

Grammar Practice

Put the following adjectives and adverbs into the appropriate comparative or superlative form:

The world population is getting _____ (large). The global temperature is the _____ (warm) it has ever been. There is a _____ (high) level of carbon dioxide than there used to be. Storms are _____ (damaging) than they were in the past. Corruption in businesses is _____ (bad) compared with a few years ago. The _____ (bad) problem for the next century is food. Crop losses will be _____ (big) every year. In the cities, air pollution is _____ (harmful) for children than for adults, and it is the _____ (deadly) poison for some people in China and India.

Comprehension Questions

1. According to the authors of Vital Sings, was 1998 mostly a good year or a bad year?
2. What were some of the positive things which happened in 1998?
3. What does "Americanization of the human diet" mean?
4. What will be the big issues facing us in the next century?
5. Why has there been an increase in the number of charities in rich countries?

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think is different about the problems in Europe and North America compared with those of Asia and Africa?
2. In your opinion, what is the worst problem facing the world today?
3. Which of the problems mentioned in the article are ones which affect Uzbekistan?
4. How would you solve the problem of pollution? What are some things you can do by yourself to help keep your city cleaner?
5. What do you think is going to happen to the earth and its people in the next century?

For further Study

1. Take one world problem and explain its causes and effects, then describe how you would solve it if you were a world leader
2. Find other articles about wars and pollution in the world. Discuss them with your coursemates. Talk about how they relate to the conclusions of this article — do they support the opinions of the authors of Vital Sings, or do they contradict them?

Course Reader

Current Events

III course

Kokand

2003

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business and governments grew.

This in turn was countered by a massive increase in independent charities and other non-governmental organizations, which employ more than 19 million people in rich countries, their combined economic being the equivalent of Britain's gross domestic product.

Food looks set to become a defining issue of the next century, the report says. Nearly 1,000 agricultural pests, including insects, plant diseases, and weeds, are immune to chemical control, and resistance is threatening to increase crop losses and weaken the global food supply. The spread of crops genetically engineered to produce natural insecticides may encourage resistance in other plants.

With almost half the world's population now living in cities, air pollution has become responsible for more deaths ever. In 1998, 64 per cent of children in Delhi, and up to 100 per cent Shanghai, had unhealthy levels of lead in their blood. It is estimated that 52,000 people died in India because of air pollution, and China reports at least 3 million deaths from pollution between 1994 and 1996.

Guardian Weekly, June 6, 1999

Useful Idioms

Find the following idioms in the text and practice using them in sentences:

to muddle through: яраша бир ишни ыилмоы, делать кое-как;

to give up: ташламоы, бросить;

to take off: учмоы, вылетать;

to speed ahead: шошилмоы, торопиться;

to jump in: сакрамоы, прыгать;

to be set to: булмоы, становиться;

Vocabulary

Put the following words and phrases in sentences to show you know their meanings:

technological revolution

organic food

grim

non-governmental organization (NGO)

natural disaster

defining issue

World economy

genetically engineered

global warming

For Further Study

In pairs, recite a text in English to your partner. Evaluate his or her presentation and give each other marks out of 10 (0= terrible, 10= perfect) for the following criteria:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| a. Posture | e. Pleasing tone |
| b. Facial expression | f. Confidence |
| c. Enthusiasm | g. Pitch |
| d. Warmth | |

in English, tell each other what your voice and presentation say about your character. Give each other advice on how your communication skills could be improved.

Environment

Article

World burdened by wars and pollution

by John Vidal

A remarkable snapshot of the world and the trends shaping life for the 21st century suggest that mankind through some of the greatest natural and technological revolutions in history, but that as soon as we solve one problem we create others.

The authors of Vital Signs, the World Watch Institute's gazetteer of world trends, say 1998 was grim. Six wars began, with one in three of the world's developing countries fighting neighbors or people of their own nation, 300 million fled natural disasters, and the growth in the world economy decelerated. On the plus side, millions gave up smoking, a renewable energy economy began to take off, polio was nearly eradicated, nuclear shrank and the communications revolutions sped ahead everywhere.

