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US school let students fight in metal cage

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THE ARTICLE

A school in Dallas, Texas is under fire for allowing students to settle disputes using fist fights. South Oak Cliff high school, known locally as 'Sock,' let students take part in bare-knuckle fights to sort out their arguments. This happened with the knowledge and consent of the school principal Donald Moten. A report investigating the fights said that one time, Mr. Moten told his staff to put students in a cage to "let them duke it out," which is Texas talk for fight. The school used a steel and wire cage in the boys' changing room for the fights. They also used the cage to sort out differences between unruly students. The report says that on another occasion, a school security guard tried to fight a pupil, but the principal stopped it.

The cage fighting took place between 2003 and 2005. According to the report, the principal, Mr. Moten, "knew of the practice, allowed it to go on for a time, and failed to report it". A counsellor at the school was shocked by what he saw. He was a professional trained to deal with student issues and problems. He said: "It was gladiator-style entertainment for the staff. They were taking these boys downstairs to fight. And it was [OK'd] by the principal and security." Mr. Moten was fired in 2006 but denies all the allegations against him. He said: "That's barbaric. You can't do that at a high school. You can't do that anywhere. Ain't nothing to comment on. It never did happen. I never put a stop to anything because it never happened."

WARM-UPS

1. FIGHTING: Walk around the class and talk to other students about fighting. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share your findings.

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

settling disputes / fist fights / school principals / arguments / cages / unruly students / counselors / being shocked / student issues / gladiators / allegations / barbaric

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. SCHOOLS: Are / Were there problems in your school? Complete the table. Talk about what you wrote with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you found out.

Problem	How it affected you	What the school did about it
Fighting		
Bullying		
Unruly students		
Poor teaching		
Poor facilities		
Class sizes		

4. DISPUTES: Students A **strongly** believe it is best to let students resolve disputes on their own; Students B **strongly** believe it is best to involve counsellors to sort out disputes between students. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. BEHAVIOUR: What do you think about students' behaviour? Rate these things from 10 (= totally unacceptable) to 1 (= this is OK). Change partners and talk about your rating.

_____ fighting	_____ bringing alcohol to school
_____ not doing homework	_____ bullying
_____ being absent from class	_____ not wearing the school uniform
_____ talking while the teacher is talking	_____ cheating

6. FIGHT: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'fight'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Students in Texas had a fight and set a school on fire. | T / F |
| b. The principal of a school in Texas allowed students to fight in a cage. | T / F |
| c. The cage was hidden in a forest behind the school. | T / F |
| d. The article says the principal got security guards to fight students. | T / F |
| e. The fighting in the cages stopped late last year. | T / F |
| f. A school counsellor said the fighting was to entertain the school staff. | T / F |
| g. The principal of the school lost his job in 2006. | T / F |
| h. The principal believes the story about fighting at his school is all lies. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. under fire | a. dismissed |
| 2. disputes | b. speak about |
| 3. sort out | c. student |
| 4. unruly | d. arguments |
| 5. pupil | e. happened |
| 6. took place | f. solve |
| 7. allowed | g. uncontrollable |
| 8. fired | h. inhuman |
| 9. barbaric | i. in trouble |
| 10. comment on | j. let |

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

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. A school in Dallas, Texas is under | a. out their arguments |
| 2. settle disputes | b. by the principal |
| 3. take part in bare-knuckle fights to sort | c. by what he saw |
| 4. sort out differences between | d. using fist fights |
| 5. a school security guard tried to fight | e. fire |
| 6. The cage fighting took | f. entertainment |
| 7. A counsellor at the school was shocked | g. place between 2003 and 2005 |
| 8. It was gladiator-style | h. unruly students |
| 9. ... it was OK'd | i. against him |
| 10. ...denies all the allegations | j. a pupil |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

A school in Dallas, Texas is _____ fire for allowing students to settle disputes using fist fights. South Oak Cliff high school, known locally as 'Sock,' let students take _____ in bare-knuckle fights to _____ out their arguments. This happened with the knowledge and _____ of the school principal Donald Moten. A report investigating the fights said that one time, Mr. Moten told his staff to put students in a cage to "let them duke it out," which is Texas _____ for fight. The school used a steel and _____ cage in the boys' changing room for the fights. They also used the cage to sort out differences between _____ students. The report says that on another occasion, a school security guard tried to fight a _____, but the principal stopped it.

The cage fighting took _____ between 2003 and 2005. According to the report, the principal, Mr. Moten, "knew of the practice, allowed it to go on for a time, and _____ to report it". A counsellor at the school was shocked by what he saw. He was a professional trained to _____ with student issues and problems. He said: "It was gladiator-_____ entertainment for the staff. They were taking these boys downstairs to fight. And it was [OK'd] by the principal and security." Mr. Moten was fired in 2006 but _____ all the allegations against him. He said: "That's _____. You can't do that at a high school. You can't do that anywhere. Ain't nothing to _____ on. It never did happen. I never put a _____ to anything because it never happened."

unruly

part

consent

under

wire

sort

pupil

talk

comment

style

failed

stop

denies

place

deal

barbaric

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

A school in Dallas, Texas is _____ allowing students to settle disputes using fist fights. South Oak Cliff high school, known locally as 'Sock,' let students _____ bare-knuckle fights to sort out their arguments. This happened with the knowledge and consent of the school principal Donald Moten. A report investigating the fights _____ time, Mr. Moten told his staff to put students in a cage to "let them duke it out," which is Texas _____. The school used a steel and wire cage in the boys' changing room for the fights. They also used the cage _____ differences between unruly students. The report says that on another occasion, a school security guard _____ a pupil, but the principal stopped it.

