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## **Ahmadinejad wins Iranian presidency**

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**26 June, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Ahmadinejad wins Iranian presidency**

**BNE:** Tehran mayor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has pulled off a sensational landslide victory in Iran's runoff presidential election. The president-elect was little known outside of Teheran two weeks ago, when he finished second in the first round of voting. Few expected him to triumph this time round. He convincingly won the presidency with 61 per cent of the votes. Voter turnout was around 60 per cent. The votes of the poor and working class proved decisive in his overwhelming victory. Many voters want him to revert to fundamentalist Islamic laws, which have been reformed over the past few years. He will assume office after the presidential inauguration ceremony in August.

Mr. Ahmadinejad has rallied Iranians to put aside their differences and unite to make Iran a "modern, advanced and Islamic" nation. He said: "Today is a day when we have to forget all our rivalries and turn them into friendships." He has promised to redistribute oil wealth to the poor, which was a part of his populist appeal. He will certainly add new tensions on the world's political stage. His staunch, conservative views and his belief that Iran has an inalienable right to develop nuclear weapons are sure to antagonize the United States. George W. Bush famously branded Iran as being part of an axis of evil. That was when Iran was led by the more moderate Mohammad Khatami. Mr. Ahmadinejad will most definitely steer Iran into uncharted waters.

## **WARM-UPS**

**1. DIFFERENCES:** Iran's new leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has asked his people to put aside their differences and unite. In pairs / groups, talk about the differences that exist among people in your country. Are they divisive differences? The following table might help:

- North / South divide
- Religious differences
- Racial differences
- Class differences
- Linguistic differences
- Other
- Haves and have-nots
- Ethnic backgrounds
- Educational differences
- Class differences
- Gender differences

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

*Iran / Tehran / elections / Mahmoud Ahmadinejad / voting / Islamic laws / putting aside differences / rivalries / nuclear weapons / axis of evil / the unknown*

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

**3. IRAN:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with Iran. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**4. IRAN OPINIONS:** To what degree do you agree or disagree with these opinions? Change the statements so they match your own opinions and provide support for any changes you make.

- a. Iran is a truly democratic country.
- b. There is no reason why Iran should not develop nuclear weapons.
- c. Iran belongs to the axis of evil.
- d. Iran has much to offer the world.
- e. The recent election result will cause great instability in the region.
- f. President George W. Bush should immediately invite Mr. Ahmadinejad to his Texas ranch.
- g. Sharing a nation's oil revenues among its poor people should be copied by all oil-producing nations.
- h. The world is a more uncertain place after Mr. Ahmadinejad's election victory.
- i. Mr. Ahmadinejad will turn Iran's international rivalries into friendships.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. The Iranian election was neck and neck until the very end.           | T / F |
| b. The election winner is very well known across the globe.             | T / F |
| c. The poor and working class voted Mr. Ahmadinejad to power.           | T / F |
| d. Many voters want a more fundamentalist Islamic state.                | T / F |
| e. Mr. Ahmadinejad asked his fellow Iranians to cast aside differences. | T / F |
| f. Mr. Ahmadinejad said he would give Iran's oil revenues to the poor.  | T / F |
| g. Mr. Ahmadinejad wants to shelve Iran's nuclear programs.             | T / F |
| h. Iran is about to embark on a journey into the unknown.               | T / F |

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

- |                     |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| a. pulled off       | summoned     |
| b. triumph          | go back to   |
| c. decisive         | alienate     |
| d. revert           | accomplished |
| e. assume           | basic        |
| f. rallied          | take over    |
| g. put aside        | vanquish     |
| h. inalienable      | forget       |
| i. antagonize       | the unknown  |
| j. uncharted waters | instrumental |

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

- |                                |                         |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. sensational landslide       | presidential election   |
| b. runoff                      | aside their differences |
| c. Few expected him to triumph | appeal                  |
| d. revert to fundamentalist    | uncharted waters        |
| e. assume                      | this time round         |
| f. rallied Iranians to put     | victory                 |
| g. populist                    | Islamic laws            |
| h. the world's political       | right                   |
| i. an inalienable              | office                  |
| j. steer Iran into             | stage                   |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words in the column on the right into the correct spaces.

### Ahmadinejad wins Iranian presidency

**BNE:** Tehran mayor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has \_\_\_\_\_ off a sensational landslide victory in Iran's \_\_\_\_\_ presidential election. The president-elect was \_\_\_\_\_ known outside of Teheran two weeks ago, when he finished second in the first round of voting. Few expected him to \_\_\_\_\_ this time round. He convincingly won the presidency with 61 per cent of the votes. Voter \_\_\_\_\_ was around 60 per cent. The votes of the poor and working class proved \_\_\_\_\_ in his overwhelming victory. Many voters want him to \_\_\_\_\_ to fundamentalist Islamic laws, which have been reformed over the past few years. He will \_\_\_\_\_ office after the presidential inauguration ceremony in August.

Mr. Ahmadinejad has \_\_\_\_\_ Iranians to put aside their differences and unite to make Iran a "modern, advanced and Islamic" nation. He said: "Today is a day when we have to forget all our \_\_\_\_\_ and turn them into friendships." He has promised to \_\_\_\_\_ oil wealth to the poor, which was a part of his \_\_\_\_\_ appeal. He will certainly add new tensions on the world's political stage. His \_\_\_\_\_, conservative views and his belief that Iran has an \_\_\_\_\_ right to develop nuclear weapons are sure to antagonize the United States. George W. Bush famously \_\_\_\_\_ Iran as being part of an axis of evil. That was when Iran was led by the more moderate Mohammad Khatami. Mr. Ahmadinejad will most definitely \_\_\_\_\_ Iran into uncharted waters.

