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Madonna defends Malawi child adoption

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1 November, 2006

THE ARTICLE

Madonna defends Malawi child adoption

Pop superstar Madonna has at last publicly defended her high profile adoption of a Malawian baby. The songstress appeared on America's Oprah Winfrey show to talk about her actions, two weeks after taking 13-month-old David Banda to the UK from his native Malawi. The controversial move has since provoked widespread disapproval from many quarters. Many commentators have accused Madonna of using the adoption as a publicity stunt and of using her wealth and fame to get her way. They compare the extensive worldwide television coverage she attracted with the very low-key nature in which Angelina Jolie adopted two children from Cambodia and Ethiopia. Child-protection agencies, in particular, criticized Madonna for how unusually fast she secured the adoption.

In the Oprah interview, a very frank Madonna admitted that social workers had warned her that the lack of adoption laws in Malawi would create difficulties. She told Winfrey: "There are no adoption laws in Malawi. I was warned that ... they [the Malawi government] were more or less going to have to make them up as we went along." Madonna added that a social worker advised her to 'Pick Ethiopia. Go to Kenya. Don't go to Malawi because you're just going to get a hard time.' She pleaded with the world's press to focus on the real issues: "I understand that gossip and negative stories sell newspapers. But I'm disappointed because it discourages other people from doing the same thing ... I feel like the media is doing a great disservice to all the orphans of Africa," she said.

START

1. DICTATION: The teacher will read to you slowly and clearly the first half of the first paragraph, repeating passages where necessary. Students will write down the speech. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again.

Self correct your work. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total no of errors. Less than 5 is very good. 10 are acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than 20 - we need to do some work!

2. READING: Get students to read the passage aloud. Swap readers every paragraph.

3. VOCABULARY: Students circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

4. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting (circle) and which are most boring (underline).

Gossip / child protection agencies / fame / television / adoption / native / newspapers / children / pop superstar / babies / social workers / real issues / negative stories / songstress / wealth

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

5. ADOPTING: Walk around the class and find out what people know about adopting children from other countries. Share your findings with new partners / the class.

6. AFRICAN ORPHANAGE: ROLE PLAY: SPEAKING 1

Student A. Imagine you are a pop star. You want to adopt an orphan. You have traveled to Africa (select a country – locate it and its capital on a map!) in the hope of adopting a child. Write down five questions you want to ask the orphanage you visit.

Student B. You are the boss of an African orphanage in this country. Write down five questions you want to discuss with any potential parent(s) who visit(s) you.

Role play: Students ask each other your questions. Decide whether the child in question can be adopted by the potential new parents.

The teacher will select some students to role play their situation in front of the class.

7. QUICK DEBATE: Students A believe adopting an orphan child from Africa is a good idea. Students B believe it isn't. Debate this with your partners. Change partners often.

8. ORPHANS: SPEAKING 2

Swap partners! In pairs imagine you are both orphans from two of the following countries. Compare and discuss briefly with your new partner anything you might remember about your previous life or what your new adopted parents have told you about it. Describe some positive and negative situations you have had to live through.

Ireland

Cambodia

Malawi

Kenya

Vietnam

South Korea

Ethiopia

Your country

Romania

Other _____

Teacher: Get the students to draw a map of the world on the board. Ask students to locate each country. (Split into two groups if necessary using the countries in each column accordingly)

9. PRESS: ROLE PLAY: SPEAKING 3

'Exclusive' TV interview with Madonna!

Student A. Imagine you are a BBC / CNN television news reporter. You have an 'exclusive' interview with Madonna. Prepare five questions you want to ask her about her adoption of an orphan from Africa.

Student B. You are Madonna! Think of five things (write them down) you want to mention to the world in the forthcoming interview with student A about the adoption of your new baby.

Role play: Student A asks Student B (Madonna) your questions. Listen to her response. React to her comments.

The teacher will select some students to role play their situations in front of the class.

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10. SENTENCE STARTERS: With your partner(s), finish these sentence starters. Change partner(s) and talk about the sentences you made.

