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German election turmoil

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20 September, 2005

THE ARTICLE

German election turmoil

BNE: The election is over but who is Germany's new leader? This is the biggest unanswered question in Europe's largest and most powerful country. The voting figures suggest the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) should take power. It won the largest slice of the vote with 35.2 percent against 34.3 percent for Gerhard Schroeder's Social Democrats. However, Chancellor Schroeder is refusing to admit defeat and is claiming victory for himself, even though he clearly lost the election.

Many members of the CDU may be quietly blaming their leader Angela Merkel for not winning the election by a bigger margin. She had a 21 percent lead in the polls at the start of the campaign. She was predicted to become Germany's first female chancellor. Many hoped she would improve the German economy, which has been in bad shape for the past seven years. However, Ms Merkel's campaign was full of problems. Her political future is now uncertain, even though she won the election.

WARM-UPS

1. LOSING: How do you feel about losing? Do you accept defeat easily or are you a sore loser? In pairs / groups, discuss your feelings about losing:

- a. An argument with a good friend
- b. An argument with someone you don't like
- c. A bet
- d. A game or race
- e. Your favorite sports team losing a final or a big game
- f. Your favorite political party losing in an election or referendum
- g. A job
- h. Other

2. GERHARD SCHROEDER: In pairs / groups, find out as much as you can about German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. Change partners often. After you have finished, sit with your partner(s) and share your information.

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

Germany / elections / unanswered questions / leaders / Chancellor Schroeder / Angela Merkel / losing / blame / female leaders / being in bad shape / the future

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

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

5. UNANSWERED QUESTIONS: The world is full of unanswered questions – Who killed JFK? Did George W. Bush know Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction? Where is Osama bin Laden? Are there really aliens? Write down some questions you would like answers to. Ask different students your questions.

6. ELECTION OPINIONS: Do you agree with these opinions on the German election? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- a. Germany will soon become the strongest economy in Europe.
- b. Gerhard Schroeder lost. He should accept defeat.
- c. Uncertainty over who is chancellor will upset the European economy.
- d. Germany needs a change of leadership.
- e. Angela Merkel is the best person to change Germany's economy.
- f. Germany's economy will become worse and worse.
- g. Gerhard Schroeder and Angela Merkel should share power.
- h. Schroeder is not respecting German voters. More people voted for Merkel.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. The German election has ended in confusion with no clear winner. | T / F |
| b. Angela Merkel's CDU party won the largest slice of the vote. | T / F |
| c. Germany is Europe's largest and most powerful country. | T / F |
| d. Chancellor Schroeder said he would admit defeat in a few days. | T / F |
| e. Everybody in the CDU party is congratulating Angela Merkel. | T / F |
| f. She is predicted to become Germany's second female chancellor. | T / F |
| g. Germany's economy has been in bad shape for seven years. | T / F |
| h. Angela Merkel's political future is certain. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| a. over | condition |
| b. suggest | share |
| c. slice | straighten out |
| d. admit | secretly |
| e. clearly | finished |
| f. quietly | accept |
| g. bigger | unclear |
| h. improve | indicate |
| i. shape | greater |
| j. uncertain | obviously |

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

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. The election is | defeat |
| b. the biggest unanswered | for the past seven years |
| c. take | blaming their leader |
| d. refusing to admit | by a bigger margin |
| e. he clearly lost the | power |
| f. quietly | over |
| g. winning the election | now uncertain |
| h. polls at the start | question |
| i. in bad shape | of the campaign |
| j. Her political future is | election |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

German election turmoil

BNE: The election is _____ but who is Germany's new leader? This is the biggest unanswered _____ in Europe's largest and most _____ country. The voting _____ suggest the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) should take power. It won the largest _____ of the vote with 35.2 percent _____ 34.3 percent for Gerhard Schroeder's Social Democrats. However, Chancellor Schroeder is _____ to admit defeat and is claiming victory for himself, even though he clearly _____ the election.

powerful
against
over
refusing
figures
question
lost
slice

Many _____ of the CDU may be quietly _____ their leader Angela Merkel for not winning the election by a bigger _____. She had a 21 percent lead in the _____ at the start of the campaign. She was _____ to become Germany's first female chancellor. Many hoped she would _____ the German economy, which has been in _____ shape for the past seven years. However, Ms Merkel's campaign was full of problems. Her political _____ is now uncertain, even though she won the election.

improve
margin
predicted
future
members
bad
polls
blaming

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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 "GERMAN ELECTION" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about Germany and the election turmoil.

