

All

SEMINAR 10

Activism

Definitions of Activism

Task 1 – Complete the following definitions. Discuss your answers with your partner.

Lobbying	Protest song	Civil disobedience	Strike action
Demonstrations	Activism	Boycott	Hactivism

1 in a general sense, can be described as intentional action to bring about social or political change. This action is in support of or in opposition to one side of an often controversial argument.

2 encompasses* the active refusal to obey certain laws, demands and commands of a government or of an occupying power without resorting to physical violence. It could be said that it is compassion in the form of respectful disagreement.

3 A is the act of abstaining from using, buying, or dealing with someone or some organization as an expression of protest or as a means of force.

4 can consist of the private pressuring of legislative members, public actions (e.g. mass demonstrations), or combinations of both public and private actions (e.g. encouraging constituents to contact their legislative representatives). There are large differences in the effectiveness of lobby groups.

5 (a combination of *hack* and *activism*) is often understood as the writing of code, or otherwise manipulating information to promote political ideology, expressive politics, free speech, human rights, and/or information ethics.

6 are a form of activism, usually taking the form of a public gathering at a rally* or walking in a march.

7 (more simply a strike), is a work stoppage caused by the mass refusal by employees to perform work. A strike usually takes place in response to complaints that employees feel management are ignoring.

8 A is a song intended to protest perceived problems in society such as injustice, racial discrimination, war, globalization, inflation, social inequalities, incarceration*, the Greenhouse effect, or global warming.

Task 2 – Discussion Questions

1. Can you give specific examples for some of the above-mentioned actions?
2. Are some vital* protests taking place in the world at the moment?
3. What controversial issues have been in the centre of public debate in your region recently?
4. What social or political question do you feel strongly about?
5. Which of these methods of protesting would you participate in? Why or why not?
 - signing a petition
 - writing a letter to your MP
 - going to a demonstration
 - handing out leaflets
 - writing on a wall
 - attacking a building that represents what you are protesting against

Picture Description

Task 3 – Describe one of the following pictures. Where was the picture taken? When was it? Who are the people? What are they protesting?



Task 4 – Match the reports to the related pictures.

Protests in India over Big Brother

The “Celebrity Big Brother” race row has turned into an international incident as protestors burned effigies* of the show’s organisers on the streets of India. As the number of complaints to Ofcom (The Independent regulator and competition authority of the UK communications industries) approached 20,000, senior politicians in the UK queued up to denounce the treatment of Bollywood star Shilpa Shetty on the Channel 4 show. The Indian government has also indicated that it plans to raise the issue with Britain. <http://www.nexs.excite.co.uk> viewed on 2.2.2007

Religious rally opposes new gay rights laws

The signs read “Cry Freedom” and the crowd sang “We Shall Overcome”, but it was a highly selective brand of religious liberty being demanded by a demonstration outside Britain’s parliament last night. Several hundred people, among them many children, gathered to protest against new regulations to protect gay rights to be introduced in mainland Britain in April 2007. <http://www.guardian.com> viewed 2.2.2007

On January 27th there was an extraordinary outpouring* for peace in Washington DC and in communities all around the U.S.A. On Saturday, the National Mall was filled with the voices of 500,000 people committed to doing their part to end the war in Iraq and bring all of the troops home. The energy in this massive turnout was electric. <http://www.unitedforpeace.org> viewed on 2.2.2007

Task 5 – Discussion Questions: Controversial Issues

What do you think of.....?

- eating meat
- the fur trade
- blood sports (bull fighting, fox hunting, and cock fighting)
- battery farms (where hens are kept in cramped* conditions)
- animal testing for medical research
- animal testing for cosmetics

Task 6 – Reading – Read the text and choose the best title for each paragraph

- A) The Power of Advertising B) Animal Rights Success
C) Cowardly Violence or Moral Crusaders? D) A Justifiable Method? E) Big Mac Attack!