- a. Angelina Jolie _____
- b. The media _____
- c. Madonna's adoption _____
- d. In an interview _____
- e. Adoption laws _____
- f. Speaking on CNN _____
- g. The Malawi government _____
- h. Child protection agencies _____

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

12. FIVE MINUTES: Choose three of these words. Write a sentence using each word. Try to associate them with **adoption**. Discuss with your partner. Spend five minutes on this exercise.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Angelina Jolie adopted two children | T / F |
| b. Madonna has adopted a baby girl | T / F |
| c. There are no adoption laws in Malawi | T / F |
| d. Madonna appeared on the David Letterman show | T / F |
| e. The adoption was usually fast | T / F |
| f. A social worker advised her to go to South Africa | T / F |
| g. Madonna has three other children | T / F |
| h. Many commentators accused Madonna of using the adoption as a publicity stunt | T / F |

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

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| a. talk | meeting |
| b. commentators | word of mouth /hearsay/dirt |
| c. interview | damage |
| d. gossip | deed |
| e. press | centre |
| f. disservice | honest |
| g. frank | trick |
| h. actions | discuss |
| i. focus | analysts |
| j. stunt | media |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. She told Winfrey | since provoked widespread disapproval... |
| b. The media is | accused Madonna |
| c. The controversial move has | 'Pick Ethiopia. |
| d. Many commentators have | a very frank Madonna... |
| e. Gossip and negative stories | 13-month-old David Banda |
| f. A social worker advised her to | criticized Madonna |
| g. Two weeks after taking | publicly defended her high profile adoption |
| h. Child protection agencies, in particular, | "There are no adoption laws in Malawi. |
| i. In the Oprah interview | doing a great disservice |
| j. Pop superstar Madonna has at last | sell newspapers |

GAP FILL: READING

Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Madonna defends Malawi child adoption

Pop _____ Madonna has at last publicly defended her high profile _____ of a Malawian baby. The songstress appeared on America's Oprah Winfrey show to talk about her actions, two weeks after taking 13-month-old David Banda to the UK from his _____ Malawi. The _____ move has since provoked widespread disapproval from many quarters. Many _____ have accused Madonna of using the adoption as a publicity stunt and of using her _____ and fame to get her way. They compare the extensive worldwide television _____ she attracted with the very low-key _____ in which Angelina Jolie adopted two children from Cambodia and Ethiopia. Child-protection agencies, in particular, criticised Madonna for how unusually fast she secured the adoption.

adoption
commentators
native
coverage
superstar
nature
wealth
controversial

In the Oprah interview, a very _____ Madonna admitted that social workers had warned her that the lack of adoption _____ in Malawi would create difficulties. She told Winfrey: "There are no adoption laws in Malawi. I was warned that ... they [the Malawi government] were more or less going to have to make them up as we went along." Madonna added that a _____ advised her to 'Pick Ethiopia. Go to Kenya. Don't go to Malawi because you're just going to get a hard time.' She pleaded with the world's _____ to focus on the real issues: "I understand that _____ and _____ stories sell newspapers. But I'm disappointed because it discourages other people from doing the same thing ... I feel like the _____ is doing a great disservice to all the _____ of Africa," she said.

negative
orphans
social worker
laws
gossip
frank
press
media

GAP FILL: LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Madonna defends Malawi child adoption

Pop superstar Madonna has at last _____ her high profile adoption of a Malawian baby. The songstress appeared on America's Oprah Winfrey show to _____ actions, two weeks after taking 13-month-old David Banda to the UK from his native Malawi. The controversial move has since provoked _____ many quarters. Many _____ have accused Madonna of using the adoption as a publicity stunt and of using her wealth and fame to _____. They compare the extensive worldwide television coverage _____ the very low-key nature in which Angelina Jolie adopted two children from Cambodia and Ethiopia. Child-protection agencies, in particular, criticised Madonna for how unusually fast _____ adoption.

