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Brazil votes on gun ban

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23 October, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Brazil votes on gun ban

Should the sale of guns and bullets be banned in Brazil? Brazilians will find out by voting today in the world's first ever referendum on whether or not to ban guns. Brazil has the second highest rate of gun deaths in the world, after Venezuela. Nearly 39,000 people are killed from gunshot wounds each year, more than those killed in traffic accidents. Guns are the main cause of death among young Brazilians. United Nations research shows that during the past ten years, guns killed more people in Brazil than wars killed people around the world.

Supporters of the ban highlight the recent campaign that has reduced gun-related deaths. The government bought guns from the public in a two-year "buy back" system. This saw the first drop in gun deaths in more than 13 years last month. Around half a million weapons were handed over to police. New laws also require gun holders to re-register their weapons every three years. People must also have psychological tests and pay a fee that is too expensive for most Brazilians. Opponents of the ban say people have a basic right to self-defence. They also say a ban would not stop the black market in guns.

WARM-UPS

1. GUN HISTORY: In pairs / groups, talk about your history with guns. What are your earliest memories? Did you have a toy gun? How often do you see guns today?

2. BAN: Which of the items in the list below are most dangerous to society? With your partner(s), rank them in order of most serious.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| _____ Guns | _____ Alcohol |
| _____ Drugs | _____ AIDS |
| _____ Government corruption | _____ Cars |
| _____ Prostitution | _____ Other (_____) |

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

Guns / bullets / Brazilians / voting / gun sales / gunshot wounds / traffic accidents / the past decade / gun makers / police / self-defence / black market

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

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

5. GUN OPINIONS: In pairs / groups, talk about what you think of these opinions on guns:

- All of the world's guns should be destroyed.
- English police officers do not carry guns. This proves they are unnecessary.
- Guns are for criminals and cowboys.
- Owning a gun for self-defence is a human right.
- If guns disappeared, people would find different ways of killing each other.
- People have the right to shoot burglars.
- People who carry guns on the street should receive longer prison sentences.
- Most countries in the world where guns are illegal have peaceful societies.
- Movies and video games are responsible for glamorizing guns and gun crime.

6. GUN SENTENCES: Write five sentences beginning with the word "guns". Talk about them with your partner(s).

- Guns _____.
- Guns _____.
- Guns _____.
- Guns _____.
- Guns _____.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Brazil is voting at the UN for a worldwide ban on gun sales. | T / F |
| b. Venezuela has the highest rate of gun deaths in the world. | T / F |
| c. Guns kill more people in Brazil than traffic accidents. | T / F |
| d. Wars have killed many people in Brazil in the past ten years. | T / F |
| e. Brazil's government has just finished a two-year bargain sale in arms. | T / F |
| f. Brazilian citizens gave around half a million guns to police. | T / F |
| g. Brazil's gun owners must have psychological tests to keep a gun. | T / F |
| h. Some people say a ban would stop the black market in guns. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|----------------|------------|
| a. referendum | point out |
| b. ban | number one |
| c. main | injuries |
| d. wounds | ballot |
| e. shows | necessary |
| f. highlight | reveals |
| g. drop | arms |
| h. weapons | gave |
| i. handed over | fall |
| j. basic | prohibit |

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

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| a. Should the sale of guns and bullets | has reduced gun-related deaths |
| b. referendum on whether or not | from gunshot wounds each year |
| c. the second highest rate of | among young Brazilians |
| d. 39,000 people are killed | expensive for most Brazilians |
| e. Guns are the main cause of death | be banned |
| f. highlight the recent campaign that | over to police |
| g. the first drop in gun deaths in | to ban guns |
| h. half a million weapons were handed | the black market in guns |
| i. pay a fee that is too | more than 13 years |
| j. a ban would not stop | gun deaths in the world |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

Brazil votes on gun ban

Should the _____ of guns and bullets be banned in Brazil? Brazilians will find out by _____ today in the world's first ever referendum on whether or not to _____ guns. Brazil has the second highest _____ of gun deaths in the world, after Venezuela. Nearly 39,000 people are killed from _____ wounds each year, more than those killed in _____ accidents. Guns are the main cause of death _____ young Brazilians. United Nations research shows that during the past ten years, guns killed more people in Brazil than _____ killed people around the world.

Supporters of the ban _____ the recent campaign that has reduced gun-related deaths. The government bought guns from the _____ in a two-year "buy back" system. This saw the first _____ in gun deaths in more than 13 years last month. Around half a million weapons were _____ over to police. New laws also _____ gun holders to re-register their weapons every three years. People must also have psychological _____ and pay a _____ that is too expensive for most Brazilians. Opponents of the ban say people have a basic right to self-defence. They also say a ban would not stop the _____ market in guns.

ban
sale
wars
gunshot
voting
among
rate
traffic
fee
handed
public
require
highlight
black
drop
tests

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Brazil votes on gun ban

Should the sale of guns and _____ be banned in Brazil? Brazilians will find out by voting today in the world's _____ referendum on whether or not to ban guns. Brazil has the second highest _____ of gun deaths in the world, after Venezuela. Nearly 39,000 people are killed from gunshot _____ each year, more than those killed in traffic accidents. Guns are the _____ cause of death among young Brazilians. United Nations research shows that during _____ years, guns killed more people in Brazil than wars killed people around the world.

