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Politicians holiday during financial crisis

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1108/110808-politicians.html>

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8th August, 2011

THE ARTICLE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110808-politicians.html>

Senior UK politicians are under fire for going on vacation during the current global economic crisis. In Britain, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Chancellor are all away on holiday. British Foreign Secretary William Hague, the most senior politician left in Britain, said this was not a problem and that his government was still “fully functioning”. Mr Hague said Britain was “not in the firing line” of the world’s financial problems as much as other countries. Opposition chancellor Ed Balls strongly disagreed with Mr Hague and accused the government of failing to provide leadership when it mattered most. He said there was “a gaping hole where British leadership should be” with the UK Government “absent from the global economic debate at this critical time”.

Prime Minister David Cameron is enjoying a \$15,000-a-week holiday in France with his family. He did take some time out to talk to the governor of the Bank of England about the growing economic crisis and the turmoil in the stock markets caused by the downgrading of America’s credit rating. Chancellor George Osborne also made phone calls to other European finance ministers during his vacation in Los Angeles. Opposition politician Angela Eagle urged the government leaders to “get a grip and show some leadership”. She said: “I don’t begrudge anyone a holiday...they have stressful jobs, but I think it is fairly extraordinary that they are all away at exactly the same time.” Her Colleague John Mann said; “They’ve left a junior banker in charge. It shows they haven’t got a clue what to do.”

WARM-UPS

1. POLITICIANS: Walk around the class and talk to other students about politicians. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

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

senior / politicians / economic crisis / on holiday / fully functioning / leadership / turmoil / stock markets / credit rating / get a grip / extraordinary / haven't got a clue

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

3. HOLIDAYS: When, when not, and how long? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

	When?	When not?	How long
National leader			
Teacher			
Soldier			
Doctor			
Business leader			
Student			

4. LEADERSHIP: Students A **strongly** believe national leaders should show leadership and never take a holiday; Students B **strongly** believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. VACATION: What's best? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- the beach
- stay at home
- cruise
- trekking in the jungle
- abroad
- driving
- cycling
- camping

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

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110808-politicians.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. Politicians always go on holiday when a financial crisis comes along. T / F
- b. Britain's three top leaders all went on holiday at the same time. T / F
- c. Britain's foreign secretary the financial crisis has hit his country hard. T / F
- d. An opposition accused Britain's PM of showing a lack of leadership. T / F
- e. The UK leader has spoken to no one about economics while on holiday. T / F
- f. The British chancellor is vacationing with the prime minister. T / F
- g. Angela Eagle thinks the prime minister should not take holidays. T / F
- h. Ms Eagle's colleague said a gifted banker is in charge of GB's economy. T / F

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

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 1. under fire | a. devaluing |
| 2. current | b. vital |
| 3. functioning | c. encouraged |
| 4. gaping | d. being criticized |
| 5. critical | e. chaos |
| 6. turmoil | f. idea |
| 7. downgrading | g. present |
| 8. urged | h. be strong |
| 9. get a grip | i. operating |
| 10. clue | j. wide |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Senior UK politicians are under | a. when it mattered most |
| 2. his government was still fully | b. stock markets |
| 3. Britain was not in the firing | c. functioning |
| 4. failing to provide leadership | d. grip |
| 5. at this critical | e. fire for going on vacation |
| 6. turmoil in the | f. rating |
| 7. the downgrading of America's credit | g. what to do |
| 8. get a | h. line |
| 9. They've left a junior banker | i. time |
| 10. they haven't got a clue | j. in charge |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110808-politicians.html>

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

Senior UK politicians are under (1) _____ for going on vacation during the current global economic crisis. In Britain, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Chancellor are all (2) _____ on holiday. British Foreign Secretary William Hague, the most senior politician left in Britain, said this was not a problem and that his government was still "(3) _____ functioning". Mr Hague said Britain was "not in the firing line" of the world's financial problems as much as other countries. Opposition chancellor Ed Balls (4) _____ disagreed with Mr Hague and accused the government of (5) _____ to provide leadership when it (6) _____ most. He said there was "a gaping hole where British leadership should be" with the UK Government "(7) _____ from the global economic debate at this (8) _____ time".