In the Oprah interview, a _____ Madonna admitted that social workers had warned her that the lack of adoption laws in Malawi would create difficulties. She told Winfrey: "There are no _____ Malawi. I was warned that ... they [the _____ government] were more or less going _____ make them up as we went along." Madonna added that a social worker advised her to '_____. Go to Kenya. Don't go to Malawi because you're just going to get a hard time." She pleaded with the world's press to focus on the real issues: "I understand _____ negative stories sell newspapers. But I'm disappointed because it _____ people from doing the same thing ... I feel like the media is doing a great disservice _____ of Africa," she said.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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 or subject in question.

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

- Madonna
- David Banda
- Ethiopia
- Newspapers
- Orphans
- Africa
- Superstar
- Oprah Winfrey
- The Malawi government
- The world's press
- Social workers
- Television

DISCUSSION

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

1. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
2. Should pop superstars be able to adopt children?
3. If you were a pop star, would you adopt a child?
4. Do you know anyone who has adopted a child?
5. Should rich countries do more to help the orphans of Africa?
6. Should adopted children be able to visit their relatives/country?
7. What country would you choose if you wanted to adopt a child?
8. Do you think adoption laws in some countries are too easy?
9. Should some countries relax their harsh adoption laws?
10. Were child protection agencies right to criticize Madonna?

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. Should the world's press back off from publicizing pop stars' private lives?
- d. Would you go to Africa to adopt a child?
- e. Have you ever visited an orphanage?
- f. What do you think the living conditions are like in an orphanage?
- g. Do you think it's easy being an adopted child?
- h. Should older parents be able to adopt children?
- i. Does your country make adopting easy?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

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. Find out information about Madonna adopting her Malawi child. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. MALAWI: NEWS ARTICLE: You are a reporter for 'The Sunday Times' newspaper. Imagine you have just returned from Malawi in Africa. You are reporting on Madonna's adoption of David Banda. Write a feature on what you saw. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Which entry was best and why?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to an orphanage in Africa. Tell them about yourself and your partner and why you want to adopt a child. Ask three questions. Show your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Your classmates will write a reply.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| a. talk | discuss |
| b. commentators | analysts |
| c. interview | meeting |
| d. gossip | word of mouth / hearsay |
| e. press | media |
| f. disservice | damage |
| g. frank | honest |
| h. actions | deeds |
| i. focus | centre |
| j. stunt | trick |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. She told Winfrey | "There are no adoption laws in Malawi. |
| b. The media is | doing a great disservice |
| c. The controversial move has | since provoked widespread disapproval... |
| d. Many commentators have | accused Madonna |
| e. Gossip and negative stories | sell newspapers |
| f. A social worker advised her to | 'Pick Ethiopia. |
| g. Two weeks after taking | 13-month-old David Banda |
| h. Child protection agencies, in particular, | criticized Madonna |
| i. In the Oprah interview | a very frank Madonna... |
| j. Pop superstar Madonna has at last | publicly defended her high profile adoption |

GAP FILL:

Madonna defends Malawi child adoption

Pop **superstar** Madonna has at last publicly defended her high profile **adoption** of a Malawian baby. The songstress appeared on America's Oprah Winfrey show to talk about her actions, two weeks after taking 13-month-old David Banda to the UK from his **native** Malawi. The **controversial** move has since provoked widespread disapproval from many quarters. Many **commentators** have accused Madonna of using the adoption as a publicity stunt and of using her **wealth** and fame to get her way. They compare the extensive worldwide television **coverage** she attracted with the very low-key **nature** in which Angelina Jolie adopted two children from Cambodia and Ethiopia. Child-protection agencies, in particular, criticised Madonna for how unusually fast she secured the adoption.

In the Oprah interview, a very **frank** Madonna admitted that social workers had warned her that the lack of adoption **laws** in Malawi would create difficulties. She told Winfrey: "There are no adoption laws in Malawi. I was warned that ... they [the Malawi government] were more or less going to have to make them up as we went along." Madonna added that a **social worker** advised her to 'Pick Ethiopia. Go to Kenya. Don't go to Malawi because you're just going to get a hard time." She pleaded with the world's **press** to focus on the real issues: "I understand that **gossip** and **negative** stories sell newspapers. But I'm disappointed because it discourages other people from doing the same thing ... I feel like the **media** is doing a great disservice to all the **orphans** of Africa," she said.