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Woman fired for using capital letters

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0904/090904-capital_letters.html

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THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0904/090904-capital_letters.html

WOULD YOU GET ANGRY IF YOU GOT E-MAILS WITH LOTS OF CAPITAL LETTERS? A New Zealand boss saw red after one of his employees used block capitals in e-mails to colleagues. Vicki Walker, an accountant in Auckland, was fired after her co-workers complained about her use of caps. Members of staff at ProCare Health were angry with Ms. Walker for constantly filling her mails with sentences in capital letters, bold and red text. They said they found the e-mails "confrontational". Bosses at ProCare dismissed Ms Walker for causing "disharmony" in the workplace. Walker took the company to court and sued for unfair dismissal. She won the case and ProCare had to pay her US\$11,500 in damages and lost pay.

According to the New Zealand Herald newspaper, Ms Walker is still not happy. She plans to appeal for further compensation. She also wants to speak out for greater protection for office workers when they are in disputes with big companies. Walker said too many white-collar workers feel helpless when large employers fire them. She says many people are not prepared to fight their bosses because of the financial and mental stresses involved. She used her own experience as an example, saying: "I am a single woman with a mortgage, and I had to re-mortgage my home and borrow money...to make it through. They nearly ruined my life." Walker's case highlights a widespread uncertainty regarding "netiquette" and e-mails.

WARM-UPS

1. CAPITAL LETTERS: Walk around the class and talk to other students about capitals. Change partners often. Sit with your first 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.

getting angry / e-mails / colleagues / complaining / disharmony / the workplace / pay / compensation / office workers / protection / large employers / mortgage / netiquette

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

3. NETIQUETTE: Make some Netiquette Rules with your partner(s). Show your rules to other students. Vote as a class on what the best e-mail rules are.

	Should	Shouldn't
Capital letters		
Bold		
Emoticons		
Opening greeting		
Subject		
SMS English (cu l8r)		
Other _____		

4. E-MAIL: Students A **strongly** believe language in e-mails should be as formal as language in letters; Students B **strongly** believe e-mails should always be casual and not formal. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. CAPITALS: Your teacher will write some capital letters on the board. With your partner / team, you have to write as many words (proper nouns) as you can that use those capitals. The winner is the team with the most words.

6. RED IDIOMS: With your partner(s), find the meanings of these 'red' idioms.

see red / catch the red-eye / catch someone red-handed / paint the town red / red-carpet treatment / red herring / roll out the red carpet / red tape / in the red

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

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0904/090904-capital_letters.html

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. A woman in New Zealand lost her job for speaking in capital letters. | T / F |
| b. The woman's co-workers complained about her many hats. | T / F |
| c. Her colleagues said her e-mail style wasn't good for office harmony. | T / F |
| d. The woman lost a court case when she sued her company. | T / F |
| e. The woman is planning on taking further court action. | T / F |
| f. She thinks office workers should be stronger against big companies. | T / F |
| g. The woman had to refinance her housing loan because she was fired. | T / F |
| h. The article suggests most people know the rules of writing e-mails. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. saw red | a. protested |
| 2. fired | b. destroyed |
| 3. constantly | c. salary |
| 4. complained | d. arguments |
| 5. pay | e. got angry |
| 6. appeal | f. dismissed |
| 7. further | g. housing loan |
| 8. disputes | h. call |
| 9. mortgage | i. always |
| 10. ruined | j. more |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. A New Zealand boss saw | a. for unfair dismissal |
| 2. her co-workers complained about | b. my life |
| 3. filling her mails with sentences | c. further compensation |
| 4. took the company to court and sued | d. and e-mails |
| 5. pay her US\$11,500 in damages | e. red |
| 6. She plans to appeal for | f. her use of caps |
| 7. too many white-collar | g. stresses |
| 8. financial and mental | h. and lost pay |
| 9. They nearly ruined | i. workers feel helpless |
| 10. widespread uncertainty regarding "netiquette" | j. in capital letters |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0904/090904-capital_letters.html