Global temperatures jumped dramatically last year to a record 14.57°C. The rapid warming of the past 25 years is now greater than at any time since temperatures were measured, and we have seen the largest recorded jump in the global concentration of carbon dioxide, the main global warming gas — much attributable to the forest fires that accompanied El Niño. Weather-related damage such as storms cost insurance companies \$92 billion in 1998.

Other trends are speeding up: the Americanization of the human diet is increasing fast, but there is a trend to high-quality alternatives such as organic food. As economies became global under the influence of the top 500 corporations, so corporation in

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Introduction

This Course Reader is intended for third course students in the English department of the Faculty of Foreign Philology. It is meant to be used as the primary text for an 80 hour Current Events class. Students at this level are expected to be comfortable enough with the language that they can read actual texts and discuss them in English.

Goals of the Course Reader

Current Events is a course which requires up-to-date information in order for the students to understand what is happening in the world today. Recently, teachers have been required to find their own material, photocopying articles from magazines and newspapers to use as a basis for their lessons. The only English language textbooks which exist for Current Events are at least ten years old and are full of Soviet propaganda.

The authors of this Reader, as teachers of Current Events, understand that a dire need exists for a source of modern articles which other teachers can use in their lessons. Our intention is to provide examples of English language texts taken from magazines and newspaper published in Great Britain and North America which students can read and discuss in class. We do not intend this reader to be a grammar book; instead, we

Summarize the article, showing that you know the meaning of the following words:

to mumble	to grimace	statesmanlike
a high-pitched squeak	ambitious	tone
client	to portray	pitch
posture	to sound keen	<i>gravitas</i>

Grammar Practice

Change the following sentences from passive voice into active voice.

1. Many professionals were helped by Mrs. Bunch.
2. They were taught by her to speak clearly.
3. Before they learned to speak clearly, they had been passed over for promotions by their bosses.
4. It has been found by researchers that how you speak is very important.
5. Some people have been shown new ways to speak.
6. One man was told to speak more warmly.
7. The Prime Minister was praised by Mrs. Bunch.
8. Mrs. Thatcher was called the Iron Lady.

Comprehension Questions

1. What does success depend on, according to the article?
2. Why are some professionals failing to get to the top?
3. Who is Meribeth Bunch? What successes has she had?
4. What does Mrs. Bunch advice in her book?
5. What does she mean by this statement? "People tend to forget the powerful effect their voice has on people in terms of portraying who they are."
6. Which politicians does Mrs. Bunch think sound the best? The worst? Why?

Discussion Questions

1. What kind of person do you want to be? Does your voice and the way you speak reflect your ambition?
2. Do you think that it is more important to have a good voice than to dress well?
3. Would you like to learn how to speak better?
4. Name some people you think speak very well. Name some who do not sound very good. What is the difference between these two groups of people?

regional accents, but making sure they spoke clearly and reflected confidence and enthusiasm.

In order to change the way a voice sounds it was necessary to improve posture and stop grimacing, frowning or even smiling too much.

Mrs. Bunch, author of *Creating Confidence*, advises ambitious people to listen to a tape-recording of themselves or, better still, to watch themselves on video.

The way a voice sounds accounts for 38 per cent of the effectiveness of communication, according to an American study. Physical appearance and body language make up 55 per cent, while a mere seven per cent relates to the actual words spoken.

Mrs. Bunch, who counts leading actors and singers among her clients, said: "People tend to forget the powerful effect their voice has on people in terms of portraying who they are. It is sad, but many who get turned down for jobs may be their own worst enemy by not thinking about how they sound. It is not a case of trying to sound upper-class to impress, but of reflecting warmth, sounding keen and speaking in a tone which is pleasing to the ear."

Those praised by Mrs. Bunch include Tony Blair, who has added *gravitas* to his voice since becoming Prime Minister and "now sounds more statesmanlike."

Although Baroness Margaret Thatcher is hardly regarded as an underachiever, Mrs. Bunch maintains that the Iron Lady's vice continues to let her down. "She started out with a high-pitched squeak and even with all the training she had her voice still lacks a certain warmth and enthusiasm."

Prince Charles apparently does a good job of sounding "royal," but this "gives little away about his real character."