Animal Rights – A New Breed of Activism

1 We have all had leaflets thrust* into our hands featuring disturbing photographs of helpless kittens wired up* to medical experiments in research laboratories, or pictures of dirty, overcrowded conditions in factory farms. Whatever our views on animal experimentation or food production are, we cannot help but be shocked by the examples outlined in such leaflets. Animal rights groups have achieved considerable success for their causes over the years, raising awareness and keeping the issues in the public eye. With food, for example, supermarkets are selling more and more organic products and free range eggs to meet an increasing demand. With regards to vivisections*, some bans on drug and cosmetic testing on animals have been implemented and even fox-hunting was banned by the British government.

2 In the past few years, instances of animal rights violence have continually hit the headlines. Animal rights activists in Britain recently attacked 62-year-old farmer's wife Katharine Brown, while she was walking her dog in the countryside. They chained her to a fence and demanded that she and her husband close their farm, which breeds cats for medical research. Similarly last year, an Oxford University professor was attacked as he gave a lecture; in the 1970s, Professor Blakemore had been involved in using animals for medical research. His windows were smashed and his children threatened with kidnapping*. Both the Browns and Professor Blakemore insist that the activists were "misguided and misinformed" about what they do and would be willing to talk face-to-face with them about the issues concerned. The group behind many of these attacks is ALF (Animal Liberation Front), which has made no secret of its belief in the use of violence to fight for animal rights.

3 Some people in favour of animal rights would argue that violence against animals deserves violence against the humans concerned. However, most would agree that such extremism is damaging the animal cause and we are losing sympathy for the real issues.

4 The PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) advertising campaign against McDonald's marks this shift in protest tactic: using advertising activism. No other organisation has reached PETA's level of impact by attacking one of the largest worldwide corporations. PETA has spent \$200,000 so far on a campaign which is 'peanuts' in comparison to McDonald's \$2 billion a year spent on advertising. However, the poster campaign has already made a lasting impression on the world's media. Many advertisers have refused to print the posters because they are too shocking by advertising standards. This negative attention has only served to heighten awareness about McDonald's already damaged reputation.

5 McDonald's has been at the centre of the "cruelty to animals" controversy since 1997, when a court ruled that it was "responsible for cruelty to animals". PETA outlined suggestions for changing the way McDonald's treats animals in its farming methods and the restaurant company agreed to change. It has now become apparent that McDonald's has not fulfilled its promises, hence the new powerful poster campaign.

Task 7 – Find words or phrases in the article to match the descriptions below:

1. a piece of paper which gives you information or advertises something _____
2. to almost force something into someone's hands when they haven't asked for it (phrase) _____
3. to be attached to something by electrical cables (phrase) _____
4. scientific experimentation on animals (noun) _____
5. to receive a lot of attention in news reports (phrase) _____
6. to take someone away and keep them in a secret location (verb) _____
7. a change (noun) _____
8. existing for a long time or forever (adjective) _____

Task 8 - Reading Comprehension

1. What is the evidence that animal rights groups have raised awareness of animal cruelty?
2. What are the effects of extremist behaviour?
3. Why did animal rights activists attack Katharine Brown? What did they do to her?
4. What was PETA's tactic in campaigning against McDonald's?
5. What happened when McDonald's went to court in 1997?

Listening – Dwarf Throwing

Task 9 – Read the article and discuss the questions with your partner.

Until quite recently in some pubs in Australia you could see dwarfs being thrown from one end of the bar to the other by big muscled Aussies. "Dwarf throwing competitions" attracted big crowds: the dwarfs were paid a lot of money to put on a crash helmet and allow themselves to be thrown onto a mattress, located some metres away. Few were hurt and most enjoyed their sudden rise to fame.

A variation on this was "dwarf bowling", which was also popular in England. This "game" consisted of tying a dwarf to a skateboard and "bowling" him (again equipped with a crash helmet) rather than a ball, down the alley and against the pins. For a while, dwarf throwing competitions were used under sponsorship to raise money for charity, but some people under the auspices* of such groups as the *Organisation of People of Restricted Growth* objected to what they called "macabre* spectacles".

