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No hip-hop fashion for basketball players

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1 November, 2005

THE ARTICLE

No hip-hop fashion for basketball players

A new basketball season starts in America today and many players are angry about new fashion rules. The NBA's boss, David Stern, has introduced a new dress code for what players can and cannot wear off the court. Many of the game's black stars say the new rules are racist. Several big names claim it is an attack on black American culture. Players cannot wear flashy jewelry, shorts, sleeveless shirts, oversized T-shirts and overly baggy jeans. Also out are sunglasses and baseball caps indoors. Players will receive suspensions for not following the new "smart-casual" rules and could even be banned for life.

Philadelphia star Allen Iverson is positive the new rules are an attack on hip-hop fashion. He said: "They're targeting guys who dress like me, guys who dress hip-hop. Put a murderer in a suit and he's still a murderer. It sends a bad message to kids." He said of the new smarter dress: "I don't think it's good for the league - it kind of makes it fake." Boston star Paul Pierce agreed, saying: "...chains, hip-hop and throwback jerseys, I think that's part of our culture. The NBA is young, black males." Some players have suggested the NBA should add a clothing allowance to their multi-million-dollar salaries.

WARM-UPS

1. HIP-HOP: In pairs / groups, talk about hip-hop and the fashions, stars and cultures that surround it. Do you like the music? Do you follow the fashion? What are your first memories of hip-hop? What kinds of hip-hop are there?

2. BASKETBALL FASHION: America's National Basketball Association (NBA) has banned the following fashion items. Players cannot wear these while they are on official NBA business, including travelling by air between games. What do you think of these items? Should they be banned? Do you wear them?

- Gaudy jewelry
- Do-rags (head scarves)
- Indoor sunglasses
- Baseball caps
- Sleeveless shirts
- Work boots
- Oversized T-shirts and jerseys
- Overly baggy jeans and pants

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

Basketball / America / fashion / dress codes / racism / black American culture / NBA / necklace chains and medallions / baseball caps / hip-hop / young black males

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

4. BLACK AMERICAN CULTURE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with black American culture. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. DRESS CODES: Do you think different sports stars or other stars need to follow dress codes? Discuss this with your partner(s). What fashion rules should these people follow?

Basketball players Golf players Actors Singers Politicians English teachers

6. ARTICLE OPINIONS: Discuss what you think of these opinions:

- a. Basketball players should be able to wear whatever they want.
- b. Basketball players should wear suits to give the sport a professional image.
- c. The NBA should give players a salary increase to buy "smarter" clothes.
- d. The NBA uses hip-hop to increase the sport's popularity. It is strange for it to tell players to stop wearing hip-hop fashion.
- e. Gangsta and hip-hop fashion have no place in basketball. Stars must set a good example to kids and dress well.
- f. Hip-hop fashion is smart.
- g. The NBA has given a bad name to the image of hip-hop fashion.
- h. Many business people and politicians wear suits and commit crimes.
- i. Today's NBA players look like gang members.
- j. A guy with a do-rag and baggy jeans could also have a PhD.

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 survey said American basketball players have no fashion sense. | T / F |
| b. Basketball players are saying new dress rules in the sport are racist. | T / F |
| c. Flashy jewelry, baseball caps and indoor sunglasses are out. | T / F |
| d. Players who do not follow the dress code could get a one-week ban. | T / F |
| e. A top basketball star said the new rules attack hip-hop fashion. | T / F |
| f. The player said NBA players loved wearing fake brands. | T / F |
| g. An NBA star said hip-hop fashion is not a part of black culture. | T / F |
| h. Some players said they should get an allowance for nicer clothes. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|---------------|-----------|
| a. angry | aiming at |
| b. introduced | fashion |
| c. dress | killer |
| d. out | sure |
| e. receive | started |
| f. positive | false |
| g. targeting | get |
| h. murderer | subsidy |
| i. fake | furious |
| j. allowance | banned |