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

WOULD YOU GET ANGRY IF YOU GOT E-MAILS WITH LOTS OF CAPITAL LETTERS? A New Zealand _____ saw red after one of his employees used block capitals in e-mails to _____. Vicki Walker, an accountant in Auckland, was _____ after her co-workers complained about her _____ of caps. Members of staff at ProCare Health were angry with Ms. Walker for constantly filling her mails with sentences in capital letters, _____ and red text. They said they found the e-mails "confrontational". Bosses at ProCare dismissed Ms Walker for _____ "disharmony" in the workplace. Walker took the company to court and _____ for unfair dismissal. She won the case and ProCare had to pay her US\$11,500 in _____ and lost pay.

bold
fired
sued
boss
use
damages
colleagues
causing

According to the New Zealand Herald newspaper, Ms Walker is _____ not happy. She plans to _____ for further compensation. She also wants to speak out for greater protection for office workers when they are in _____ with big companies. Walker said too many white-collar workers feel _____ when large employers fire them. She says many people are not prepared to fight their bosses because of the financial and mental _____ involved. She used her own _____ as an example, saying: "I am a single woman with a mortgage, and I had to re-mortgage my home and _____ money...to make it through. They nearly ruined my life." Walker's case _____ a widespread uncertainty regarding "netiquette" and e-mails.

experience
disputes
borrow
helpless
still
highlights
appeal
stresses

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0904/090904-capital_letters.html

WOULD YOU GET _____ E-MAILS WITH LOTS OF CAPITAL LETTERS? A New Zealand boss saw red after one of his employees used block _____ to colleagues. Vicki Walker, an accountant in Auckland, was fired after her co-workers complained _____ caps. Members of staff at ProCare Health were angry with Ms. Walker for constantly filling her mails with sentences in capital letters, _____. They said they found the e-mails "confrontational". Bosses at ProCare dismissed Ms Walker for causing _____ workplace. Walker took the company to court and sued for unfair dismissal. She won the case and ProCare had to pay her US\$11,500 in _____.

According to the New Zealand Herald newspaper, Ms Walker is still not happy. She _____ further compensation. She also wants to speak out for greater protection for office workers when they _____ big companies. Walker said too many white-collar workers feel helpless when large employers fire them. She says many people are not prepared to fight their bosses because of the financial and _____. She used her own experience as an example, saying: "I am a single woman with a mortgage, and I had to re-mortgage my home and borrow money..._____. They _____." Walker's case highlights a widespread uncertainty _____ and e-mails.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0904/090904-capital_letters.html

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'capital' and 'letter'.

capital	letter
----------------	---------------

- 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">• angry• block• caps• bold• dismissed• lost	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• still• speak out• collar• mental• borrow• highlights
--	---

STUDENT CAPITAL LETTERS SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0904/090904-capital_letters.html

Write five GOOD questions about capital letters 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.

CAPITAL LETTERS 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 'e-mail'?
- c) Describe your e-mail writing habits?
- d) Which are better, e-mails or real letters?
- e) What do you think of text with lots of capital letters?
- f) What kinds of mails make you angry?
- g) Do you understand why ProCare bosses fired Vicki Walker?
- h) How could ProCare bosses have resolved this situation in a better way?
- i) Have you ever sent an e-mail you regretted?
- j) Do you think Ms Walker got the right amount of damages?

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CAPITAL LETTERS DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) When do you type everything in caps?
- c) If you were Ms Walker, would you continue to fight in the courts?
- d) What was the last mail you got that made you angry?
- e) Do you think workers are helpless against big companies?
- f) What do you think of e-mails full of emoticons and shortened English (e.g. cu l8r for see you later)?
- g) Are e-mails written in your language different from those written in English?
- h) Do you know any "rules" when writing e-mails?
- i) What do your teachers tell you about writing e-mails?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Vicki Walker?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0904/090904-capital_letters.html

WOULD YOU GET ANGRY IF YOU GOT E-MAILS WITH LOTS OF CAPITAL LETTERS? A New Zealand boss saw (1) _____ after one of his employees used block capitals in e-mails to colleagues. Vicki Walker, an accountant in Auckland, was (2) _____ after her co-workers complained about her use of (3) _____. Members of staff at ProCare Health were angry with Ms. Walker for constantly filling her mails with sentences in capital letters, (4) _____ and red text. They said they found the e-mails "confrontational". Bosses at ProCare (5) _____ Ms Walker for causing "disharmony" in the workplace. Walker took the company to court and sued for unfair dismissal. She won the case and ProCare had to pay her US\$11,500 in (6) _____ and lost pay.

