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# PlayStations banned in UK jails

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0807/080726-prison.html>

## Contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading / Listening	7
Student Survey	8
Discussion	9
Language Work	10
Writing	11
Homework	12
Answers	13

## THE ARTICLE

The heads of British prisons have banned prisoners from playing computer games that have an adult rating. Under new rules, prison authorities have also decided not to buy any more games or games consoles for prisoners. However, they are allowing prisoners who behave well to buy their own PlayStations or xBoxes. Prisons can also allow prisoners at risk of suicide to play games to keep them occupied. The new crackdown on the games culture in prisons is because of a fear that many games make prisoners more violent. The Prison Service has called an end to its PlayStation Project, where games consoles were given to highly dangerous prisoners. The reason for introducing prison gaming was to stop prisoners from getting too depressed.

The British government sparked anger last year when it admitted to spending \$20,000 on games and equipment for prisoners to use in their cells. There was public uproar when a convicted killer was photographed with a PlayStation in May. A leading prison reformer, Geoff Dobson, said games did serve a useful purpose to keep order in prisons. "We should not forget the usefulness of these games to prison officers...keeping order in overcrowded prisons," he said. Dobson added that because of overcrowding, prisoners were spending more time in their cells doing nothing and becoming more frustrated. He summed up the problem, saying: "The bottom line is access to computer games is no substitute for [useful] activity like work or education classes."

# WARM-UPS

**1. PRISON:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about prisons. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your 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.

*heads / British prisons / computer games / prisoners / suicide / violent / depressed / sparking anger / prison cells / uproar / convicted killer / overcrowding / bottom line*

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

**3. PRISON OPINIONS:** Do you agree with these opinions? Talk about them with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you talked about.

- Prisoners should never be allowed to have things like computer games.
- Violent computer games make everyone violent.
- Prisoners should be allowed to take their own PlayStations to their cells.
- Prisoners should work or study in their cells, not play games.
- Prisoners need to relax. PlayStation is a good way of relaxing.
- I'd like to be locked in a cell for 20 hours with nothing but a PlayStation.
- If PlayStations help keep prisons quiet, every prisoner should have one.
- Spending taxpayers' money on games consoles for prisoners is an outrage.

**4. PRISON CELLS:** What do you think prisoners should be allowed to have in their cells? Rate the items below: 10 = "Prisoners must have this" 1 = "No way on Earth should prisoners have this". Discuss your ratings and reasons with your partner(s).

_____ PlayStation	_____ newspapers
_____ computer with Internet access	_____ radio
_____ television	_____ music
_____ books	_____ coffee maker / kettle
_____ a pen and paper	_____ toilet

**5. HEADLINE PREDICTION:** With your partner(s), use the words in the "Chat" activity above to predict what the news article will be about. Once you have your story, change partners and share them. Who was closest to the real story?

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

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- a. British prisoners can no longer play adult-rated games on PlayStations. T / F
- b. Prisons will stop buying PlayStation consoles and games for prisoners. T / F
- c. Prisoners are no longer allowed to buy PlayStations while in prison. T / F
- d. Prisons introduced PlayStations to stop prisoners getting bored. T / F
- e. The British government spent \$200,000 on PlayStations last year. T / F
- f. A prison reformer said PlayStations help keep the peace in prisons. T / F
- g. There are not too many prisoners in British prison cells. T / F
- h. The reformer said education classes are better than PlayStations. T / F

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

- |                 |                        |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1. heads        | a. heart of the matter |
| 2. banned       | b. act                 |
| 3. behave       | c. miserable           |
| 4. suicide      | d. stopped             |
| 5. depressed    | e. anger               |
| 6. sparked      | f. peace               |
| 7. uproar       | g. bosses              |
| 8. order        | h. summarized          |
| 9. summed up    | i. killing oneself     |
| 10. bottom line | j. started             |

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

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. computer games that have            | a. in overcrowded prisons |
| 2. prisoners who behave                | b. anger last year        |
| 3. prisoners at risk                   | c. well                   |
| 4. games consoles were given to highly | d. uproar                 |
| 5. stop prisoners from getting         | e. of suicide             |
| 6. The British government sparked      | f. an adult rating        |
| 7. public                              | g. for useful activity    |
| 8. games did serve a                   | h. too depressed          |
| 9. keeping order                       | i. useful purpose         |
| 10. no substitute                      | j. dangerous prisoners    |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

The heads of British prisons have \_\_\_\_\_ prisoners from playing computer games that have an adult \_\_\_\_\_. Under new rules, prison authorities have also decided not to buy any more games or games consoles for prisoners. However, they are allowing prisoners who \_\_\_\_\_ well to buy their own PlayStations or xBoxes. Prisons can also allow prisoners at \_\_\_\_\_ of suicide to play games to keep them occupied. The new \_\_\_\_\_ on the games culture in prisons is because of a fear that many games make prisoners more violent. The Prison Service has called an \_\_\_\_\_ to its PlayStation Project, where games consoles were given to \_\_\_\_\_ dangerous prisoners. The reason for introducing prison gaming was to stop prisoners from \_\_\_\_\_ too depressed.