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

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. A new basketball season | say the new rules are racist |
| b. introduced a new | salaries |
| c. Many of the game's black stars | flashy jewelry |
| d. Players cannot wear | who dress like me |
| e. banned | dress code |
| f. the new rules are | of our culture |
| g. They're targeting guys | an attack on hip-hop fashion |
| h. It sends a bad | starts in America today |
| i. I think that's part | message to kids |
| j. multi-million-dollar | for life |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

No hip-hop fashion for basketball players

A new basketball _____ starts in America today and many players are angry about new fashion _____. The NBA's boss, David Stern, has introduced a new _____ code for what players can and cannot wear off the _____. Many of the game's black stars say the new rules are _____. Several big names claim it is an attack on black American culture. Players cannot wear _____ jewelry, shorts, sleeveless shirts, oversized T-shirts and overly baggy jeans. Also _____ are sunglasses and baseball caps indoors. Players will receive suspensions for not following the new "smart-casual" rules and could even be banned for _____.

flashy
court
rules
out
season
racist
dress
life

Philadelphia star Allen Iverson is _____ the new rules are an attack on hip-hop fashion. He said: "They're targeting guys who _____ like me, guys who dress hip-hop. Put a murderer in a _____ and he's still a murderer. It sends a _____ message to kids." He said of the new _____ dress: "I don't think it's good for the league - it kind of makes it fake." Boston star Paul Pierce agreed, saying: "...chains, hip-hop and throwback jerseys, I think that's part of our _____. The NBA is young, black males." Some players have _____ the NBA should add a clothing _____ to their multi-million-dollar salaries.

culture
suggested
smarter
dress
bad
positive
allowance
suit

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

No hip-hop fashion for basketball players

A new basketball _____ starts in America today and many players are angry about new fashion _____. The NBA's boss, David Stern, has introduced a new dress code for what players can and cannot wear off the _____. Many of the game's black stars say the new rules are _____. Several big names claim it is an attack on black American culture. Players cannot wear _____ jewelry, shorts, sleeveless shirts, oversized T-shirts and overly _____ jeans. Also out are sunglasses and baseball caps indoors. Players will receive suspensions for not following the new "smart-_____" rules and could even be banned for life.

Philadelphia star Allen Iverson is _____ the new rules are an attack on hip-hop fashion. He said: "They're _____ guys who dress like me, guys who dress hip-hop. Put a murderer in a suit and he's still a murderer. It sends a bad _____ to kids." He said of the new smarter dress: "I don't think it's good for the league - it kind of makes it _____." Boston star Paul Pierce _____, saying: "...chains, hip-hop and throwback jerseys, I think that's part of our culture. The NBA is young, black _____." Some players have suggested the NBA should add a _____ allowance to their multi-million-dollar salaries.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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 "HIP-HOP FASHION" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about hip-hop fashion and whether NBA basketball players should be allowed to wear it.

- 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:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| • season | • positive |
| • code | • dress |
| • black stars | • murderer |
| • flashy | • fake |
| • overly | • males |
| • life | • allowance |

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 hip-hop fashion?
- c. Do you think sports should have dress codes for players?
- d. Do you think dress codes in sports should be the same as the culture of its stars?
- e. Do you think the new NBA dress code is racist?
- f. Do you think it's strange that the NBA chief has banned many fashion items commonly worn by young black people?
- g. What do you think of Allen Iverson's comment that people in suits can also be murderers?
- h. Do you think NBA players in suits give a fake image of the sport?
- i. Should players be banned for life for not following the dress code?
- j. Do you think this story is a storm in a teacup?

