

Major breakthrough in US-Cuba relations

19th December, 2014



A new chapter is starting with relations between the USA and Cuba. The two countries have had very little contact with each other for over fifty

years. That changed on Wednesday when US President Barack Obama announced he wanted to get the relationship between the USA and Cuba back to normal. One of the first things President Obama wants to do is to restore diplomatic and economic ties. He told reporters that: "Today, America chooses to cut loose the shackles of the past." Cuban President Raul Castro said: "We have agreed to re-establish diplomatic relations." The two sides have been in secret talks for more than a year. Some negotiations were at the Vatican and included help from Pope Francis.

The White House announced a series of actions to reset relations between the two nations. The USA will no longer state that Cuba sponsors terrorism. It will be easier for US citizens to travel to and do business in Cuba. There will also be better telephone and Internet access for people to communicate with each other. A major change is the lifting of the 54-year-old trade embargo that stops US goods going to Cuba and all Cuban goods going to the USA. Mr Castro said he has worked hard for the normalisation of ties with the USA. He said he hoped the two countries could now share a brighter future together. He told reporters: "We must learn the art of coexisting with our differences in a civilised manner."

Sources: BBC / Havana Times / New York Times

Writing

The future of the world is bright. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

chapter / relations / contact / normal / cut loose / the past / diplomatic / negotiations / reset / terrorism / do business / Internet access / trade embargo / brighter future

True / False

- The article says a new paragraph is starting between the US and Cuba. T / F
- The US and Cuba have not had much contact for more than 50 years. T / F
- President Obama said he wanted to break free from the past. T / F
- Pope Francis helped in negotiations between the US and Cuba. T / F
- It will still be difficult for US citizens to visit Cuba. T / F
- The trade embargo between the two countries will stay in place. T / F
- Cuba's president said this breakthrough didn't take much work. T / F
- Cuba's president said the US and Cuba had to learn to live together. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. chapter | a. great |
| 2. announced | b. period |
| 3. normal | c. countries |
| 4. secret | d. talks |
| 5. negotiations | e. supports |
| 6. nations | f. links |
| 7. sponsors | g. declared |
| 8. major | h. way |
| 9. ties | i. usual |
| 10. manner | j. confidential |

Discussion – Student A

- How will more Americans going to Cuba change Cuba?
- How will better relations help Americans?
- How will the future between the two countries be brighter?
- What difficulties might there be from now?
- What three adjectives best describe this story (and why)?
- Which other two nations really need to restore relations?
- How difficult is it for countries to coexist?
- What questions would you like to ask Raul Castro?

Breaking News English - The Mini Lesson

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. The two countries have had very little | a. do business in Cuba |
| 2. restore diplomatic and | b. of the past |
| 3. cut loose the shackles | c. were at the Vatican |
| 4. The two sides have been in secret talks | d. to reset relations |
| 5. Some negotiations | e. economic ties |
| 6. a series of actions | f. future together |
| 7. travel to and | g. for more than a year |
| 8. the lifting of the 54-year-old | h. manner |
| 9. share a brighter | i. contact with each other |
| 10. in a civilised. | j. trade embargo |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about relations between Cuba and the US?
- How will better relations change things for people in Cuba?
- How will this news change the world?
- How important is it to get US-Cuban relations back to normal?
- Who does your country need to restore relations with?
- How can the USA restore relations with other countries?
- How important is this news in terms of world history?
- Why and how do you think Pope Francis helped?

Spelling

- A new phctrae is starting
- two countries have had very little ctntoac
- ooeiccmn ties
- agreed to re-establish ilcmpaidt relations
- been in tscree talks for more than a year
- eiucnldd help from Pope Francis
- US nicszeit
- Internet esaccs
- eumcoimatcn with each other
- the 54-year-old trade oraegbm
- share a hebrgirt future together
- in a eivldciis (UK) / lizicdvie (USA) manner

Answers – Synonym Match

1. b	2. g	3. i	4. j	5. d
6. c	7. e	8. a	9. f	10. h

Role Play

Role A – Same language

You think having the same language is best thing for relations between two countries. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): same enemies, same religion or same currency.

Role B – Same enemies

You think having the same enemies is best thing for relations between two countries. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): same language, same religion or same currency.

Role C – Same religion

You think having the same religion is best thing for relations between two countries. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): same enemies, same language or same currency.

Role D – Same currency

You think having the same currency is best thing for relations between two countries. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so good. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): same enemies, same religion or same language.

Speaking – Relations

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things to help relations between countries at the top at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| • same language | • art |
| • trade | • common enemy |
| • sporting rivalry | • ethnicity |
| • same politics | • religion |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.