mattered
away
absent
fully
fire
critical
failing
strongly

Prime Minister David Cameron is (9) _____ a \$15,000-a-week holiday in France with his family. He did take some time out to talk to the governor of the Bank of England about the growing economic crisis and the (10) _____ in the stock markets caused by the downgrading of America's (11) _____. Chancellor George Osborne also made phone calls to other European finance ministers (12) _____ his vacation in Los Angeles. Opposition politician Angela Eagle (13) _____ the government leaders to "get a (14) _____ and show some leadership". She said: "I don't begrudge anyone a holiday...they have stressful jobs, but I think it is (15) _____ extraordinary that they are all away at exactly the same time." Her Colleague John Mann said; "They've left a junior banker in charge. It shows they haven't got a (16) _____ what to do."

turmoil
during
clue
enjoying
grip
rating
fairly
urged

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110808-politicians.html>

Senior UK politicians are _____ vacation during the current global economic crisis. In Britain, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Chancellor _____. British Foreign Secretary William Hague, the most senior politician left in Britain, said this was not a problem and that his government was _____. Mr Hague said Britain was “not _____” of the world’s financial problems as much as other countries. Opposition chancellor Ed Balls strongly disagreed with Mr Hague and accused the government of failing to provide leadership when it mattered most. He said there was “a gaping hole where British leadership should be” with the UK Government “absent from the global economic _____ time”.

Prime Minister David Cameron is enjoying a \$15,000-a-week holiday in France with his family. He did _____ to talk to the governor of the Bank of England about the growing economic crisis and the _____ markets caused by the downgrading of America’s credit rating. Chancellor George Osborne also made phone calls to other European finance ministers during his vacation in Los Angeles. Opposition politician Angela Eagle _____ leaders to “get a grip and show some leadership”. She said: “I _____ a holiday...they have stressful jobs, but I think it is fairly extraordinary that they are all away at _____.” Her Colleague John Mann said; “They’ve left a junior banker in charge. It shows they _____ what to do.”

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110808-politicians.html>

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'financial' and 'crisis'.

financial	crisis
------------------	---------------

- 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 how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• under• away• fully• firing• mattered• critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• enjoying• turmoil• during• grip• stressful• clue
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STUDENT POLITICIANS SURVEY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110808-politicians.html>

Write five GOOD questions about politicians 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.

POLITICIANS 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 word 'politician'?
- c) What kind of politician would you be?
- d) Why do people enter politics?
- e) How many holidays should politicians have and when?
- f) Is it wise for Britain's three top leaders to go on holiday at the same time?
- g) Can a government be "fully functioning" without its three most senior leaders?
- h) Do you agree with Ed Balls that David Cameron is not showing leadership?
- i) Should David Cameron return from his holiday?
- j) Should prime ministers and presidents give up the right to a holiday?

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POLITICIANS DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Does David Cameron deserve a holiday?
- c) Do you think vacationing leaders are making the financial crisis worse?
- d) What is happening to the world's stock markets and why?
- e) What do you think of the politicians in your country?
- f) A saying goes: "You can tell when a politician lies because his/her lips move." What do you think of this?
- g) Have you ever needed to get a grip?
- h) Which politician or world leader do you respect most?
- i) Do you think a lot of politicians haven't got a clue?
- j) What questions would you like to ask David Cameron?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110808-politicians.html>

Senior UK politicians are (1) ____ fire for going on vacation during the current global economic crisis. In Britain, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Chancellor are all (2) ____ on holiday. British Foreign Secretary William Hague, the most senior politician left in Britain, said this was not a problem and that his government was still “(3) ____ functioning”. Mr Hague said Britain was “not in the (4) ____ line” of the world’s financial problems as much as other countries. Opposition chancellor Ed Balls strongly disagreed with Mr Hague and accused the government (5) ____ failing to provide leadership when it mattered most. He said there was “a gaping hole where British leadership should (6) ____” with the UK Government “absent from the global economic debate at this critical time”.