Supporters of the ban _____ the recent campaign that has reduced gun-_____ deaths. The government bought guns from the public in a two-year "buy back" system. This saw the first _____ in gun deaths in more than 13 years last month. Around half a million weapons were _____ to police. New laws also require gun holders to re-register their weapons every three years. People must also have psychological _____ and pay a fee that is too expensive for most Brazilians. Opponents of the ban say people have a basic _____ to self-defence. They also say a ban would not stop the _____ in guns.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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 "GUNS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about guns and their role in society.

- 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:

- | | |
|----------|---------------|
| • should | • highlight |
| • ever | • system |
| • rate | • drop |
| • wounds | • re-register |
| • main | • fee |
| • war | • black |

DISCUSSION

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

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think of guns?
- c. Is there a gun problem in your country?
- d. Why is there more gun crime in the USA than in Canada?
- e. Do you think police officers should carry guns?
- f. What controls should there be on the sale of guns?
- g. Should laws relating to gun crime be tougher?
- h. Would you vote yes or no in a referendum on guns?
- i. What do you think of the argument that "guns don't kill people, people kill people"?
- j. Do you feel the need to own a gun?

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 people have a right to own a gun?
- d. Do you think people should shoot burglars?
- e. Why do you think gun crime is so common in Brazil and Venezuela?
- f. Are you worried about gun crime?
- g. Could you ever shoot someone with a gun?
- h. What would you like to say to the boss of the world's largest gun manufacturer?
- i. What would you think if everyone in the world had a gun one day?
- 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

GUN ROLE PLAY: Should the sale of guns be banned? Team up with classmates who have 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 – GOVERNMENT LEADER

You want to be strong and have a gun-free society. Guns kill thousands of innocent people. Guns increase other crimes such as rape and robbery. Guns are illegal in many countries that have very low crime rates. Most gun-related deaths are not carried out by criminals.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY GUNS ARE BAD.

Role B – GUN OWNER

You believe gun ownership is a basic human right. Everyone needs a gun for protection. Society is becoming more and more violent. A ban on guns will not stop criminals from getting them. Banning guns will hurt an important industry and jobs will be lost.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY GUN SALES SHOULD NOT BE BANNED.

Role C – JO PUBLIC

You are a member of the public. You know several people who have been killed by gang members who carry guns. You cannot trust anyone to own a gun. Gangs or crazy people will always kill innocent people. You think a society free of guns is a more peaceful society.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY GUN SALES SHOULD BE BANNED.

Role D – GUN MAKER

You think people need guns for self-defence. You have heard many stories of people saving their own lives because they had a gun. People without a gun in the house cannot wait for the police to arrive. You don't accept that guns kill people. Criminals are the real killers. It is wrong to say guns are to blame. Ask if society should also ban kitchen knives.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY GUN SALES SHOULD NOT BE BANNED.

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

Should the sale of guns be banned?

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 gun crime in Brazil. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. PROS AND CONS: Make a poster about the pros and cons of gun ownership. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write similar things?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to Brazil's president. Tell him your thoughts on his country's referendum. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|------------|
| a. referendum | ballot |
| b. ban | prohibit |
| c. main | number one |
| d. wounds | injuries |
| e. shows | reveals |
| f. highlight | point out |
| g. drop | fall |
| h. weapons | arms |
| i. handed over | gave |
| j. basic | necessary |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| a. Should the sale of guns and bullets | be banned |
| b. referendum on whether or not | to ban guns |
| c. the second highest rate of | gun deaths in the world |
| d. 39,000 people are killed | from gunshot wounds each year |
| e. Guns are the main cause of death | among young Brazilians |
| f. highlight the recent campaign that | has reduced gun-related deaths |
| g. the first drop in gun deaths in | more than 13 years |
| h. half a million weapons were handed | over to police |
| i. pay a fee that is too | expensive for most Brazilians |
| j. a ban would not stop | the black market in guns |

GAP FILL:

Brazil votes on gun ban

Should the **sale** of guns and bullets be banned in Brazil? Brazilians will find out by **voting** today in the world's first ever referendum on whether or not to **ban** guns. Brazil has the second highest **rate** of gun deaths in the world, after Venezuela. Nearly 39,000 people are killed from **gunshot** wounds each year, more than those killed in **traffic** accidents. Guns are the main cause of death **among** young Brazilians. United Nations research shows that during the past ten years, guns killed more people in Brazil than **wars** killed people around the world.

Supporters of the ban **highlight** the recent campaign that has reduced gun-related deaths. The government bought guns from the **public** in a two-year "buy back" system. This saw the first **drop** in gun deaths in more than 13 years last month. Around half a million weapons were **handed** over to police. New laws also **require** gun holders to re-register their weapons every three years. People must also have psychological **tests** and pay a **fee** that is too expensive for most Brazilians. Opponents of the ban say people have a basic right to self-defence. They also say a ban would not stop the **black** market in guns.