Daily Mail, May 22, 1999

Useful Idioms

Find the following idioms in the text and practice using them in sentences:

to hinge on: бошцлиы бццмобы, зависеть от;

to turn down: кейинга ыулдирмобы, отклонять;

to start out: бошцламобы, начинать;

to get ahead: такомиллаштирмобы, улучшать;

Vocabulary

have provided questions about the content of the text and issues which it brings up.

In addition to teaching the material in the text, we hope that teachers will use this text as a basis for improving their students skills at writing essays. Each thematic unit provides at least one if not more essay topics which challenge the students to write about their thoughts and opinions on that theme. Appendix C, at the end of the book, gives guidelines for writing academic essays in English, a skill which we feel is not adequately covered in other classes.

Contents of the Course Reader

This Course Reader contains 25 articles in 12 different thematic sections. The articles are taken from actual magazines and newspapers published in Great Britain and North America. The name of the periodical from which it was taken and the date of publication are given at the end article, before the exercises. These should be as appropriate for discussion ten years from now as they are today.

Following each article is a section containing idioms used in the text, followed by their Uzbek and Russian translations. In the second section, there is a list of new vocabulary words with an activity to enforce that vocabulary. Then there is a set of Comprehension Questions asking about facts given in the text. After that, there are Discussion Questions which ask the student to think deeper about the issue and his opinions. The final part of each article is titled "For Further Study" and gives a more in-depth task such as an essay or a class debate.

After the 25 articles are five Appendices. The first, Appendix A, is a complete set of test questions based on facts given in the articles. Appendix B gives an additional essay question for each thematic unit. The third, Appendix C, is a brief summary of how to write an academic essay in English. Following that, Appendix D is a list of Conversational Formulas useful for debating topics given in the book and in other discussions. The final section of the book, Appendix E, is a glossary of the words given in the vocabulary sections of the book with brief English definitions.

Because they are by theme, the articles are not necessarily in order from easiest to most difficult. Should a teacher want to start with the easier

articles to get her class accustomed to reading in English, she should begin with "The Week," "The war against drugs," "GM crops...," "AIDS...," and "Baby who survived..." The longest articles, which we suggest the teacher use several lessons to cover, are the stories about Tyrell Dueck, "No exit here," and "The Power of Big Ideas."

How to Use The Course Reader

This Course Reader should be the basis for an 80 hour class. It is not intended as the only source of information, however. The teacher should begin the semester with an overview of the subject, which will be familiar to students who have studied current Events in the second course. At the next lesson, we recommend that the teacher introduce the guidelines for writing academic essays in English. By going over the suggestions in Appendix C and walking the class through the steps during the lesson, the teacher can be assured that her students are aware of her expectation for their writing.

When reading an article, we suggest that the teacher first lead a brief discussion of the chosen theme to find out what her students already know. Then the class should read the article, aloud, alone, or in small groups. When they have finished the article, the teacher can lead the class in talking about what they have finished the article, the teacher can lead the class in talking about what they have read.

The Useful idioms and Vocabulary are given in each text immediately following the article. It is valuable for students to try to determine the meaning of each word from its context in the article before looking it up the glossary or a dictionary. The word from its context in the article before looking it up in the glossary or a dictionary. The teacher may choose to assign the Vocabulary exercises as homework or as classwork.

The subsequent section, Comprehension Questions, is intended to get the students thinking about the contents of and issues brought up by the article. The first questions generally ask simple content related questions. The Discussion Questions require students to think more about their own opinions of the article and on the topic in general. Comprehension Questions should be answered by the students during class, either orally or in written form. The questions in the Discussion Questions section are intended for discussion, where students may have many varying answers.

Comprehension Questions

1. In what aspects of men's lives does boredom make them do worse than women?
2. Who deals better with structures and monotony, men or women?
3. What are some of the ways men deal with their proneness to boredom?
4. What social issues are associated with boredom, according to Dr. Watt?
5. According to the article, why do men cheat on their wives?
6. Why are American students more bored than students in other countries?

Discussion Questions

1. Do you bored often? How do you deal with boredom?
2. Do you think people in Uzbekistan are prone to boredom?
3. In your opinion, is the article correct? If not, what would you change about it?
4. Why is it valuable for society if a scientist studies boredom?
5. Are there ways to correct these feeling of boredom? How?