According to the New Zealand Herald newspaper, Ms Walker is still not happy. She plans to appeal (7) _____ further compensation. She also wants to speak out for greater protection for office workers when they are in disputes (8) _____ big companies. Walker said too many white-collar workers feel helpless when large employers fire them. She says many people are not prepared (9) _____ fight their bosses because of the financial and mental stresses involved. She used her own experience (10) _____ an example, saying: "I am a (11) _____ woman with a mortgage, and I had to re-mortgage my home and borrow money...to make it through. They nearly ruined my life." Walker's case highlights a (12) _____ uncertainty regarding "netiquette" and e-mails.

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

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. | (a) reds | (b) reddish | (c) redness | (d) red |
| 2. | (a) heated | (b) fired | (c) burned | (d) barbecued |
| 3. | (a) caps | (b) hats | (c) capital | (d) alphabet |
| 4. | (a) cold | (b) old | (c) bold | (d) told |
| 5. | (a) dismiss | (b) dismissal | (c) dismissed | (d) dismissing |
| 6. | (a) damaged | (b) damages | (c) damage | (d) damaging |
| 7. | (a) for | (b) at | (c) by | (d) on |
| 8. | (a) together | (b) all | (c) every | (d) with |
| 9. | (a) at | (b) to | (c) on | (d) in |
| 10. | (a) was | (b) has | (c) be | (d) as |
| 11. | (a) singular | (b) singles | (c) single | (d) singled |
| 12. | (a) widespread | (b) width | (c) widely | (d) widen |

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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 capital letters. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. E-MAIL NETIQUETTE: Make a poster about how to write good e-mails. Include the do's and don'ts of e-mail writing. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. UNFAIR DISMISSAL: Write a magazine article about the unfair dismissal of Vicki Walker. Include imaginary interviews with Vicki, her boss and an unhappy colleague.

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. LETTER: Write a letter to Vicki Walker. Ask her three questions about her experience. Give her three suggestions about how white-collar workers can stand up against big employers. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. saw red | a. got angry |
| 2. fired | b. dismissed |
| 3. constantly | c. always |
| 4. complained | d. protested |
| 5. pay | e. salary |
| 6. appeal | f. call |
| 7. further | g. more |
| 8. disputes | h. arguments |
| 9. mortgage | i. housing loan |
| 10. ruined | j. destroyed |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. A New Zealand boss saw | a. red |
| 2. her co-workers complained about | b. her use of caps |
| 3. filling her mails with sentences | c. in capital letters |
| 4. took the company to court and sued | d. for unfair dismissal |
| 5. pay her US\$11,500 in damages | e. and lost pay |
| 6. She plans to appeal for | f. further compensation |
| 7. too many white-collar | g. workers feel helpless |
| 8. financial and mental | h. stresses |
| 9. They nearly ruined | i. my life |
| 10. widespread uncertainty regarding "netiquette" | j. and e-mails |

GAP FILL:

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According to the New Zealand Herald newspaper, Ms Walker is **still** not happy. She plans to **appeal** for further compensation. She also wants to speak out for greater protection for office workers when they are in **disputes** with big companies. Walker said too many white-collar workers feel **helpless** when large employers fire them. She says many people are not prepared to fight their bosses because of the financial and mental **stresses** involved. She used her own **experience** as an example, saying: "I am a single woman with a mortgage, and I had to re-mortgage my home and **borrow** money...to make it through. They nearly ruined my life." Walker's case **highlights** a widespread uncertainty regarding "netiquette" and e-mails.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - b 3 - a 4 - c 5 - c 6 - b 7 - a 8 - d 9 - b 10 - d 11 - c 12 - a