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The 4 page 60 minute ESL British English lesson – 05/10/13

US Government Shuts Down!

Incredibly at the time of writing this English lesson the US government has partially shut down! Why? Because the Republicans and the Democrats couldn't agree on the US budget by midnight on the 30th September.

The politicians were squabbling like boys fighting on a school playground about the US budget and about the elimination or at least the delay of Obamacare.

Obamacare is a revolutionary new healthcare reform introduced by the president that kicked in on October 1st. It should massively reform the US health system yet oddly this idea has upset certain Republicans. (I do not pretend to know half the issues around this but you might!)

The Republicans want Obamacare stopped or at least delayed. The Republicans also want to stop the Democrats reckless spending. Thus they rejected the US budget.

The following day the US government partially shut down. It saw up to 800,000 federal workers facing life without a pay cheque. The last time this happened was 18 years ago. The stalemate then lasted 21 days. Quite how long this standoff will last is anyone's guess!

Another issue is if Congress doesn't raise the debt ceiling by October 17th the US government will run out of money to pay creditors unless it increases how much it can borrow.

The Republicans don't like the Democrats 'socialist' thinking of "spend, spend, spend!" Yet the Democrats continue to instigate this policy to dig the US out of its economic hole. Is the word 'austerity' understood in US politics?

In the short term the US economy will suffer. Long term we could see a worldwide recession.

SPEAKING – WARM UP

Think of three things you know about the US government shutdown in October 2013. Go round the room swapping details with others.

LISTENING – WRITING - DICTATION

The teacher will read some lines of the article slowly to the class.

READING

Students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

SPEAKING - UNDERSTANDING

1) The article – Students check any unknown vocabulary or phrases with the teacher.

2) The article - Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- 1) What is the article about?
- 2) What do you think about the article?
- 3) Was this an easy or difficult article to understand?
- 4) Was this a boring or interesting article?
- 5) Discuss the article.

3) Article quiz - Students quiz each other in pairs. Score a point for each correct answer. Score half a point each time you have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A questions

- 1) What is an 'economic hole'?
- 2) What is a 'standoff'?
- 3) What happens on the 17th October?
- 4) What don't the Republicans like?
- 5) What does 'austerity' mean?

Student B questions

- 1) What didn't happen on the 30th September?
- 2) What was the result on the 1st October?
- 3) How many workers faced life without a pay cheque?
- 4) What is a 'pay cheque'?
- 5) What is 'Obamacare'?

Category: Economic / Politics / USA
Level: Intermediate / Upper Intermediate

US Government Shuts Down! – 5th October 2013

WRITING / SPEAKING

In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with '**US budget**'. *One-two minutes.* Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

WRITING / SPEAKING

In pairs – Think of three things you know about the US budget standoff.

Write them below. Talk about them!

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Add three things you know about Obamacare. Discuss together.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

SPEAKING – DISCUSSION

In pairs – Student A is a Democrat. Student B is a Republican. Who is right when discussing the US budget and Obamacare? 2-5 mins.

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Are the stock markets likely to take a hit shortly because of this squabbling?
- 3) Is the President right in his actions?
- 4) What advice would you offer the President?
- 5) What advice would you offer the Republicans?
- 6) What advice would you offer the Democrats?
- 7) Just how will all this affect the US economy?
- 8) Why is there no austerity in the USA compared to Europe?
- 9) Are we likely to see another recession or crash shortly?
- 10) Have you learnt anything in today's English lesson?

SPEAKING – ROLEPLAY 1

In groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *ABC America Washington DC* TV studio. Today's interview is about: *US Government Shuts Down!*

- 1) The President of the USA.
- 2) A Republican.
- 3) A Democrat.
- 4) A US government employee who is now on unpaid leave.

The teacher will choose some groups to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

SPEAKING - ROLEPLAY 2

In pairs. You are in a pub in Washington DC with a friend. Start a conversation about the 'US government standoff'. 5 mins.

SPEAKING - DISCUSSION

Allow 10 minutes – As a class.

Discuss the following...

US Government Shuts Down!

(Google it first!)

Or

Obamacare (Google it first!)

The teacher can moderate the session.

DISCUSSION

Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you've read?
- 2) Why is there not a third party in US politics?
- 3) How would you manage if you were a government employee and you were sent home unpaid because of politics?
- 4) What do you think of Obamacare?
- 5) How does the US healthcare compare to the healthcare in your country?
- 6) Why are the Republicans voting against the US budget?
- 7) Just how much of a backlash from the American people might there be?
- 8) Should someone knock the heads together of the US Congressmen in order to resolve the present issue?
- 9) Have you enjoyed this lesson?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

US Government Shuts Down! – 5th October 2013

GAP FILL: READING

US Government Shuts Down!

Incredibly at the time of writing this English lesson the US government has (1)___ shut down! Why? Because the Republicans and the Democrats couldn't agree on the US (2)___ by midnight on the 30th September.

The politicians were (3)___ like boys fighting on a school playground about the US budget and about the elimination or at least the (4)___ of Obamacare.