For Further Study

Observe the male and female members of your family. Do the males seem to get bored more easily than the females? Write an essay detailing the results of your observations. Do your findings support Dr. Watt's?

Psychology

Article

Clearly, how to talk your way to the top

by Beezy Marsh

Success may hinge on not what you say but how you say it, claims a speech expert. Frustrated professionals who dress the part, work extra hours but still fail to get ahead are not making the right sounds.

Mumblers and those with a high-pitched squeak are most passed over by employers, research has found. Having a clear voice and sounding enthusiastic can be a ticket to success.

Voce coach Meribeth Bunch found most of her clients with careers at a standstill succeeded after changing the way they spoke. It was not a case of disguising

at how people react to boredom on the job," Dr. Watt said.

So, does Dr. Watt ever get bored studying boredom? "I have moderately high boredom proneness," he said with a laugh. "For me, I think I am more productive because I easily get bored with things. I look for ways of making changes. It's kind of a motivating thing for me. "

Toronto Globe and Mail, June 8, 1999

Useful Idioms

Find the following idioms in the text and practice using them in sentences:

To be prone to boredom: тез-тез зерикмоы, часто скучать;

an attitude of entitlement: кишилар баы ьуукуига ьаратилган, нечеловеческие отношения;

to look for: ахтармоы; искать;

to deal with: алоьада бцлмоы, иметь дело;

Vocabulary

You have a friend in the United States who is studying psychology. Write her a letter telling about this article and asking if she has heard about it. Use the following words in your letter:

peer relationships structures

destructively

emotional autonomy monotony

dissatisfaction

gender to take risks

routine

stimulation

constructively

stimulus/ stimuli

Grammar Practice

Fill in the blank spaces with the correct form on the verb in parentheses.

1. Researchers ____ (discover) that men ____ (be) bored more often than women.

2. Women a man ____ (be) bored, he can not ____ (plan) a career or ____ (have) a normal relationship with friends.

3. When there ____ (be) no stimulation from outside, men can not ____ (deal) with life. Women ____ (be) able ____ (deal) with situations better than men.

4. Boredom ____ (be) associated with many social issues. When they ____ (be) bored, men might ____ (cheat) on their wives or ____ (get) low grades in their studies.

5. People ____ (like) ____ (have) a routine. They ____ (like) ____ (watch) the same programs on TV and ____ (eat) the same foods for supper. But ____ (follow) a routine can ____ (make) a person very bored. Then he might ____ (do) something bad.

Encourage them to have different points of view and to question each other about their answers.

Depending on the article, the section titled "For Further Study" can be used either as homework or as additional classwork . Some ask students to research a topic and write an essay or make a presentation about their findings, while others assign sides to an in-class debate on the issue. It may be beneficial for the students to have time to prepare for the debate, then act it out at following lesson.

Prior to the first in-class debate, the students should be coached on the proper format of a debate. Each side must prepare its position on the issue, with statements expressing its beliefs and information to support that statement. Each side should also determine what the opposing side's arguments will be and prepare a rebuttal, or argument disproving their opponents. Students should practice the conversational formulas given in Appendix D as a polite way of expressing their opinions. If the debate is being judged, before the judge his conclusion, each side should be given a few minutes to summarize their point of view and make a concluding argument.

Throughout a thematic unit, students should be following the news on television, radio, and in the newspapers. They should be encourage to pay special attention to those issues related to theme they are studying. A related assignment is for students to translate articles they have read in the press from their native language into English for use during the lesson. If the teacher wants, she may also assign students to translate the articles in the Course Reader into their native language to share with their families and friends.

After reading all the articles in thematic unit, or in a group of themes, there should be a lesson in which students present articles, lead discussions or give report on issues they have found in the mast media around that theme. Appendix B presents essay topics for each thematic unit which can be assigned as homework or as controlled class work.

The test questions in Appendix A can be used as additional exercises during class, as homework or as review at the and of a section. The teacher can also use these questions as a basis for tests and exams throughout the year.

We have started with this Reader for the third course and plan to develop similar texts for the second and fourth course in the future.