The British government sparked \_\_\_\_\_ last year when it admitted to spending \$20,000 on games and equipment for prisoners to use in their \_\_\_\_\_. There was public uproar when a convicted \_\_\_\_\_ was photographed with a PlayStation in May. A leading prison reformer, Geoff Dobson, said games did serve a useful \_\_\_\_\_ to keep order in prisons. "We should not forget the usefulness of these games to prison officers...keeping \_\_\_\_\_ in overcrowded prisons," he said. Dobson added that because of overcrowding, prisoners were \_\_\_\_\_ more time in their cells doing nothing and becoming more \_\_\_\_\_. He summed up the problem, saying: "The bottom line is access to computer games is no \_\_\_\_\_ for [useful] activity like work or education classes."

*crackdown*

*highly*

*rating*

*getting*

*risk*

*banned*

*end*

*behave*

*order*

*cells*

*purpose*

*frustrated*

*anger*

*substitute*

*killer*

*spending*

## **LISTENING:** Listen and fill in the spaces.

The heads of British prisons have \_\_\_\_\_ playing computer games that have an adult rating. \_\_\_\_\_, prison authorities have also decided not to buy any more games or games consoles for prisoners. However, they are allowing prisoners \_\_\_\_\_ buy their own PlayStations or xBoxes. Prisons can also allow prisoners \_\_\_\_\_ to play games to keep them occupied. The new crackdown on the games culture in prisons is because of a fear that many games \_\_\_\_\_ violent. The Prison Service has called an end to its PlayStation Project, where games consoles were given to highly dangerous prisoners. The reason for introducing prison gaming was to stop prisoners \_\_\_\_\_ depressed.

The British government \_\_\_\_\_ year when it admitted to spending \$20,000 on games and equipment for prisoners to use in their cells. There was \_\_\_\_\_ a convicted killer was photographed with a PlayStation in May. A \_\_\_\_\_, Geoff Dobson, said games did serve a useful purpose to keep order in prisons. "We should not \_\_\_\_\_ of these games to prison officers...keeping order in overcrowded prisons," he said. Dobson added that because of overcrowding, prisoners were spending more time in their cells doing nothing and becoming \_\_\_\_\_. He summed up the problem, saying: "The bottom line is access to computer games \_\_\_\_\_ [useful] activity like work or education classes."

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

<b>prison</b>	<b>cell</b>
---------------	-------------

- 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"><li>• heads</li><li>• rules</li><li>• behave</li><li>• culture</li><li>• project</li><li>• reason</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sparked</li><li>• uproar</li><li>• purpose</li><li>• order</li><li>• frustrated</li><li>• bottom</li></ul>
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# STUDENT PRISONS SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about prisons 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.

# PRISONS 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 'prison'?
- c) Do you think prisoners should have PlayStations in their cells?
- d) What is the most important role of a prison?
- e) Do you think PlayStations can serve a useful purpose in prisons?
- f) Should a government buy PlayStations for prisoners or poor children?
- g) Do you think violent video games make prisoners more violent?
- h) Is it a good idea for prisons to keep a few PlayStations for suicidal prisoners?
- i) Do video games stop you from getting depressed?
- j) What do you think of the prison PlayStation Project?

*PlayStations banned in UK jails - 26th July, 2008*  
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# PRISONS DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Would you be angry if your government spent money on video games consoles for prisoners?
- c) What should prisoners be allowed to have in their cells?
- d) Should prisoners be allowed PlayStations to keep the peace?
- e) Is giving a prisoner a PlayStation a real punishment?
- f) If you were a prison officer, would you like all prisoners to have PlayStations?
- g) How do you keep the peace in overcrowded prisons?
- h) How frustrated do you get when you have nothing to do?
- i) Is the bottom line letting no prisoners play games?
- j) What useful activity should prisoners do in prison?

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# LANGUAGE

The heads of British prisons have (1) \_\_\_\_ prisoners from playing computer games that have an adult rating. (2) \_\_\_\_ new rules, prison authorities have also decided not to buy any more games or games consoles for prisoners. However, they are allowing prisoners who behave (3) \_\_\_\_ to buy their own PlayStations or xBoxes. Prisons can also allow prisoners at risk (4) \_\_\_\_ suicide to play games to keep them occupied. The new crackdown on the games culture in prisons is because of a fear that many games make prisoners more (5) \_\_\_\_\_. The Prison Service has called an end to its PlayStation Project, where games consoles were given to (6) \_\_\_\_ dangerous prisoners. The reason for introducing prison gaming was to stop prisoners from getting too depressed.