Obamacare is a revolutionary new healthcare reform introduced by the president that kicked in on October 1st. It should massively (5)___ the US health system yet oddly this idea has upset (6)___ Republicans. (I do not (7)___ to know half the issues around this but you might!)

The Republicans want Obamacare stopped or at least delayed. The Republicans also want to stop the Democrats (8)___ spending. Thus they rejected the US budget.

reform / budget / reckless / certain / delay / pretend / squabbling / partially

The following day the US government partially shut down. It saw up to 800,000 federal workers facing life without a pay cheque. The last time this happened was 18 years ago. The stalemate then lasted 21 days. Quite how long this (1)___ will last is anyone's (2)___!

Another issue is if Congress doesn't raise the debt ceiling by October 17th the US government will run out of money to pay creditors unless it increases how much it can borrow.

The Republicans don't like the Democrats '(3)___' thinking of "spend, spend, spend!" Yet the Democrats continue to (4)___ this policy to (5)___ the US out of its economic (6)___. Is the word '(7)___' understood in US politics?

In the short term the US economy will suffer. Long term we could see a worldwide (8)___.

austerity / dig / recession / instigate / standoff / guess / socialist / hole

GAP FILL: GRAMMAR

US Government Shuts Down!

Incredibly at the time of writing this English lesson the US government has partially shut down! (1)___? Because the Republicans and the Democrats (2)___n't agree on the US budget by midnight on the 30th September.

The politicians were squabbling like boys fighting on a school playground about the US budget and about the elimination or at least the delay of Obamacare.

Obamacare is a revolutionary new healthcare reform introduced by the president (3)___ kicked in on October 1st. It should massively reform the US health system (4)___ oddly this idea has upset certain Republicans. (I do not pretend to know half the issues around (5)___ but you (6)___!)

The Republicans want Obamacare stopped or at least delayed. The Republicans (7)___ want to stop the Democrats reckless spending. (8)___ they rejected the US budget.

thus / might / also / why / this / yet / could / that

The following day the US government partially shut down. (1)___ saw up to 800,000 federal workers facing life without a pay cheque. The last time this happened was 18 years ago. The stalemate then lasted 21 days. Quite how long this standoff will last is anyone's guess!

Another issue is (2)___ Congress doesn't raise the debt ceiling (3)___ October 17th the US government will run out of money to pay creditors unless it increases how much it can borrow.

The Republicans don't like the Democrats 'socialist' thinking (4)___ "spend, spend, spend!" (5)___ the Democrats continue to instigate this policy to dig the US out of its economic hole. Is the word 'austerity' understood (6)___ US politics?

In the short term the US economy will suffer. Long term (7)___ could see (8)___ worldwide recession.

we / of / it / in / a / if / by / yet

GAP FILL: LISTENING

US Government Shuts Down!

Incredibly at _____ this English lesson the US government has partially shut down! Why? Because the Republicans and the Democrats couldn't agree on the US budget by midnight on the 30th September. The politicians were squabbling like boys fighting on _____ about the US budget and about the elimination or at least the delay of Obamacare.

Obamacare is a revolutionary new _____ introduced by the president that kicked in on October 1st. It should massively reform the US health system yet oddly this idea has upset certain Republicans. (_____ know half the issues around this but you might!)

The Republicans want Obamacare stopped or at least delayed. The Republicans also want to stop the Democrats _____ reckless _____ spending. _____ the US budget.

The following day the US government _____. It saw up to 800,000 federal workers facing life without a pay cheque. The last time this happened was 18 years ago. The stalemate then lasted 21 days. Quite how long this standoff will last _____!

Another issue is if Congress doesn't raise the debt ceiling by October 17th the US government will run out of money to pay creditors unless it increases _____.

The Republicans don't like the Democrats 'socialist' thinking of "spend, spend, spend!" Yet the Democrats continue to instigate this policy to dig the US out of its economic hole. _____ understood in US politics?

In the short term the US economy will suffer. Long term we could see a _____.

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WRITING/SPELLING

WRITING / SPEAKING

1) In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with '**Obamacare**'. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

2) Sentence starters - Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- 1) Obamacare _____
- 2) The US budget _____
- 3) The standoff _____

3) Homework - Write and send a 200 word email to your teacher about: **US shutdown or Obamacare**. Your email can be read out in class.

GAP FILL READING

- 1) partially
- 2) budget
- 3) squabbling
- 4) delay
- 5) reform
- 6) certain
- 7) pretend
- 8) reckless

ANSWERS

- 1) standoff
- 2) guess
- 3) socialist
- 4) instigate
- 5) dig
- 6) hole
- 7) austerity
- 8) recession

SPELLING

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards check your answers.

- 1) squabbling
- 2) playground
- 3) Obamacare
- 4) revolutionary
- 5) healthcare
- 6) reform
- 7) massively
- 8) oddly
- 9) yet
- 10) should

SPELLING

Use the following ratings:

Pass = 12
Good = 15
Very good = 18
Excellent = 20

- 11) certain
- 12) thus
- 13) partially
- 14) stalemate
- 15) standoff
- 16) borrow
- 17) socialist
- 18) instigate
- 19) hole
- 20) austerity

US Government Shuts Down! – *5th October 2013*