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Britney Spears admits baby driving mistake

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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

11 February, 2006

THE ARTICLE

Britney Spears admits baby driving mistake

Pop singer Britney Spears is in the headlines for the wrong reasons again. Photographers snapped her driving her car with her four-month-old son on her lap. Ms. Spears has admitted that her actions were dangerous. However, she has blamed the paparazzi for being aggressive toward her. She said the photographers follow her every move. She added that she feels she is always trying to escape from them. Ms. Spears said she put her son on her lap to protect him from the media. The agency that took the pics said the "photographers exhibited no aggressive behavior."

Spears may have to go to court for breaking traffic safety laws. California law requires children to sit in a child-safety seat until they are at least 6 years old or weigh 27 kg. A police spokesperson said Ms. Spears knew this and may have to pay a penalty. He said a deputy sheriff had already visited Spears' Malibu home. The Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services asked the police to question Ms. Spears. The group is angry at the dangerous example set by the singer. The matter is now in the hands of the LA Police Department.

WARM-UPS

1. CELEBRITIES: Write down the name of some celebrities who have broken the law. Talk about these in pairs / groups. What punishment did they receive? Was it the same as a “normal” person would get? Do you think famous people are treated differently under the law?

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

Pop singers / headlines / driving / paparazzi / steering wheels / photos / traffic safety laws / child car seats / sheriffs / Los Angeles / setting good examples

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

3. CAR SAFETY: Which of these points are laws in your country? Would you like to see any of them tightened up?

- Child seats
- Children sitting in the front
- Smoking in a car and children
- Speed and children
- Stickers to warn other drivers
- The number of children in a car
- Seat belts
- Other

4. OPINIONS: Do you agree with these opinions on celebrities and the law?

- a. Celebrities should be treated exactly the same as everyone else under the law.
- b. Celebrities have a duty to set a good example to others.
- c. Famous people are under different pressures and should be treated differently.
- d. Too many celebrities don't go to prison because they are rich and famous.
- e. Celebrity lawbreakers should get bigger punishments to set an example.
- f. Famous people should work to encourage us to keep to the law.
- g. Britney Spears had no excuse to break the law by putting her son on her lap.

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

6. PAPARAZZI: You are a famous star. Everyone in the street recognizes you. The paparazzi constantly follow you and photograph your every move. Talk to the other “stars” in the class about being famous. What do you think of the paparazzi? In what ways is your life not normal?

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Britney Spears allowed her baby son to drive her car at 80 kph. | T / F |
| b. Ms. Spears has admitted her actions were dangerous. | T / F |
| c. Ms. Spears said a photographer tried to move her. | T / F |
| d. A photo agency said its photographers were not aggressive. | T / F |
| e. In California, children up to the age of six must use child seats in cars. | T / F |
| f. Los Angeles police visited Ms. Spears at her home after the incident. | T / F |
| g. A family group has said Ms. Spears' actions were understandable. | T / F |
| h. The LA Police Department said the matter is now finished. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| a. headlines | confessed |
| b. snapped | quiz |
| c. admitted | photographs |
| d. protect | violating |
| e. pics | fine |
| f. breaking | photographed |
| g. penalty | furious |
| h. question | news |
| i. angry | incident |
| j. matter | shield |

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

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. in the headlines | being aggressive toward her |
| b. Ms. Spears has admitted that | a penalty |
| c. she has blamed the paparazzi for | her every move |
| d. the photographers follow | traffic safety laws |
| e. photographers exhibited | set by the singer |
| f. go to court for breaking | for the wrong reasons |
| g. California law requires children | of the LA Police Department |
| h. pay | no aggressive behavior |
| i. angry at the dangerous example | to sit in a child-safety seat |
| j. The matter is now in the hands | her actions were dangerous |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

Britney Spears admits baby driving mistake

Pop singer Britney Spears is in the _____ for the wrong reasons again. Photographers _____ her driving her car with her four-month-old son on her lap. Ms. Spears has _____ that her actions were dangerous. However, she has _____ the paparazzi for being aggressive toward her. She said the photographers follow her every _____. She added that she feels she is always trying to _____ from them. Ms. Spears said she put her son on her lap to _____ him from the media. The agency that took the pics said the "photographers _____ no aggressive behavior."

escape
admitted
move
headlines
exhibited
snapped
blamed
protect

Spears may have to go to court for _____ traffic safety laws. California law _____ children to sit in a child-safety seat until they are at _____ 6 years old or weigh 27 kg. A police spokesperson said Ms. Spears knew this and may have to pay a _____. He said a deputy sheriff had already visited Spears' Malibu home. The Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services asked the police to _____ Ms. Spears. The group is angry at the dangerous example _____ by the singer. The _____ is now in the _____ of the LA Police Department.

question
matter
requires
penalty
set
breaking
hands
least

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Britney Spears admits baby driving mistake

Pop singer Britney Spears is in the _____ for the wrong reasons again. Photographers snapped her driving her car with her four-month-old son on her lap. Ms. Spears has _____ that her actions were dangerous. However, she has blamed the paparazzi for being _____ toward her. She said the photographers follow her every move. She added that she feels she is always trying to _____ from them. Ms. Spears said she put her son on her _____ to protect him from the media. The agency that took the pics said the "photographers exhibited no aggressive _____."