1. What must it have been like for the dwarfs?
2. How would you have felt in the same situation?

Task 10 – Listen to Australian Dave speaking about dwarf throwing and answer these questions:

1. How did Dave get involved in dwarf throwing?
2. What protection did they use after the first time?
3. Why did the "humanitarians" object to dwarf throwing and how did they find out about it?
4. Did they understand dwarf problems?
5. What kinds of things are humiliating* for dwarfs?
6. What were good points about dwarf throwing?

Task 11 – Discussion points

1. Were the 'human rights' activists right in having these activities banned, thus depriving the dwarfs of a lot of money and excitement?
2. What rights do we have in deciding what is right or best for other people?
3. Many people would agree that the following should be banned. Try to think of reasons why they shouldn't be banned: casinos, hunting, the Ku Klux Klan and other racist/fascist groups, religious sects, Satanic groups, smoking.
4. What would you like to ban at your university, in your town, country, the world?

Adopted from *Discussions A – Z* by Adrian Wallwork.

Grammar – Verbs and Prepositions

Task 12 – Fill in the blanks with appropriate prepositions. Note that one blank does not require a preposition.

1. In many ways I agree his statement.
2. Conservationists will never agree the building of the motorway.
3. They'd like to discuss what to do next.
4. They want a discussion abortion* laws.
5. Most women prefer breastfeeding* bottle feeding.
6. The government intends to prohibit shopkeepers selling cigarettes to children.
7. The crowds were protesting the government's purchase of nuclear weapons.
8. As a conservationist, I strongly object the removal of these trees.
9. The government is becoming increasingly concerned the rising level of unemployment.
10. The justice system should be more concerned re-educating criminals than punishing them.
11. Transport workers are still strike better pay and shorter hours.
12. America has had a tremendous influence Japanese society.
13. Many people are opposed the use of fur in the clothing industry.

Task 13 – Complete the sentences using the following verbs. Note that you will have to conjugate some of them.

OPPOSE	GO	FORBID	VOTE	CONTROL
MAKE	INSPECT	BAN	ELECT	HOLD

1. Many demonstrations have been in recent years to call attention to the effects of pollution..
2. Some of the prisoners haveon hunger strikes.
3. Roman Catholic cardinals are meeting at the Vatican to a new Pope.
4. Fifty-three per cent of Danesin favour of the Maastricht treaty.
5. Many leading scientists vigorously* Darwin's ideas.
6. The committee has four specific critiques of the government's transport policy.
7. There should be a law which couples to have more than two children.
8. The government should cigarette advertising.
9. I was surprised that nobody wanted to my luggage.
10. The police were unable to the crowd.

Vocabulary

encompass* -	zahrnovat, obsahovat
rally* -	manifestace, shromáždění
incarceration* -	věznění
effigy* -	figurína (zvláště neoblíbené osoby, užívaná na demonstracích)
outpouring* -	výlev, projev
vital* -	zásadní, významný
cramped* -	stísněný, přeplněný
thrust* -	strčit, vrazit
wire up* -	přípevnit drátem
kidnapping* -	únos
vivisections* -	vivisekce, pitvání za živa
paint stripper* -	opalovač nátěrů
auspices* -	záštita, ochrana
macabre* -	hrůzný, děsivý
humiliating* -	ponižující, potupný
abortion* -	potrat
breastfeeding* -	kojení
vigorously* -	rázně

Word Bank

non-violent protest -	nenásilný protest
to abstain from (doing) something -	zdržet se
lobby group -	lobbyistická skupina
to promote an ideology -	propagovat ideologii
public gathering -	veřejné shromáždění
injustice -	nespravedlnost
to raise an issue -	vznést otázku, vyvolat diskuzi
religious liberty -	náboženská svoboda
to protest against something -	protestovat proti něčemu
to raise / to heighten awareness of -	zvýšit povědomí o
to fight for human rights -	bojovat za lidská práva
to outline a suggestion -	nastínit návrh
to campaign against something -	vést proti něčemu kampaň
to ban something -	něco zakázat