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US Army having recruiting problems

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Today's contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
After Reading	6
Discussion	7
Speaking	8
Listening Gap Fill	9
Homework	10
Answers	11

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5 October, 2005

THE ARTICLE

US Army having recruiting problems

BNE: The United States Army did not meet its recruitment goals in the year ending September 30. Although more than 73,000 new recruits joined, this was more than eight percent short of its target. This is the biggest slump in Army numbers in a quarter of a century. Army spokesman Francis Harvey said he was concerned about the lower numbers but added that it was not a crisis. He said one reason for the shortfall is the larger number of jobs available in the strong American economy. Another reason is the nearly 2,000 soldiers who have died in Iraq.

The Army has done many things to encourage young people to join. There is now more money than ever available to new soldiers. Anyone who serves four years in the Army can get a \$25,000 bonus for buying a home. The Army also tried a larger recruitment campaign. Thousands of recruiters toured shopping malls asking young people to sign up. The recruiters offered much bigger sign-up bonuses than before. Richard Cody, a top-ranking officer, said the Army might not be able to increase in size and meet its overseas commitments.

WARM-UPS

1. JOIN THE ARMY: In pairs / groups, talk about which of the following are good reasons to join the army:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. Adventure | f. To learn new skills |
| b. To use a gun | g. To travel |
| c. To fight in combat | h. To be a hero |
| d. To protect one's country | i. To get medals |
| e. The uniform | j. To have good friends |

2. I'M A SOLDIER: You are now a soldier in the US Army. Walk around the classroom and talk to the other "soldiers" about army life. What are the best and worst things about being a soldier? Which countries have you been to? Are you going to stay a soldier for a long time?

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

Armies / soldiers / targets / recruitment / slumps / American economy / careers / Iraq / encouragement / more money / bonuses / buying a home / commitments

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

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

5. ARMY DEBATES: Debate each of the arguments below with a partner for just two minutes. After two minutes, move on to the next partner and debate. Student A agrees with the first argument, Student B, the second.

- Army life is better than deskwork. vs. Deskwork is better than army life.
- All citizens must join the army for one year. vs. This is a bad idea.
- Soldiers should get a very high salary. vs. Soldiers get enough now.
- All soldiers are heroes. vs. Soldiers are just doing their jobs.
- Killing someone in action is murder. vs. Killing the enemy is a soldier's duty.
- There should be no armies in the world. vs. Armies help keep the peace.
- Money should be spent on reducing poverty. vs. Money is needed for soldiers.
- Joining the army is best. vs. Joining the air force or navy is better.

6. WE NEED YOU: Write down some of the attractions of your job (or the job you would like to do). After you have finished, take the following roles: Students A - You are a recruiter for your company. You need to hire more people to do your job. Try to encourage Students B to join your company and do your job. Students B - You do NOT want to do the job Student A is offering. Take turns in being Students A and B.

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 computers in the US Army recruitment office shut down. | T / F |
| b. The US Army experienced its biggest recruitment slump in 25 years. | T / F |
| c. More young people are choosing different careers. | T / F |
| d. The Iraq War has not affected the number of new recruits. | T / F |
| e. Anyone who joins the US Army gets \$25,000 to buy a new house. | T / F |
| f. Army training includes driving around shopping malls. | T / F |
| g. Many young people are being offered bigger bonuses to sign up. | T / F |
| h. The US Army will have no problem meeting overseas commitments. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|----------------|-----------|
| a. meet | dip |
| b. goals | drive |
| c. slump | duties |
| d. crisis | help |
| e. nearly | targets |
| f. encourage | works |
| g. serves | almost |
| h. campaign | joining |
| i. sign-up | achieve |
| j. commitments | emergency |

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

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| a. meet its recruitment | of a century |
| b. more than eight percent | in Army numbers |
| c. the biggest slump | sign-up bonuses |
| d. a quarter | short of its target |
| e. the larger number | campaign |
| f. encourage young people | of jobs available |
| g. recruitment | commitments |
| h. recruiters offered much bigger | officer |
| i. a top-ranking | goals |
| j. meet its overseas | to join |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

WHOOPS: Four of the eight words in bold in each paragraph are incorrect. Find and delete them. In pairs / groups, think of a better word.