World News

Article

These articles represent one week in the life of the world

The Week: International News

The president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, and the president of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Laurent Kabila, signed a peace agreement in Libya to end the war in Congo, according to Libyan state television.

More than 1,200 Zimbabweans are dying each week from AIDS, President Robert Mugabe

said. He blamed the size of the epidemic for "reversing the gains that the country has made since independence."

The United Nations investigator for children's rights, Ofelia Calcetas-Santos, criticized the world of football for, in effect, trafficking in children from underdeveloped countries by luring them to Europe and then abandoning them when no team will take them.

A mud and rockslide killed at least 41 people in western Colombia. The dead included red Cross and civil defense workers, and firemen helping people trapped by an earlier landslide in the town of Argelia.

Jack Kevorkian, the physician known as Dr. Death for helping 130 terminally ill patients to commit suicide, was sentenced to 10 to 25 years in prison for murdering a man to whom he gave a lethal injection in front of a video camera.

Rebels of Uganda's Allied Democratic Forces hacked and shot to death 12 people in two raids in Nyakigumba trading center in western Uganda.

An exiled Iraqi opposition group said that dozens of people had been executed by government forces in the city of Basra. The Iraqi Communist party statement said Iraqi forces were trying to put down armed opposition activity.

China is hiring inspectors from abroad to check word on its Three

know — men are easily bored.

Men are significantly more prone to boredom than women and, as a result, men are generally worse at career planning, lifestyle planning, peer relationships, emotional autonomy and interdependence, says John Watt, a professor of psychology at Kansas State University.

"In general, you do find gender differences in terms of external stimulation," Dr. Watt said. "Men have a higher need for external stimulation. They don't deal very well with structures and monotony." Women, he added, "are better able at dealing with situations that men don't find favorable."

His research shows that because they are more prone to boredom, men take more risks and are more likely to change a structured environment. This can be done constructively, through a new hobby or career, or destructively through drugs, crime or disruption at work.

"Men are more likely than women to seek stimulation," he said.

Dr. Watt has been studying boredom and its effects on issues ranging from sexual relations to workplace mischief for 10 years. Boredom has been associated with a variety of social issues, including low grades, job dissatisfaction, depression and some forms of personality disorder.

Dr. Watt believes boredom proneness can also help explain why men chat on their wives. Most relationships begin with a sense of excitement and then fall into a more structured routine, he said.

"People fall into a routine; they know, for example, that they are going to do something at the same time every week, or after a certain television program, he said." Some men "have a difficult time dealing with that kind of structure and routine." Because they are more prone to boredom in the relationship, Dr. Watt said, some men seek to lessen the routine by looking for another relationship.

Much of Dr. Watt's research involves examining how boredom affects the workplace and society in general. For example, in one study he found that U.S. students were more prone to boredom than students from Ireland. That could be because Americans in general are exposed to more stimuli than people in other countries, he said.

"Other societies are much better at entertaining themselves," he said. In the United States, "There is almost an attitude of entitlement; we expect to be entertained."

Technology in general "is driving our economy, and jobs are much more computerized, and I think it becomes even more important to look

Comprehension Questions

1. How many countries does this report cover?
2. What might the United States government do to countries if they are serious violators of religious freedom?
3. Which faiths are persecuted in the world?
4. What is happening in Iraq?
5. Which group is being persecuted in Afghanistan? What are some of the things the government of Afghanistan has done to these people?
6. Which kind of countries are more tolerant of religious differences, authoritarian ones or democratic ones?
7. In which country are there tensions between Hindus and Muslims?
8. What are some of the things that the Arab population in Israel does not receive?
9. What could happen to someone in China if he didn't practice religion in an officially sponsored church?

Discussion Questions

1. What do you know about the state of religion in Uzbekistan?
2. Should the government of a country be allowed to regulate its citizens' religious beliefs?
3. Should a country's government be controlled by a particular religious organization? Why or why not?
4. How can a country deal with problems caused by certain religious groups?