The cage fighting took place between 2003 and 2005. According to the report, the principal, Mr. Moten, "_____ practice, allowed _____ a time, and failed to report it". A counsellor at the school was shocked by what he saw. He was a professional trained _____ student issues and problems. He said: "It was gladiator-style entertainment for the staff. They were taking these boys downstairs to fight. And it was [OK'd] by the principal and security." Mr. Moten was fired in 2006 but _____ allegations against him. He said: "That's barbaric. You can't _____ high school. You can't do that anywhere. Ain't nothing to comment on. It never did happen. I never _____ anything because it never happened."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

cage	fight

- 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. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• under• locally• consent• talk• unruly• guard	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• practice• shocked• style• denies• fired• stop
---	--

STUDENT FIGHTING SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about fighting in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR DISCUSSION

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

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'fighting'?
- c) Do you think fist fights are a good way for students to settle disputes?
- d) How did you settle your disputes when you were at school?
- e) Did you see a lot of fighting at school?
- f) What did the unruly students in your school do?
- g) Were you a well-behaved student at school?
- h) Do you think the principal should be arrested?
- i) What would you do if a school principal asked you to fight in a cage?
- j) Is student behaviour getting better or worse?

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STUDENT BEHAVIOUR DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What shocking things went on at your school?
- c) Do you think using counsellors is the best way to resolve disputes?
- d) Do you think teachers at the school were happy with these fights taking place?
- e) If the principal says it's all untrue, do you think he should sue someone?
- f) What was the worst thing you did at school?
- g) What's the best way to deal with unruly students?
- h) Is bad behaviour always the student's fault or is the school sometimes to blame?
- i) What area of student behaviour would you like to see improvements in?
- j) What questions would you ask the school principal Donald Moten?

LANGUAGE

A school in Dallas, Texas is (1) _____ fire for allowing students to settle disputes using fist fights. South Oak Cliff high school, known (2) _____ as 'Sock,' let students take part in bare-knuckle fights to sort out their arguments. This happened with the knowledge and consent (3) _____ the school principal Donald Moten. A report investigating the fights said that one time, Mr. Moten told his (4) _____ to put students in a cage to "let them duke it out," which is Texas talk for fight. The school used a steel and wire cage in the boys' changing room (5) _____ the fights. They also used the cage to sort out differences between unruly students. The report says that on (6) _____ occasion, a school security guard tried to fight a pupil, but the principal stopped it.

The cage fighting (7) _____ place between 2003 and 2005. According to the report, the principal, Mr. Moten, "knew (8) _____ the practice, allowed it to go on for a time, and failed to report it". A counsellor at the school was shocked by what he saw. He was a professional trained to (9) _____ with student issues and problems. He said: "It was gladiator-(10) _____ entertainment for the staff. They were taking these boys downstairs to fight. And it was [OK'd] by the principal and security." Mr. Moten was fired in 2006 but denies all the allegations (11) _____ him. He said: "That's barbaric. You can't do that at a high school. You can't do that anywhere. Ain't nothing to comment (12) _____. It never did happen. I never put a stop to anything because it never happened."

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. | (a) over | (b) about | (c) around | (d) under |
| 2. | (a) local | (b) locals | (c) locally | (d) locale |
| 3. | (a) by | (b) of | (c) with | (d) to |
| 4. | (a) staff | (b) stiff | (c) stuff | (d) stuffed |
| 5. | (a) by | (b) to | (c) for | (d) over |
| 6. | (a) others | (b) the others | (c) other | (d) another |
| 7. | (a) did | (b) took | (c) got | (d) made |
| 8. | (a) of | (b) on | (c) at | (d) by |
| 9. | (a) deals | (b) deal | (c) dealt | (d) dealing |
| 10. | (a) stylish | (b) styles | (c) style | (d) stylist |
| 11. | (a) against | (b) for | (c) up | (d) in |
| 12. | (a) out | (b) of | (c) in | (d) on |

WRITING:

Write about **fighting** for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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 out more about student behaviour in different countries around the world. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. BEHAVIOUR: Make a poster about different kinds of bad behaviour at school. What punishment or action should each receive? Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. FIGHTS: Write a magazine article about the cage fighting at the school. Include imaginary interviews with students who hated it.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to a school principal. Ask him/her three questions about student behaviour in his/her school. Give him/her three ideas on what (s)he should do to improve student behaviour. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. under fire | a. in trouble |
| 2. disputes | b. arguments |
| 3. sort out | c. solve |
| 4. unruly | d. uncontrollable |
| 5. pupil | e. student |
| 6. took place | f. happened |
| 7. allowed | g. let |
| 8. fired | h. dismissed |
| 9. barbaric | i. inhuman |
| 10. comment on | j. speak about |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. A school in Dallas, Texas is under | a. fire |
| 2. settle disputes | b. using fist fights |
| 3. take part in bare-knuckle fights to sort | c. out their arguments |
| 4. sort out differences between | d. unruly students |
| 5. a school security guard tried to fight | e. a pupil |
| 6. The cage fighting took | f. place between 2003 and 2005 |
| 7. A counsellor at the school was shocked | g. by what he saw |
| 8. It was gladiator-style | h. entertainment |
| 9. ... it was OK'd | i. by the principal |
| 10. ...denies all the allegations | j. against him |

GAP FILL:

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LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - c 3 - b 4 - a 5 - c 6 - d 7 - b 8 - a 9 - b 10 - c 11 - a 12 - d