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## **Afghan talent show winner chosen**

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25<sup>th</sup> March, 2008

## THE ARTICLE

The winner of Afghanistan's pop idol contest has been declared. Rafi Naabzada, 19, beat his rival Hameed Sakhizada into first place in the grand final of Afghan Star. The hit TV talent show has been a huge success in Afghanistan. An estimated 11 million viewers regularly tuned in to watch it over the past three months. The final, which took place at a heavily-guarded Kabul hotel, had the biggest audience. Over one-third of the Afghan population watched to see if Naabzada or Sakhizada would win. The two finalists received more than 300,000 votes by text message. Both contestants were modest about their success. Mr Naabzada said: "I am very happy to become an Afghan Star." Runner up Sakhizada seemed satisfied with coming second, saying: "I do not feel that I am defeated today, but I think that I am a lucky man."

The show was not popular with everyone in Afghanistan. It received severe criticism from conservatives because of the number of women who took part. In particular, there was a lot of attention on Lema Sahar, a 20-year-old woman who finished third. Sahar is from southern Kandahar province, which is the birthplace of the Taliban. She told a press conference about the dangers she faced in singing live on national television: "I am proud to have reached this position. I have been threatened, including several phone calls during the night, but I never lost my confidence. I came third because of the votes of my people," she said proudly. The show's host Daud Sideqi defended Sahar, saying: "Music has always been part of our culture....If we look to the Islamic countries around us like Pakistan, Iran, and Tajikistan, they all have singers, including women singers."

## WARM-UPS

**1. TALENT SHOWS:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about talent shows. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your original partner(s) and share what you found out.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*contests / rivals / talent shows / audiences / text messages / feeling lucky / criticism / conservatives / being threatened / confidence / music and culture*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. TV SHOWS:** With your partner(s), decide what is good and bad about these shows. Change partners and share your ideas.

Show	Good	Bad
talent show		
quiz show		
chat show		
cooking show		
car show		
game show		

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

**5. QUICK DEBATE:** Students A **strongly** believe that TV talent shows are a total waste of time; Students B **strongly** believe TV talent shows are fantastic entertainment. Change partners again and talk about your roles and conversations.

## 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 19-year-old has won a TV talent show in Afghanistan.              | T / F |
| b. Around 11 million people watched the show on a regular basis.       | T / F |
| c. The show's finalists received over 3 million votes by text message. | T / F |
| d. The contest's runner-up said he felt unlucky not to have won.       | T / F |
| e. Many people disliked the show because some singers were women.      | T / F |
| f. A 20-year-old woman from Kabul finished in third place.             | T / F |
| g. The woman made threatening phone calls during the night.            | T / F |
| h. The show's host said music has always been part of Afghan culture.  | T / F |

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

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. declared   | a. enormous    |
| 2. rival      | b. happy       |
| 3. huge       | c. supported   |
| 4. modest     | d. attack      |
| 5. satisfied  | e. announced   |
| 6. severe     | f. experienced |
| 7. criticism  | g. shy         |
| 8. faced      | h. bullied     |
| 9. threatened | i. opponent    |
| 10. defended  | j. serious     |

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

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. The winner of Afghanistan's                 | a. from conservatives   |
| 2. beat his rival Hameed Sakhizada             | b. tuned in to watch it |
| 3. An estimated 11 million viewers regularly   | c. about their success  |
| 4. a heavily-guarded                           | d. my confidence        |
| 5. Both contestants were modest                | e. into first place     |
| 6. It received severe criticism                | f. of the Taliban       |
| 7. there was a lot of attention on Lema Sahar, | g. part of our culture  |
| 8. the birthplace                              | h. Kabul hotel          |
| 9. I never lost                                | i. pop idol contest     |
| 10. Music has always been                      | j. a 20-year-old woman  |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The winner of Afghanistan's pop idol \_\_\_\_\_ has been declared. Rafi Naabzada, 19, beat his rival Hameed Sakhizada into first \_\_\_\_\_ in the grand final of Afghan Star. The hit TV talent show has been a huge success in Afghanistan. An estimated 11 million \_\_\_\_\_ regularly tuned in to watch it over the past three months. The final, which took place at a \_\_\_\_\_ - guarded Kabul hotel, had the biggest audience. Over one-third of the Afghan population watched to see if Naabzada or Sakhizada would win. The two \_\_\_\_\_ received more than 300,000 votes by text message. Both contestants were \_\_\_\_\_ about their success. Mr Naabzada said: "I am very happy to become an Afghan Star." Runner up Sakhizada seemed \_\_\_\_\_ with coming second, saying: "I do not feel that I am \_\_\_\_\_ today, but I think that I am a lucky man."

