

## Newly-crowned Miss America suffers racist abuse

19<sup>th</sup> September, 2013



America's newly-crowned beauty queen Nina Davuluri has been the subject of a torrent of racist abuse. She is the first woman of Indian descent to be crowned Miss America, but was greeted with a

deluge of insults after she won the pageant on Sunday night. Many people left messages on Twitter questioning why a "non-American" had become Miss America. Many tweeters misidentified her as an Arab, while others said she looked like a terrorist. One tweeter said: "Well they just picked a Muslim for Miss America. That must've made Obama happy. Maybe he had a vote." Ms Davuluri was born in New York and grew up in Oklahoma and Michigan. She was raised following the Hindu faith.

The media in India has been full of stories on the "shocking tweets". The Times of India wrote: "The tiara had barely been placed on her head and the customary tears of joy had just emerged when racist taunts erupted on social media, marring the moment of triumph for the first ever Miss America of Indian origin." Ms Davuluri brushed aside the negative comments and said she was not bothered what a minority of people thought. She said: "I have to rise above that. I always viewed myself as first and foremost American." She added: "I'm so happy this organization has embraced diversity." She added: "I'm thankful there are children watching at home who can finally relate to a new Miss America."

Sources: Sky / BBC / New York Daily News

### Writing

People who post racist comments online should go to prison. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

beauty queen / racist abuse / of Indian descent / insults / terrorist / grew up / Hindu / media / shocking / tears / joy / social media / triumph / minority / American / diversity

### True / False

- a) Beauty queens racially abused the new Miss America at a pageant. T / F
- b) The new Miss America was born in Mumbai, India. T / F
- c) On Twitter, people asked why a foreigner was now Miss America. T / F
- d) Ms Davuluri grew up practicing the Islamic religion. T / F
- e) The Indian press published many stories about the abuse. T / F
- f) A newspaper said the abuse began before the winner's tears had dried. T / F
- g) Ms Davuluri took the negative comments to heart. T / F
- h) Ms Davuluri is happy kids get to see a different kind of Miss America. T / F

### Synonym Match

- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. torrent   | a. spoiling   |
| 2. descent   | b. appalling  |
| 3. pageant   | c. origin     |
| 4. picked    | d. broke out  |
| 5. following | e. flood      |
| 6. shocking  | f. welcomed   |
| 7. barely    | g. chose      |
| 8. erupted   | h. practising |
| 9. marring   | i. hardly     |
| 10. embraced | j. contest    |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you think about beauty contests?
- c) Should Miss America have blonde hair and blue eyes?
- d) Would a winner of Korean, Cuban, Nigerian or Turkish origin also be subjected to such abuse?
- e) Why do people say Nina is "Non-American" when she was born and raised in the USA?
- f) Is race and colour a big issue in the USA?
- g) What do you think of an Indian-American becoming Miss America?
- h) What should Nina do to promote greater racial awareness and understanding?

## Phrase Match

1. the subject of a torrent
2. is the first woman
3. greeted with a deluge of
4. tweeters misidentified
5. She was raised following
6. The tiara had barely been
7. the customary tears
8. marring the moment
9. not bothered what a minority
10. embraced

- a. placed on her head
- b. of people thought
- c. of racist abuse
- d. of Indian descent
- e. of triumph
- f. her as an Arab
- g. diversity
- h. the Hindu faith
- i. of joy
- j. insults

## Discussion – Student B

- a) What should happen to the tweeters of racial abuse?
- b) Are beauty pageants a thing of the past?
- c) Is Nina right to brush the comments aside?
- d) Have you experienced any racial abuse?
- e) Is racism slowly disappearing or getting worse?
- f) Why is it important to embrace diversity?
- g) What's the best way to deal with racism?
- h) What questions would you like to ask Nina?

## Spelling

1. a orrkten of racist abuse
2. of Indian tneecsd
3. a queeld of insults
4. Many tweeters nddiemifetiis her
5. looked like a tostirrer
6. That vs'metu made Obama happy
7. The iarat had barely been placed on her head
8. racist tuntas
9. the moment of hrmtupi
10. a oytinmri of people
11. first and orsomfte
12. rbcamdee diversity

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. c	3. j	4. g	5. h
6. b	7. i	8. d	9. a	10. f

## Role Play

### Role A – Looks

You think looks are the biggest factor in deciding a beauty contest. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their factors. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): intelligence, a sense of humour or confidence.

### Role B – Intelligence

You think intelligence is biggest factor in deciding a beauty contest. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their factors. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): looks, a sense of humour or confidence.

### Role C – Sense of humour

You think a sense of humour is biggest factor in deciding a beauty contest. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their factors. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): intelligence, looks or confidence.

### Role D – Confidence

You think confidence is biggest factor in deciding a beauty contest. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their factors. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): intelligence, a sense of humour or looks.

## Speaking - Beauty

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the most beautiful at the top at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- figure
- hair
- smile
- legs
- eyes
- hands
- teeth
- skin

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.