Prime Minister David Cameron is enjoying a \$15,000-a-week holiday in France with his family. He (7) ____ take some time out to talk to the governor of the Bank of England about the growing economic crisis and the turmoil (8) ____ the stock markets caused by the downgrading of America’s credit rating. Chancellor George Osborne also made phone calls to other European finance ministers during his vacation in Los Angeles. Opposition politician Angela Eagle (9) ____ the government leaders to “get a grip and show some leadership”. She said: “I don’t begrudge anyone a holiday...they have stressful jobs, but I think it is (10) ____ extraordinary that they are all away at exactly the same time.” Her Colleague John Mann said; “They’ve left a junior banker (11) ____ charge. It shows they haven’t got a (12) ____ what to do.”

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. | (a) over | (b) beneath | (c) on | (d) under |
| 2. | (a) way | (b) no way | (c) away | (d) ways |
| 3. | (a) fulfilling | (b) fully | (c) full | (d) full up |
| 4. | (a) firing | (b) fires | (c) fire | (d) fired |
| 5. | (a) so | (b) by | (c) of | (d) at |
| 6. | (a) have | (b) do | (c) give | (d) be |
| 7. | (a) made | (b) did | (c) went | (d) phoned |
| 8. | (a) in | (b) when | (c) so | (d) for |
| 9. | (a) wedged | (b) urged | (c) pledged | (d) nudged |
| 10. | (a) fairy | (b) failing | (c) fairly | (d) fraying |
| 11. | (a) in | (b) of | (c) for | (d) by |
| 12. | (a) clueless | (b) clued up | (c) clues | (d) clue |

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 more about politicians. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. POLITICIANS: Make a poster about politicians and holidays. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. HOLIDAYS: Write a magazine article about holidays for different professions. Include imaginary interviews with people who have short holidays and people with long holidays.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to a national leader. Ask him/her three questions about politicians' holidays. Give him/her three of your opinions. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 1. under fire | a. being criticized |
| 2. current | b. present |
| 3. functioning | c. operating |
| 4. gaping | d. wide |
| 5. critical | e. vital |
| 6. turmoil | f. chaos |
| 7. downgrading | g. devaluing |
| 8. urged | h. encouraged |
| 9. get a grip | i. be strong |
| 10. clue | j. idea |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Senior UK politicians are under | a. fire for going on vacation |
| 2. his government was still fully | b. functioning |
| 3. Britain was not in the firing | c. line |
| 4. failing to provide leadership | d. when it mattered most |
| 5. at this critical | e. time |
| 6. turmoil in the | f. stock markets |
| 7. the downgrading of America's credit | g. rating |
| 8. get a | h. grip |
| 9. They've left a junior banker | i. in charge |
| 10. they haven't got a clue | j. what to do |

GAP FILL:

Politicians holiday during financial crisis

Senior UK politicians are under (1) **fire** for going on vacation during the current global economic crisis. In Britain, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Chancellor are all (2) **away** on holiday. British Foreign Secretary William Hague, the most senior politician left in Britain, said this was not a problem and that his government was still "(3) **fully** functioning". Mr Hague said Britain was "not in the firing line" of the world's financial problems as much as other countries. Opposition chancellor Ed Balls (4) **strongly** disagreed with Mr Hague and accused the government of (5) **failing** to provide leadership when it (6) **mattered** most. He said there was "a gaping hole where British leadership should be" with the UK Government "(7) **absent** from the global economic debate at this (8) **critical** time".

Prime Minister David Cameron is (9) **enjoying** a \$15,000-a-week holiday in France with his family. He did take some time out to talk to the governor of the Bank of England about the growing economic crisis and the (10) **turmoil** in the stock markets caused by the downgrading of America's (11) **rating**. Chancellor George Osborne also made phone calls to other European finance ministers (12) **during** his vacation in Los Angeles. Opposition politician Angela Eagle (13) **urged** the government leaders to "get a (14) **grip** and show some leadership". She said: "I don't begrudge anyone a holiday...they have stressful jobs, but I think it is (15) **fairly** extraordinary that they are all away at exactly the same time." Her Colleague John Mann said; "They've left a junior banker in charge. It shows they haven't got a (16) **clue** what to do."

LANGUAGE WORK

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

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