For Further Study

1. Talk to an older person about life during Soviet times. What was the state of religion then? where people free to practice their religion as they wanted to? What was the situation for Muslims? For Christians? For Jews? Ask what differences they see now that Uzbekistan is an independent republic. Is it better or worse for people who want to practice their own religion? Write an essay about what you have learned from the interview.
2. Write about religious freedom. Do you think it is very important for people or not so important? Do governments have the right to tell people which religion they can practice? What should a government do if there are people practicing a religion which it considers harmful?

Psychology

Article

Men aren't stupid: They' are just bored

by Paul Waldie

Study finds they do some things poorly because they're prone to boredom.

Researchers have discovered something a lot women probably already

Gorges dam because it fears that local engineers will be bribed and cut corners, according to Lu Youmei, head of the government construction company responsible for the dam.

An Italian nun who swapped the Camorra for the convent helped police break up a criminal organization that defrauded insurance companies of \$32 million. Police arrested six people, acting on information from Sister Erminia, aged 38, the daughter of a Camorra boss killed in a feud between the rival families of the Neapolitan Mafia. The Dutch airline KLM apologized for using a shredding machine to kill 440 Chinese squirrels shipped illegally to the Netherlands after a string of complaints from animal lovers.

Guardian Weekly, April 25, 1999

Useful idioms

Find the following idioms in the text and practice using them in sentences:

a peace agreement: тинчлик низоми, мирное соглашение;

terminally ill: бедаво бемор, неизлечимо больной;

a string of complaints: бирин - кетин шикоятлар, поток жалоб;

to put down: бирор кишини бирор нарса ыилишдан тўхтатиш,
остановить кого-то от действия;

to cut corners: пулни тежаш, экономить деньги;

to hack: майдаламовы, рубить;

Vocabulary

Write sentences which show you know the meaning of the following words and phrases:

peace agreement

to commit suicide

to traffic (NOT traffic)

to end

lethal

to blame

to lure

trapped

swap

rival

Grammar Practice

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the correct preposition:

1. The president ____ Uganda and the president ____ the Democratic Republic of Congo signed a peace agreement ____ Libya to end

the war ___ Congo.

2. The United Nations investigator ___ children's rights criticized the world ___ football for trafficking ___ children ___ underdeveloped countries by luring them _____ Europe.

3. And exiled Iraqi opposition group said that dozens _____ people had been executed _____ government forces _____ the city ___ Basra.

4. China is hiring inspectors _____ abroad to check work ___ its Three Gorges dam.

5. Jack Kevorkian was sentenced ___ 10 to 25 years _____ prison _____ murdering a man _____ whom he gave a lethal injection _____ a video camera.

Comprehension Questions

1. What does the United Nations investigator say European countries are doing to children from undeveloped countries?

2. Why is China hiring experts from other countries to help with its new dam project?

3. How long will Dr. Jack Kevorkian be in prison?

4. Which country is mention more than once? Why?

Discussion Questions

1. Which article is most interesting to you? why?

2. Which article is the funniest? Why?

3. Which article is the most serious? Why?

4. Do you think these articles are mostly about good or bad things that have happened?

5. Choose one of these articles and learn more about the issue or country.

For further study

Follow the news for this week in the world. Write a series of very short articles like the ones above to show what you have learned about the news.

Social Issues: illegal drugs

Article

The war against drugs

detention in labor camps if they practice religion outside officially sponsored churches.

San Jose Mercury News, September 10, 1999

Useful idioms

Find the following idioms in the text and practice using them in sentences:

to stay out: мавжуд бцлмаслик, отсутствовать;

to suffer for: жабр чекмоы, страдать;

based on: асосланмоы, основываться;

intent on: интиладиган, стремиться;

to carry out: бажармоы, выполнять;

to stand out: фарыламоы, различать;

Vocabulary

Use the following words and word combinations in sentences to show that you know their meaning:

persecution clerics tolerant (tolerance)

authoritarian detention secularism

(secular)

faith to desecrate human rights

abuses

discrimination (to (desecration) harassment
discriminate) to eradicate discriminatory

legislation

summary execution prolonged

adherents confiscation

Grammar Practice

Fill in the blank spaces with the appropriate prepositions.

1. ___ many countries, the people are discriminated ___ because ___ their religion.

