenges she faces. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things or give similar advice?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|------------|-----------|
| a. fought | contested |
| b. female | woman |
| c. former | ex- |
| d. rival | opponent |
| e. lead | rule |
| f. angry | furious |
| g. clashes | fight |
| h. calm | peaceful |
| i. worried | concerned |
| j. eager | anxious |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| a. a hard and closely | fought election |
| b. Africa's first ever democratically | elected female president |
| c. Liberia's former | finance minister |
| d. an unbeatable lead over | her rival George Weah |
| e. lead | the nation |
| f. There were violent | clashes |
| g. peacekeepers in riot gear fired | tear gas to keep people calm |
| h. the civil war which recently killed | a quarter of a million Liberians |
| i. start the process of | renewal and rebuilding |
| j. make Africans proud | of her performance |

GAP FILL:

Africa gets first elected female president

After a hard and **closely** fought election, Liberia's Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf will **soon** become Africa's first ever democratically elected female president. Ms. Johnson Sirleaf is Liberia's **former** finance minister and studied economics at Harvard University. With 97 percent of the vote already **counted**, she has 59.4 percent of the votes. This is an unbeatable **lead** over her rival George Weah, the former world soccer player of the year. Liberia's "Iron Lady" said: "Africa is **ready** for a female president....Women have the education, the **character**, the [ability], and the [honesty] to lead the **nation**."

Supporters of Mr. Weah are angry and are **claiming** the election was spoiled by fraud. There were **violent** clashes in front of polling stations and peacekeepers in riot **gear** fired tear gas to keep people calm. Mr. Weah has asked protestors to **avoid** using violence. More unrest may return Liberia to the **civil** war which recently killed a quarter of a million Liberians. Ms. Johnson-Sirleaf said she was not worried about the **protests** or the possibility of civil war. She said she was **eager** to "start the process of renewal and rebuilding". She also said she would make Africans **proud** of her performance.