*heavily**satisfied**viewers**contest**finalists**defeated**place**modest*

The show was not \_\_\_\_\_ with everyone in Afghanistan. It received severe criticism from conservatives because of the number of women who took \_\_\_\_\_. In particular, there was a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ on Lema Sahar, a 20-year-old woman who finished third. Sahar is from southern Kandahar province, which is the birthplace of the Taliban. She told a press conference about the \_\_\_\_\_ she faced in singing live on national television: "I am proud to have reached this position. I have been \_\_\_\_\_, including several phone calls during the night, but I never lost my confidence. I came third because of the votes of my people," she said \_\_\_\_\_. The show's host Daud Sideqi defended Sahar, saying: "Music has always been part of our \_\_\_\_\_....If we look to the Islamic countries around us like Pakistan, Iran, and Tajikistan, they all have singers, \_\_\_\_\_ women singers."

*dangers**culture**part**threatened**including**popular**proudly**attention*

**LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.**

The winner of Afghanistan's pop idol contest \_\_\_\_\_. Rafi Naabzada, 19, beat his rival Hameed Sakhizada \_\_\_\_\_ in the grand final of Afghan Star. The hit TV talent show has been a huge success in Afghanistan. An estimated 11 million viewers \_\_\_\_\_ to watch it over the past three months. The final, which took place at a heavily-guarded Kabul hotel, had the biggest audience. Over \_\_\_\_\_ Afghan population watched to see if Naabzada or Sakhizada would win. The two finalists \_\_\_\_\_ 300,000 votes by text message. Both contestants were modest about their success. Mr Naabzada said: "I am very \_\_\_\_\_ an Afghan Star." Runner up Sakhizada seemed satisfied with coming second, saying: "I do not \_\_\_\_\_ defeated today, but I think that I am a lucky man."

The show \_\_\_\_\_ everyone in Afghanistan. It received severe criticism from conservatives \_\_\_\_\_ number of women who took part. In particular, there was a lot of attention on Lema Sahar, a 20-year-old woman \_\_\_\_\_. Sahar is from southern Kandahar province, which is the birthplace of the Taliban. She told a press conference about the dangers \_\_\_\_\_ singing live on national television: "I am proud to have reached this position. I have been threatened, including several phone \_\_\_\_\_ night, but I never lost my confidence. I came third because of the votes of my people," she said proudly. The show's host Daud Sideqi defended Sahar, saying: "Music has \_\_\_\_\_ our culture....If we look to the Islamic countries around us like Pakistan, Iran, and Tajikistan, they all have singers, including women singers."

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

<b>pop</b>	<b>idol</b>
------------	-------------

- 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 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. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• declared</li> <li>• rival</li> <li>• regularly</li> <li>• audience</li> <li>• votes</li> <li>• defeated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• severe</li> <li>• attention</li> <li>• birthplace</li> <li>• lost</li> <li>• proudly</li> <li>• including</li> </ul>
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## STUDENT TALENT SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about talent in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



## **DISCUSSION**

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

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
  - b) What springs to mind when you hear the words 'pop idol'?
  - c) What are your feelings about this story?
  - d) Do you think talent shows are great entertainment?
  - e) Are the people in talent shows usually full of talent?
  - f) Would you ever appear on a talent show?
  - g) What do you think of Afghan Star taking place in a heavily-guarded Afghan hotel?
  - h) What do you think of the fact that a third of the population watched the show?
  - i) Would you feel lucky if you came second and not first?
- 

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think the organizers should listen to the conservatives and make the contest for men only?
- c) Do you think Lema Sahar was brave to keep singing on the show week after week?
- d) What would you do if you received threatening phone calls during the night?
- e) Do you watch the pop idol shows in your country?
- f) Do you ever lose confidence?
- g) How important is music in your traditional culture?
- h) What questions would you like to ask Lema Sahar?
- i) Did you like this discussion?

## LANGUAGE

**CORRECT WORD:** Put the correct words from a–d below in the article.

The winner of Afghanistan's pop (1) \_\_\_\_\_ contest has been declared. Rafi Naabzada, 19, beat his (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Hameed Sakhizada into first place in the grand final of Afghan Star. The hit TV talent show has been a (3) \_\_\_\_\_ success in Afghanistan. An estimated 11 million viewers regularly tuned in to watch it over the past three months. The final, which (4) \_\_\_\_\_ place at a heavily-guarded Kabul hotel, had the biggest audience. Over one-third of the Afghan population watched to see if Naabzada or Sakhizada would win. The two finalists received more than 300,000 votes by text message. Both contestants were modest (5) \_\_\_\_\_ their success. Mr Naabzada said: "I am very happy to become an Afghan Star." Runner up Sakhizada seemed satisfied with coming second, saying: "I do not (6) \_\_\_\_\_ that I am defeated today, but I think that I am a lucky man."