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 like basketball?
- d. What image do you have of young men who wear hip-hop fashion?
- e. Why do you think the NBA commissioner doesn't like hip-hop fashion?
- f. Do basketball players who wear hip-hop fashion look smart?
- g. Do you think the NBA commissioner has given made the image of hip-hop fashion look bad?
- h. Who decides whether jewelry is "flashy" or clothes are not smart?
- i. Do you think NBA players should receive an allowance for smarter clothes, on top of their \$5.3 million salaries?
- 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

BASKETBALL FASHION ROLE PLAY: Should NBA basketball players have to follow a dress code that stops them from wearing hip-hop fashion? 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 – NBA COMMISSIONER

You want your stars to look smart. Hip-hop has a bad image. Smart casual clothes give a clean and positive image to kids. Many people think NBA players look like gang leaders. You want players to look professional and act professionally. Basketball is about sport, not fashion.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY HIP-HOP FASHION IS UNACCEPTABLE.

Role B – NBA PLAYER

You think the dress code is stupid. It is an attack on hip-hop fashion and black culture. No other sport has banned hip-hop fashion. The NBA has used hip-hop to make lots of money. Your fashion is a part of your personality. The public wants to see the real you, not some fake in a suit.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY THE NEW DRESS CODE IS UNACCEPTABLE.

Role C – JO PUBLIC (FOR)

Basketball players can wear whatever they like. The most important thing is the way they play, not what they look like on an airplane. The new rules are racist – they ban all of the things many black people wear. It would be strange to see the top stars wearing suits – they would look more like gangsters!

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY PLAYERS IN HIP-HOP FASHION IS OK.

Role D – JO PUBLIC (AGAINST)

All sports have dress codes. Basketball should have one too. Players have a social responsibility to dress and behave well. They should set a good example to kids. They receive huge salaries. Hip-hop fashion has a bad image. It’s gang fashion. That’s bad for basketball. Basketball players need to grow up and stop complaining.

THINK OF REASONS WHY HIP-HOP FASHION FOR NBA PLAYERS IS BAD.

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

Discuss whether basketball players should accept the new dress code.

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 hip-hop fashion. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. PROS AND CONS: Make a poster about the pros and cons of basketball players having to stick to the new dress code. Is it racist? Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things? Discuss the pros and cons together.

4. LETTER: You are a top, all-star NBA player. Write a letter to the NBA commissioner telling him what you think about the new dress code. 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. T f. F g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------|
| a. angry | furious |
| b. introduced | started |
| c. dress | fashion |
| d. out | banned |
| e. receive | get |
| f. positive | sure |
| g. targeting | aiming at |
| h. murderer | killer |
| i. fake | false |
| j. allowance | subsidy |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. A new basketball season | starts in America today |
| b. introduced a new | dress code |
| c. Many of the game's black stars | say the new rules are racist |
| d. Players cannot wear | flashy jewelry |
| e. banned | for life |
| f. the new rules are | an attack on hip-hop fashion |
| g. They're targeting guys | who dress like me |
| h. It sends a bad | message to kids |
| i. I think that's part | of our culture |
| j. multi-million-dollar | salaries |

GAP FILL:

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A new basketball **season** starts in America today and many players are angry about new fashion **rules**. The NBA's boss, David Stern, has introduced a new **dress** code for what players can and cannot wear off the **court**. Many of the game's black stars say the new rules are **racist**. Several big names claim it is an attack on black American culture. Players cannot wear **flashy** jewelry, shorts, sleeveless shirts, oversized T-shirts and overly baggy jeans. Also **out** are sunglasses and baseball caps indoors. Players will receive suspensions for not following the new "smart-casual" rules and could even be banned for **life**.

Philadelphia star Allen Iverson is **positive** the new rules are an attack on hip-hop fashion. He said: "They're targeting guys who **dress** like me, guys who dress hip-hop. Put a murderer in a **suit** and he's still a murderer. It sends a **bad** message to kids." He said of the new **smarter** dress: "I don't think it's good for the league - it kind of makes it fake." Boston star Paul Pierce agreed, saying: "...chains, hip-hop and throwback jerseys, I think that's part of our **culture**. The NBA is young, black males." Some players have **suggested** the NBA should add a clothing **allowance** to their multi-million-dollar salaries.