

www.**Breaking News English**.com

Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

UK hospital bans cooing at babies

URL: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0509/050928-babies.html>

Today's contents

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

Buy the Breaking News English.com Resource Book
"1,000 Ideas & Activities For Language Teachers"
\$9.99

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

28 September, 2005

THE ARTICLE

UK hospital bans cooing at babies

BNE: A row has erupted in Britain over whether the rights of newborn babies are infringed by the cooing and touching of doting relatives and friends. The Calderdale Royal Hospital in the town of Halifax has banned visitors from cooing at newborns over fears their human rights are being breached and to reduce the risk of infection. Debbie Lawson, the hospital's neo-natal spokeswoman, said the new measure was necessary to uphold respect, dignity and privacy for all patients. She told reporters: "Cooing should be a thing of the past...these are little people with the same rights as you or me." She added: "Infection control was also a key part of the message as the unit deals with very small babies with very vulnerable immune systems."

The new baby safeguards have been met with stinging criticism from politicians and maternity experts. The British government's representative for the region, Linda Riordan, said the measures were "bureaucracy gone mad". She told the local *Halifax Courier* newspaper it was the mother's decision to determine who had cooing rights. New mothers at the hospital expressed astonishment and were bemused that visitors could not ask questions about their babies or their own wellbeing. A parenting charity, the National Childbirth Trust, said the move was unnecessary. Its Chief Executive Belinda Phipps said: "Mothers are able to tell people not to look at their babies or pull the curtain round for privacy."

WARM-UPS

1. I'M A BABY: You are now a baby (again). Walk around the class and talk to the other "babies" about your lives. What's good or bad about baby life? What's the hospital like? What have you done in your life so far? Do you like the doctors and nurses? Have any strange people come and cooed at you?

2. RIGHTS: What kind of special rights does each of the following groups have that perhaps the other groups do not have? What special rights should they have?

- | | |
|------------|---------------------|
| a. Babies | f. Women |
| b. Animals | g. The disabled |
| c. Humans | h. The elderly |
| d. Iraqis | i. English students |
| e. Trees | j. Other |

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

Rows / Britain / newborn babies / cooing / hospitals / human rights / respect / dignity / privacy / infection control / bureaucracy / parenting / curtains

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

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

5. BABY RIGHTS OPINIONS: How far do you agree with these opinions? Discuss them with your partner(s).

- It's time society recognized babies have separate and special rights.
- Baby rights are the same as those covered by human rights.
- The idea of baby rights is an example of bureaucracy gone mad.
- Cooing at newborn babies is an infringement of their rights.
- Anyone who coos at newborn babies in hospitals should receive a fine.
- Hospital visitors should not touch newborns as it risks infecting the infants.
- The mother should be the only one to decide who can coo at or handle her baby.
- Cooing at babies is a natural human reaction and important for a baby's early development.

6. INFRINGEMENTS: Spend a minute or two writing down all of the things adults do to newborn babies. Share your list with other students. Discuss which three of these things represent an infringement of baby rights

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- a. A British hospital has banned visitors from cooing at newborn babies. T / F
- b. The hospital says cooing is an infringement of babies' human rights. T / F
- c. A hospital spokeswoman wants visitors who coo at babies to be fined. T / F
- d. The spokeswoman said the measure was also to control infection. T / F
- e. British politicians have welcomed the new baby safeguards. T / F
- f. A politician said mothers could not decide who could coo at her baby. T / F
- g. Mothers at the hospital were happy with the new policy. T / F
- h. A parenting charity said the move was unnecessary. T / F

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

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| a. erupted | puzzled |
| b. infringed | weak |
| c. doting | contravened |
| d. uphold | protection |
| e. vulnerable | maintain |
| f. safeguards | harsh |
| g. stinging | measure |
| h. bureaucracy | flared up |
| i. bemused | red tape |
| j. move | adoring |

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

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. A row | to uphold respect |
| b. the cooing and touching | expressed astonishment |
| c. human rights are | stinging criticism from politicians |
| d. the new measure was necessary | round for privacy |
| e. small babies with very | of doting relatives |
| f. safeguards have been met with | gone mad |
| g. bureaucracy | vulnerable immune systems |
| h. it was the mother's decision to | has erupted |
| i. mothers at the hospital | determine who had cooing rights |
| j. pull the curtain | being breached |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

WHICH WORD: Strike through the incorrect word from the pairs in *italics*.