The show was not popular (7) \_\_\_\_\_ everyone in Afghanistan. It received severe criticism from conservatives because of the number of women who took part. In particular, there was a lot of attention (8) \_\_\_\_\_ Lema Sahar, a 20-year-old woman who finished third. Sahar is from southern Kandahar province, which is the birthplace of the Taliban. She told a press conference about the dangers she (9) \_\_\_\_\_ in singing live on national television: "I am proud to have reached this position. I have been threatened, including several phone calls (10) \_\_\_\_\_ the night, but I never lost my confidence. I came third because of the votes of my people," she said (11) \_\_\_\_\_. The show's host Daud Sideqi defended Sahar, saying: "Music has always been part of our culture....If we look to the Islamic countries around us like Pakistan, Iran, and Tajikistan, they all have singers, (12) \_\_\_\_\_ women singers."

- |     |               |              |             |              |
|-----|---------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1.  | (a) idly      | (b) ideal    | (c) idle    | (d) idol     |
| 2.  | (a) libel     | (b) rival    | (c) rivalry | (d) libels   |
| 3.  | (a) huge      | (b) hug      | (c) hugs    | (d) hugely   |
| 4.  | (a) take      | (b) taking   | (c) took    | (d) taken    |
| 5.  | (a) nearby    | (b) near     | (c) about   | (d) around   |
| 6.  | (a) felt      | (b) feel     | (c) feeling | (d) feels    |
| 7.  | (a) with      | (b) by       | (c) to      | (d) on       |
| 8.  | (a) an        | (b) by       | (c) in      | (d) on       |
| 9.  | (a) mouthed   | (b) faced    | (c) eyed    | (d) nosed    |
| 10. | (a) between   | (b) amongst  | (c) among   | (d) during   |
| 11. | (a) prouder   | (b) pride    | (c) proudly | (d) proud    |
| 12. | (a) including | (b) includes | (c) include | (d) included |



## **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 out about Afghan Star. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. TALENT SHOW:** Make a poster about your own idea for a new talent show. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. RIVALS:** Write a magazine article about the rivalry between two talent show contestants. Include imaginary interviews with them. What do they say about each other?

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down new words and expressions.

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to a conservative on Afghanistan. Ask him/her three questions about women singing in talent shows. Give your opinion on this. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

**6. DIARY / JOURNAL:** Imagine you are a contestant in a talent show. Write your diary / journal entry for one day in your life. Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson.

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

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

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. declared   | a. announced   |
| 2. rival      | b. opponent    |
| 3. huge       | c. enormous    |
| 4. modest     | d. shy         |
| 5. satisfied  | e. happy       |
| 6. severe     | f. serious     |
| 7. criticism  | g. attack      |
| 8. faced      | h. experienced |
| 9. threatened | i. bullied     |
| 10. defended  | j. supported   |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. The winner of Afghanistan's                 | a. pop idol contest     |
| 2. beat his rival Hameed Sakhizada             | b. into first place     |
| 3. An estimated 11 million viewers regularly   | c. tuned in to watch it |
| 4. a heavily-guarded                           | d. Kabul hotel          |
| 5. Both contestants were modest                | e. about their success  |
| 6. It received severe criticism                | f. from conservatives   |
| 7. there was a lot of attention on Lema Sahar, | g. a 20-year-old woman  |
| 8. the birthplace                              | h. of the Taliban       |
| 9. I never lost                                | i. my confidence        |
| 10. Music has always been                      | j. part of our culture  |

### GAP FILL:

#### Afghan talent show winner chosen

The winner of Afghanistan's pop idol **contest** has been declared. Rafi Naabzada, 19, beat his rival Hameed Sakhizada into first **place** in the grand final of Afghan Star. The hit TV talent show has been a huge success in Afghanistan. An estimated 11 million **viewers** regularly tuned in to watch it over the past three months. The final, which took place at a **heavily**-guarded Kabul hotel, had the biggest audience. Over one-third of the Afghan population watched to see if Naabzada or Sakhizada would win. The two **finalists** received more than 300,000 votes by text message. Both contestants were **modest** about their success. Mr Naabzada said: "I am very happy to become an Afghan Star." Runner up Sakhizada seemed **satisfied** with coming second, saying: "I do not feel that I am **defeated** today, but I think that I am a lucky man."

The show was not **popular** with everyone in Afghanistan. It received severe criticism from conservatives because of the number of women who took **part**. In particular, there was a lot of **attention** on Lema Sahar, a 20-year-old woman who finished third. Sahar is from southern Kandahar province, which is the birthplace of the Taliban. She told a press conference about the **dangers** she faced in singing live on national television: "I am proud to have reached this position. I have been **threatened**, including several phone calls during the night, but I never lost my confidence. I came third because of the votes of my people," she said **proudly**. The show's host Daud Sideqi defended Sahar, saying: "Music has always been part of our **culture**....If we look to the Islamic countries around us like Pakistan, Iran, and Tajikistan, they all have singers, **including** women singers."

### LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d    2 - b    3 - a    4 - c    5 - c    6 - b    7 - a    8 - d    9 - b    10 - d    11 - c    12 - a