US Army having recruiting problems

BNE: The United States Army did not **greet** its recruitment goals in the year **ending** September 30. Although more than 73,000 new recruits joined, this was more than eight percent **long** of its target. This is the biggest **slump** in Army numbers in a quarter of a century. Army spokesman Francis Harvey said he was concerned about the **higher** numbers but added that it was not a **crisis**. He said one reason for the shortfall is the larger number of jobs available in the **strong** American economy. Another reason is the **nearby** 2,000 soldiers who have died in Iraq.

The Army has done many things to **discourage** young people to join. There is now more **money** than ever available to new soldiers. Anyone who **serves** four years in the Army can get a \$25,000 bonus for buying a **home**. The Army also tried a larger recruitment campaign. Thousands of recruiters toured shopping **malls** asking young people to sign **down**. The recruiters offered much bigger sign-up bonuses than **after**. Richard Cody, a top-ranking officer, said the Army might not be able to increase in size and meet its **undersea** commitments.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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. WHOOPS: 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. STUDENT "ARMY" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about armies and being a soldier.

- 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:

- meet
- eight percent
- quarter
- crisis
- shortfall
- Iraq
- encourage
- \$25,000
- recruitment
- malls
- sign-up bonuses
- overseas

DISCUSSION

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

- a. What did you think when you first read this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What do you think of the US Army?
- d. Would you like to be a soldier?
- e. How would you feel about being sent to a war zone in another country?
- f. Are you surprised at the problem with America's Army?
- g. How would you feel if your child joined the army?
- h. Would you prefer to join the army, navy or air force?
- i. Do you think life in the army would be exciting?
- j. What do you think of the idea of everyone joining the army for one year?

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. What do you think of people who become soldiers?
- d. Do you think soldiers are paid enough money?
- e. Do you think it's the duty of every citizen to fight to protect his / her country?
- f. Have you ever thought about joining the army?
- g. What do you think the US Army can do to enlist more new recruits?
- h. What do you think of the fact that almost all army recruits come from poor families?
- i. Are you proud of your country's army?
- 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

ARMY RECRUITMENT: Your job is to recruit thousands of young people into the army. Use the attractions in the left hand column to make a campaign aimed at encouraging people to enlist. Think of the wonderful reasons why young men and women should sign up.

ATTRACTIONS	WONDERFUL REASONS TO SIGN UP
Foreign travel	
Good employer	
Financial benefits	
Uniform	
Learn new skills	
Meet new people	
Other	

Change partners and show each other your ideas. Provide each other with feedback on how to improve your campaigns.

Change partners again. Take turns in role playing the recruiter and a young person very reluctant to join the army.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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BNE: The United States Army did not _____ its recruitment _____ in the year ending September 30. Although more than 73,000 new _____ joined, this was more than eight percent short of its target. This is the biggest _____ in Army numbers in a _____ of a century. Army spokesman Francis Harvey said he was concerned about the lower numbers but added that it was not a _____. He said one reason for the shortfall is the larger number of jobs available in the _____ American economy. Another _____ is the nearly 2,000 soldiers who have died in Iraq.

The Army has done many things to _____ young people to join. There is now more money than ever available to new soldiers. Anyone who _____ four years in the Army can get a \$25,000 _____ for buying a home. The Army also tried a larger recruitment campaign. Thousands of recruiters _____ shopping malls asking young people to _____ _____. The recruiters offered much bigger sign-up bonuses than before. Richard Cody, a top-ranking officer, said the Army might not be able to increase in size and _____ its overseas commitments.

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 the US Army. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. FIRST DAY: You have joined the army. Write your diary / journal entry describing your first day. What are your fears, hopes and expectations? Show your entries to your partners in your next class. Did you all write about similar things?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to the head the US Army's recruiting department. Tell him / her how he / she can increase the number of recruits joining the Army. Make suggestions as to why the number of young people joining the Army is lower than expected. Read your letter 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. F f. F g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. meet	achieve
b. goals	targets
c. slump	dip
d. crisis	emergency
e. nearly	almost
f. encourage	help
g. serves	works
h. campaign	drive
i. sign-up	joining
j. commitments	duties

PHRASE MATCH:

a. meet its recruitment	goals
b. more than eight percent	short of its target
c. the biggest slump	in Army numbers
d. a quarter	of a century
e. the larger number	of jobs available
f. encourage young people	to join
g. recruitment	campaign
h. recruiters offered much bigger	sign-up bonuses
i. a top-ranking	officer
j. meet its overseas	commitments

WHOOPS:

US Army having recruiting problems

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