- 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:

- over
- unanswered
- suggest
- slice
- refusing
- clearly
- quietly
- margin
- lead
- improve
- problems
- future

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 adjectives describe your feelings about Germany's election turmoil?
- d. Are elections in your company confusing?
- e. What do you think of Gerhard Schroeder?
- f. What do you think of Angela Merkel?
- g. Do you think Gerhard Schroeder should admit defeat?
- h. Why do you think Germany's economy is so weak?
- i. Why is it bad for Germany to be leaderless?
- j. Have you ever refused to admit defeat?

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. Do you think Angela Merkel should resign as her party's leader?
- d. How did Angela Merkel lose her 21 percent lead so quickly?
- e. Many people say Germany is not ready for a female chancellor. What do you think?
- f. What kind of policies will help Germany to recover?
- g. Has your country's economy ever been in bad shape?
- h. When do you think Germany will become strong again?
- i. Is your future certain or uncertain?
- 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?

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

German election turmoil

BNE: The election ____ ____ but who is Germany's new leader? This is the biggest _____ question in Europe's largest and most powerful country. The voting figures suggest the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) should _____ power. It won the largest _____ of the vote with 35.2 percent against 34.3 percent for Gerhard Schroeder's Social Democrats. However, Chancellor Schroeder is refusing to _____ defeat and is claiming victory for himself, even though he _____ lost the election.

Many members of the CDU may be quietly _____ their leader Angela Merkel for not winning the election by a bigger _____. She had a 21 percent lead in the polls at the _____ of the campaign. She was predicted to become Germany's first female chancellor. Many hoped she would _____ the German economy, which has _____ ____ bad shape for the past seven years. However, Ms Merkel's campaign was full of problems. Her political future is now uncertain, even _____ she won the election.

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 the German election. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. THE PLAYERS: Make a poster describing Gerhard Schroeder and Angela Merkel. Try to explain some of their policies and differences. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

4. DIARY / JOURNAL: You are Gerhard Schroeder or Angela Merkel. Write your diary / journal entry for the day of the election. Read your diary / journal to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| a. over | finished |
| b. suggest | indicate |
| c. slice | share |
| d. admit | accept |
| e. clearly | obviously |
| f. quietly | secretly |
| g. bigger | greater |
| h. improve | straighten out |
| i. shape | condition |
| j. uncertain | unclear |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. The election is | over |
| b. the biggest unanswered | question |
| c. take | power |
| d. refusing to admit | defeat |
| e. he clearly lost the | election |
| f. quietly | blaming their leader |
| g. winning the election | by a bigger margin |
| h. polls at the start | of the campaign |
| i. in bad shape | for the past seven years |
| j. Her political future is | now uncertain |

GAP FILL:

German election turmoil

BNE: The election is **over** but who is Germany's new leader? This is the biggest unanswered **question** in Europe's largest and most **powerful** country. The voting **figures** suggest the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) should take power. It won the largest **slice** of the vote with 35.2 percent **against** 34.3 percent for Gerhard Schroeder's Social Democrats. However, Chancellor Schroeder is **refusing** to admit defeat and is claiming victory for himself, even though he clearly **lost** the election.

Many **members** of the CDU may be quietly **blaming** their leader Angela Merkel for not winning the election by a bigger **margin**. She had a 21 percent lead in the **polls** at the start of the campaign. She was **predicted** to become Germany's first female chancellor. Many hoped she would **improve** the German economy, which has been in **bad** shape for the past seven years. However, Ms Merkel's campaign was full of problems. Her political **future** is now uncertain, even though she won the election.