Spears may have to go to court for _____ traffic safety laws. California law requires children to sit in a child-safety seat until they are at _____ 6 years old or weigh 27 kg. A police spokesperson said Ms. Spears knew this and may have to pay a _____. He said a deputy sheriff had already visited Spears' Malibu home. The Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services asked the police to _____ Ms. Spears. The group is angry at the dangerous example _____ by the singer. The matter is now in the _____ of the LA Police Department.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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 activity. 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 "CHILD SEAT" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about holidays and sick days.

- 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:

- | | |
|----------|------------|
| • wrong | • court |
| • lap | • at least |
| • blamed | • penalty |
| • move | • question |
| • media | • example |
| • pics | • hands |

DISCUSSION

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

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Do you like Britney Spears?
- c. What do you think of celebrities who break the law?
- d. What are the child safety laws for cars in your country?
- e. Do you think the laws should be stricter?
- f. What punishment do you think Britney Spears should get?
- g. What punishment should people receive if children are injured or killed because they are not in child seats?
- h. What do you think of the paparazzi?
- i. Do you think the photographers are to blame in this story?
- j. Do you think celebrities should show more patience with the media?

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. Would you like to be very famous and be followed by photographers?
- d. Do you think child safety seats are essential?
- e. Do you think it is right for stars and celebrities to get special treatment under the law?
- f. What other laws to protect children would you like passed?
- g. Do you think all cars should be fitted with seats to protect children?
- h. Do you think it is becoming safer or more dangerous to drive a car?
- i. Do you think you would have acted the same if you were Britney Spears?
- 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

CHILD SAFETY: In pairs / groups, think of new laws to make it safer for children to be in cars. Create the penalties for people breaking these laws.

	LAW	PENALTY
Child seats		
Children sitting in the front		
Smoking in a car and children		
Speed and children		
Stickers to warn other drivers		
The number of children in a car		
Seat belts		

Change partners / groups. Tell each other your laws and penalties. Give each other feedback on them.

Return to your original partner(s) and share what you heard from your earlier partner(s).

Conduct a class survey to find out what the most common laws and penalties were.

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 about previous occasions on which Britney Spears has hit the headlines. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. SURVEY: Conduct your own "child seat" survey among your family and friends. Report your findings to your partner(s) in your next class. Did you all write about similar things?

4. CAR SAFETY: Write an essay on your thoughts about car safety and children. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| a. headlines | news |
| b. snapped | photographed |
| c. admitted | confessed |
| d. protect | shield |
| e. pics | photographs |
| f. breaking | violating |
| g. penalty | fine |
| h. question | quiz |
| i. angry | furious |
| j. matter | incident |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. in the headlines | for the wrong reasons |
| b. Ms. Spears has admitted that | her actions were dangerous |
| c. she has blamed the paparazzi for | being aggressive toward her |
| d. the photographers follow | her every move |
| e. photographers exhibited | no aggressive behavior |
| f. go to court for breaking | traffic safety laws |
| g. California law requires children | to sit in a child-safety seat |
| h. pay | a penalty |
| i. angry at the dangerous example | set by the singer |
| j. The matter is now in the hands | of the LA Police Department |

GAP FILL:

Britney Spears admits baby driving mistake

Pop singer Britney Spears is in the **headlines** for the wrong reasons again. Photographers **snapped** her driving her car with her four-month-old son on her lap. Ms. Spears has **admitted** that her actions were dangerous. However, she has **blamed** the paparazzi for being aggressive toward her. She said the photographers follow her every **move**. She added that she feels she is always trying to **escape** from them. Ms. Spears said she put her son on her lap to **protect** him from the media. The agency that took the pics said the "photographers **exhibited** no aggressive behavior."

Spears may have to go to court for **breaking** traffic safety laws. California law **requires** children to sit in a child-safety seat until they are at **least** 6 years old or weigh 27 kg. A police spokesperson said Ms. Spears knew this and may have to pay a **penalty**. He said a deputy sheriff had already visited Spears' Malibu home. The Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services asked the police to **question** Ms. Spears. The group is angry at the dangerous example **set** by the singer. The **matter** is now in the **hands** of the LA Police Department.