UK hospital bans cooing at babies

BNE: A *row / column* has erupted in Britain over whether the rights of newborn babies are infringed by the cooing and touching of *dating / doting* relatives and friends. The Calderdale Royal Hospital in the town of Halifax has banned visitors from cooing at newborns *over / under* fears their human rights are being *breached / preached* and to reduce the risk of infection. Debbie Lawson, the hospital's neo-natal spokeswoman, said the *new tape / measure* was necessary to uphold respect, dignity and *privation / privacy* for all patients. She told reporters: "Cooing should be a *trinket / thing* of the past ...these are little people with the same rights as you or me." She added: "Infection control was also a *key / lock* part of the message as the unit deals with very small babies with very vulnerable immune systems."

The new baby safeguards have been met with *singing / stinging* criticism from politicians and maternity experts. The British government's representative for the *regimen / region*, Linda Riordan, said the measures were "bureaucracy gone *mad / mud*". She told the local 'Halifax Courier' newspaper it was the mother's decision to *determine / undermine* who had cooing rights. New mothers at the hospital expressed *astonishment / astronomy* and were bemused that visitors could not ask questions about their babies or their own wellbeing. A parenting *chastity / charity*, the National Childbirth Trust, said the *move / movement* was unnecessary. Its Chief Executive Belinda Phipps said: "Mothers are able to tell people not to look at their babies or pull the curtain *round / circular* for privacy."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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. WHICH WORD? 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 "BABY RIGHTS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about babies and whether they have separate rights.

- 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:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| • erupted | • stinging |
| • fears | • mad |
| • uphold | • determine |
| • past | • bemused |
| • little | • wellbeing |
| • vulnerable | • parenting |

DISCUSSION

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

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. Have you ever thought about babies' rights?
- d. Do you think babies have separate and special rights?
- e. How are babies different from children?
- f. Are you good with babies?
- g. Do you think there should be a United Nations charter on babies' rights?
- h. Don't you think babies have a right to be cooed at?
- i. How would you feel if you could not coo at a new niece or nephew?
- j. Do you think cooing takes away a baby's dignity and privacy?

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. Does the hospital have a point when it says it wants to protect small babies from infection?
- d. Do you think this measure would catch on in your country?
- e. Do you think it's fair that visitors cannot ask a mother about her health?
- f. Do you think cooing should be "a thing of the past"?
- g. Do you think hospital bureaucracy has "gone mad"?
- h. Do you think babies need privacy or know what it is?
- i. Have you been bemused at any recent bureaucratic decisions?
- 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?

SPEAKING

BABY RIGHTS ROLE PLAY: This role play is to discuss whether or not cooing at and picking up newborn babies should be banned. Team up with classmates who have been assigned the same role as you. Develop your roles and discuss ideas and “strategies” before the role play begins.

Introduce yourself to the other role players.

Role A – HOSPITAL STAFF (IN FAVOR)

You believe babies have special rights which are not legislated for. You think cooing is an invasion of privacy and interrupts babies’ sleeping patterns. You also believe cooing is detrimental to a baby’s speech development. You know many babies develop infections because visitors touch them. Some babies die.

THINK OF MORE RIGHTS OF BABIES.

Role B – CHILD CARE EXPERT (AGAINST)

You think the notion of banning cooing is ridiculous. Cooing is a natural part of human nature. Babies need cooing to make them feel loved. Banning cooing means babies are deprived of a chance of bonding with relatives. Babies have risked infection from visitors since the year dot.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY BANNING COOING IS WRONG.

Role C – FATHER

You are furious. How dare hospital administrators ban you from talking to your newborn child! How dare some hospital bureaucrat stop you asking your partner about her health! You think hospital administrators have nothing better to do than to make ridiculous rules.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO COO.

Role D – BABY

You have had enough of strangers you have never met uttering gibberish at you. You cannot talk to or understand them, so why do they do it? You’ve had enough of them picking you up when you’re trying to sleep. If that happened to other people, it would be termed assault. You want and demand your rights.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD HAVE MORE RIGHTS.