*little*  
*assume*  
*decisive*  
*triumph*  
*runoff*  
*revert*  
*turnout*  
*pulled*

*rivalries*  
*steer*  
*branded*  
*populist*  
*rallied*  
*staunch*  
*redistribute*  
*inalienable*

## **AFTER READING / LISTENING**

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

- 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 IRAN SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about Iran, the Middle East and relations with the U.S.

- 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:

- pulled off
- triumph
- convincingly
- decisive
- revert
- assume
- rallied
- rivalries
- populist
- staunch
- inalienable
- steer

## **DISCUSSION**

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

- a. What was your initial reaction to this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the story?
- c. Are you interested in Iranian politics?
- d. What do you know about Iran?
- e. Would you like to know more about Iran?
- f. Do you think Iran is a part of the "axis of evil"?
- g. What do you think about Iranians democratically deciding on a leader who wants Iran to reinstate strict Islamic laws?
- h. Do you think Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and George W. Bush will be good friends?
- i. Would it have been better if Mr. Rafsanjani had won the election?
- j. What kinds of uncharted waters Iran will be crossing?

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

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. What is your opinion on Mr. Ahmadinejad's election victory?
- d. Do you think Mr. Ahmadinejad will modernize Iran?
- e. What do you think of his election promise to redistribute Iran's oil wealth to the poor?
- f. Should Iran be allowed to develop nuclear weapons?
- g. How would a nuclear armed Iran affect the region?
- h. What should George W. Bush do if Iran presses ahead with its nuclear weapons program?
- i. Is Iran a good model of democracy for other Islamic nations?
- 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

**PUTTING ASIDE DIFFERENCES:** In pairs / groups, decide how the problems of the world can be solved by nations casting aside their differences. Discuss the obstacles and what needs to be done to turn rivalries into friendships. Then talk about the likelihood of this happening. Walk around the class and interview many students to add to the information in your table.

WORLD RIVALRIES	OBSTACLES TO FRIENDSHIP	LIKELIHOOD OF FRIENDSHIP
Iran / USA		
N.Korea / S. Korea		
Israel / Palestine		
India / Pakistan		
Your idea		

Return to your original partners and compare your findings. Which of the rivalries is most dangerous? Which is likeliest to be resolved?



## LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### Ahmadinejad wins Iranian presidency

**BNE:** Tehran mayor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ sensational landslide victory \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ presidential election. The president-elect was little known outside of Teheran two weeks ago, when he finished \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ round of voting. Few expected him to triumph this time round. He \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ the presidency with 61 per cent of the votes. Voter turnout was around 60 per cent. The votes of the poor and working class \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ his overwhelming victory. Many voters want him to \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ Islamic laws, which have been reformed over the past few years. He will \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ the presidential inauguration ceremony in August.

Mr. Ahmadinejad \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ to put aside their differences and unite to make Iran a “modern, advanced and Islamic” nation. He said: “Today is a day when we have to \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ and turn them into friendships.” He has \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ oil wealth to the poor, which was a part of his \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_. He will certainly add new tensions on the world’s political stage. His staunch, conservative views and his belief that Iran has \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ to develop nuclear weapons are \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ the United States. George W. Bush \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ as being part of an axis of evil. That was when Iran was led by the more moderate Mohammad Khatami. Mr. Ahmadinejad will most definitely steer Iran \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_.

## **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 Iran's president-elect Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. RIVALRIES:** Write an essay explaining the rivalries your country has. What needs to be done to turn the rivalries into greater friendship? Explain these rivalries to your classmates in your next lesson. Did everyone write about similar things?

**4. LETTER:** Write a letter to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Congratulate him on his election victory. Give him advice on what he should do during his presidency. Read your letter to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all give similar advice?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

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

### SYNONYM MATCH:

a. pulled off	accomplished
b. triumph	vanquish
c. decisive	instrumental
d. revert	go back to
e. assume	take over
f. rallied	summoned
g. put aside	forget
h. inalienable	basic
i. antagonize	alienate
j. uncharted waters	the unknown

### PHRASE MATCH:

a. sensational landslide	victory
b. runoff	presidential election
c. Few expected him to triumph	this time round
d. revert to fundamentalist	Islamic laws
e. assume	office
f. rallied Iranians to put	aside their differences
g. populist	appeal
h. the world's political	stage
i. an inalienable	right
j. steer Iran into	uncharted waters

### GAP FILL:

#### Ahmadinejad wins Iranian presidency

**BNE:** Tehran mayor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has **pulled** off a sensational landslide victory in Iran's **runoff** presidential election. The president-elect was **little** known outside of Teheran two weeks ago, when he finished second in the first round of voting. Few expected him to **triumph** this time round. He convincingly won the presidency with 61 per cent of the votes. Voter **turnout** was around 60 per cent. The votes of the poor and working class proved **decisive** in his overwhelming victory. Many voters want him to **revert** to fundamentalist Islamic laws, which have been reformed over the past few years. He will **assume** office after the presidential inauguration ceremony in August.

Mr. Ahmadinejad has **rallied** Iranians to put aside their differences and unite to make Iran a "modern, advanced and Islamic" nation. He said: "Today is a day when we have to forget all our **rivalries** and turn them into friendships." He has promised to **redistribute** oil wealth to the poor, which was a part of his **populist** appeal. He will certainly add new tensions on the world's political stage. His **staunch**, conservative views and his belief that Iran has an **inalienable** right to develop nuclear weapons are sure to antagonize the United States. George W. Bush famously **branded** Iran as being part of an axis of evil. That was when Iran was led by the more moderate Mohammad Khatami. Mr. Ahmadinejad will most definitely **steer** Iran into uncharted waters.