The British government (7) \_\_\_\_ anger last year when it admitted to spending \$20,000 on games and equipment for prisoners to use in their cells. There was public (8) \_\_\_\_ when a convicted killer was photographed with a PlayStation in May. A leading prison reformer, Geoff Dobson, said games did serve a useful purpose to (9) \_\_\_\_ order in prisons. "We should not forget the usefulness of these games to prison officers...keeping order in overcrowded prisons," he said. Dobson (10) \_\_\_\_ that because of overcrowding, prisoners were spending more time in their cells doing nothing and becoming more frustrated. He summed (11) \_\_\_\_ the problem, saying: "The (12) \_\_\_\_ line is access to computer games is no substitute for [useful] activity like work or education classes."

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

- |     |               |                |              |              |
|-----|---------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.  | (a) boned     | (b) burned     | (c) binned   | (d) banned   |
| 2.  | (a) Over      | (b) Upon       | (c) Under    | (d) For      |
| 3.  | (a) good      | (b) well       | (c) OK       | (d) up       |
| 4.  | (a) of        | (b) on         | (c) in       | (d) at       |
| 5.  | (a) violently | (b) violence   | (c) violent  | (d) violet   |
| 6.  | (a) tall      | (b) height     | (c) high     | (d) highly   |
| 7.  | (a) sparks    | (b) sparked    | (c) sparking | (d) sparkled |
| 8.  | (a) uproar    | (b) roared     | (c) roaring  | (d) roars    |
| 9.  | (a) get       | (b) keep       | (c) take     | (d) make     |
| 10. | (a) totalled  | (b) multiplied | (c) added    | (d) summed   |
| 11. | (a) up        | (b) on         | (c) in       | (d) into     |
| 12. | (a) diagonal  | (b) top        | (c) middle   | (d) bottom   |



# 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 prisons in your country. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. PRISON RULES:** Make a poster about prison rules and what prisoners should and should not be allowed to have in their cells. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. NO PS3:** Write a magazine article about the life of prisoners. Include imaginary interviews with a prisoner whose PlayStation was taken away and the victim of crime.

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. DIARY / JOURNAL:** You are a prisoner. Write your diary entry for one day in your life. Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson.

**6. LETTER:** Write a letter to the boss of a prison. Ask him/her three questions about his/her prison. Give him/her three pieces of advice on how to improve his/her prison for prisoners. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

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

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                 |                        |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1. heads        | a. bosses              |
| 2. banned       | b. stopped             |
| 3. behave       | c. act                 |
| 4. suicide      | d. killing oneself     |
| 5. depressed    | e. miserable           |
| 6. sparked      | f. started             |
| 7. uproar       | g. anger               |
| 8. order        | h. peace               |
| 9. summed up    | i. summarized          |
| 10. bottom line | j. heart of the matter |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. computer games that have            | a. an adult rating        |
| 2. prisoners who behave                | b. well                   |
| 3. prisoners at risk                   | c. of suicide             |
| 4. games consoles were given to highly | d. dangerous prisoners    |
| 5. stop prisoners from getting         | e. too depressed          |
| 6. The British government sparked      | f. anger last year        |
| 7. public                              | g. uproar                 |
| 8. games did serve a                   | h. useful purpose         |
| 9. keeping order                       | i. in overcrowded prisons |
| 10. no substitute                      | j. for useful activity    |

## GAP FILL:

### PlayStations banned in UK jails

The heads of British prisons have **banned** prisoners from playing computer games that have an adult **rating**. Under new rules, prison authorities have also decided not to buy any more games or games consoles for prisoners. However, they are allowing prisoners who **behave** well to buy their own PlayStations or xBoxes. Prisons can also allow prisoners at **risk** of suicide to play games to keep them occupied. The new **crackdown** on the games culture in prisons is because of a fear that many games make prisoners more violent. The Prison Service has called an **end** to its PlayStation Project, where games consoles were given to **highly** dangerous prisoners. The reason for introducing prison gaming was to stop prisoners from **getting** too depressed.

The British government sparked **anger** last year when it admitted to spending \$20,000 on games and equipment for prisoners to use in their **cells**. There was public uproar when a convicted **killer** was photographed with a PlayStation in May. A leading prison reformer, Geoff Dobson, said games did serve a useful **purpose** to keep order in prisons. "We should not forget the usefulness of these games to prison officers...keeping **order** in overcrowded prisons," he said. Dobson added that because of overcrowding, prisoners were **spending** more time in their cells doing nothing and becoming more **frustrated**. He summed up the problem, saying: "The bottom line is access to computer games is no **substitute** for [useful] activity like work or education classes."

## 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