Change roles and repeat the role play. Comment in groups about the differences between the two role plays.

In pairs / groups, discuss whether you really believe in what you said while you were in your roles.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

UK hospital bans cooing at babies

BNE: A row has _____ in Britain over whether the rights of newborn babies are infringed by the cooing and touching of _____ relatives and friends. The Calderdale Royal Hospital in the town of Halifax has banned visitors from cooing at newborns over _____ their human rights are being _____ and to reduce the risk of _____. Debbie Lawson, the hospital's neo-natal spokeswoman, said the new measure was necessary to _____ respect, dignity and privacy for all patients. She told reporters: "Cooing should be a _____ of the past...these are little people with the same rights as you or me." She added: "_____ control was also a key part of the message as the unit deals with very small babies with very vulnerable _____ systems."

The new baby safeguards have been met with _____ criticism from politicians and _____ experts. The British government's representative for the region, Linda Riordan, said the measures were "_____ gone mad". She told the local *Halifax Courier* newspaper it was the mother's decision to _____ who had cooing rights. New mothers at the hospital expressed astonishment and were _____ that visitors could not ask questions about their babies or their own _____. A parenting charity, the National Childbirth Trust, said the move was unnecessary. Its Chief Executive Belinda Phipps said: "Mothers are able to tell people not to look at their babies or pull the curtain round for _____."

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 this story. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. BABY RIGHTS: Make a poster outlining the special rights of babies. Show your posters to your partners in your next class. Did you all write about similar things?

4. LETTER: You are a baby. Write a letter to the head of the British hospital about her decision to afford you more rights. Ask for other rights that she missed. Read your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| a. erupted | flared up |
| b. infringed | contravened |
| c. doting | adoring |
| d. uphold | maintain |
| e. vulnerable | weak |
| f. safeguards | protection |
| g. stinging | harsh |
| h. bureaucracy | red tape |
| i. bemused | puzzled |
| j. move | measure |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. A row | has erupted |
| b. the cooing and touching | of doting relatives |
| c. human rights are | being breached |
| d. the new measure was necessary | to uphold respect |
| e. small babies with very | vulnerable immune systems |
| f. safeguards have been met with | stinging criticism from politicians |
| g. bureaucracy | gone mad |
| h. it was the mother's decision to | determine who had cooing rights |
| i. mothers at the hospital | expressed astonishment |
| j. pull the curtain | round for privacy |

WHICH WORD?

UK hospital bans cooing at babies

BNE: A *row* / ~~column~~ has erupted in Britain over whether the rights of newborn babies are infringed by the cooing and touching of ~~dating~~ / *doting* relatives and friends. The Calderdale Royal Hospital in the town of Halifax has banned visitors from cooing at newborns *over* / ~~under~~ fears their human rights are being *breached* / ~~preached~~ and to reduce the risk of infection. Debbie Lawson, the hospital's neo-natal spokeswoman, said the *new tape* / *measure* was necessary to uphold respect, dignity and ~~privation~~ / *privacy* for all patients. She told reporters: "Cooing should be a ~~trinket~~ / *thing* of the past ...these are little people with the same rights as you or me." She added: "Infection control was also a *key* / ~~lock~~ part of the message as the unit deals with very small babies with very vulnerable immune systems."

The new baby safeguards have been met with ~~singing~~ / *stinging* criticism from politicians and maternity experts. The British government's representative for the ~~regimen~~ / *region*, Linda Riordan, said the measures were "bureaucracy gone *mad* / ~~mad~~". She told the local 'Halifax Courier' newspaper it was the mother's decision to *determine* / ~~undermine~~ who had cooing rights. New mothers at the hospital expressed *astonishment* / ~~astronomy~~ and were bemused that visitors could not ask questions about their babies or their own wellbeing. A parenting ~~chastity~~ / *charity*, the National Childbirth Trust, said the *move* / ~~movement~~ was unnecessary. Its Chief Executive Belinda Phipps said: "Mothers are able to tell people not to look at their babies or pull the curtain *round* / ~~circular~~ for privacy."