2. The government ___ the United States released a report ___ the state ___ religious freedom ___ the world.

3. ___ the study, experts showed that persecution is not confined ___ a particular faith.

4 ___ Iraq, the report says, Shiite Muslims have been thrown ___ jail and prevented ___ practicing their religion.

5. Tensions ___ Muslims and Hindus ___ India pose a challenge ___ the concepts ___ secularism and tolerance ___ which the state was founded.

While the report did not rank the countries based on the degree to which they limit freedom, the excesses attributed to the Iraqi government stood out. Iraq leader "Saddam Hussein has for decades conducted a brutal campaign of murder, summary execution and protracted arbitrary detention against the religious leaders and adherents of the Shiite Muslim population," the report said.

It said Iraqi security forces "have murdered senior Shiite clerics, desecrated mosques and holy sites, arrested tens of thousands of Shiites and forcibly prevented Shiites from practicing their religion."

Shiites in Afghanistan also suffered persecution and killing at the hands of the Taliban-led government in Kabul, according to the report. Afghan police impose "severe physical punishment and imprisonment" for deviations from codes of worship and dress, the report said.

It said Iran is intent on eradicating Baha'i believers through prolonged detention and imprisonment, confiscation and desecration of graveyards and holy places. It said other religious minorities in Iran also suffer.

In general, the report made clear that democratic countries are far more tolerant of religious diversity than are countries run by totalitarian governments. The report credits India, for example, with respecting constitutional provisions guaranteeing freedom of religion.

But it said tensions between Muslims and Hindus in India, and to a lesser extent between Hindus and Christians, "continue to pose a challenge to the concepts of secularism, tolerance and diversity on which the state was founded." It said state and local governments only partially respect religious freedom. The report also said there had been numerous reports of human rights abuses carried out by the mostly Hindu security forces against the predominantly Muslim population in the region of Kashmir controlled by India.

As for India's rival, Pakistan, the report said discriminatory legislation had encouraged an atmosphere of "religious intolerance, which has led to acts of violence by encouraged an atmosphere of" religious intolerance, which has led to acts of violence by extremists against members of religious minorities, including Christian, Hindus, Ahmadis and Zikiris."

In democratic Israel, the report said, the country's 20 percent Arab population does not receive the same quality of education, housing, employment opportunities and social services as Jews. In addition, it said, "government spending and financial support are proportionally far lower in predominantly non-Jewish."

The report said China's citizens can face harassment or prolonged

Almost every month, valuable illegal drugs are found in Britain - in cars, in ships, in planes, in containers, or in houses. Lots more drugs, however, are not found in time. Police and customs official in Britain and other countries

are fighting an endless battle. Today the battle is fought with modern weapons: x-rays, lasers, and dogs. Huge cargoes of drags have been found. Why is this battle necessary? If people, especially young people, really understood what these drugs meant, they would never risk having a try. Not even once.

Last year a British teenager died at a party after she had taken died from ecstasy in Britain. Since Christmas, the parents and friends of this girl have made a video to show the dangers of drug use. It is being shown in schools all over England. Some of her friends used to use ecstasy; now they have stopped. They are telling other teenagers a very simple message: "Just don't even try it/"

Some people think the world of drugs is exciting. In Manchester last year, a teacher was shocked when a ten-year-old said to her, "Well, look at the car he's dot," said the boy. "And what does he do?" asked the teacher. "He's a dealer," said the boy.

There's plenty of money in drugs, that's certain, but today's dealers will probably be tomorrow's poor drifters— or tomorrow's dead bodies. Rival gangs in Manchester use semiautomatic guns to kill each other. The situation is not as bad as in American cities, but Manchester police are alarmed.

When this magazine spoke to Francis, a drug addict, his message was clear. "Just don't even start," he said. "I began when I was just rebellion, but now I'm 25 and I'm dying. At first you get a high, but then it's downhill all the way. When you reach the bottom, there's no way up," he said somberly.

Dealers will say anything to make people buy drugs, and some fools will believe anything. "If you know what drugs can do and still take them, you must be pretty stupid," said Phil Cooper, and ex-addict. Phil knows what he's talking about. He ruined his career as a musician, and he almost died.

Horizon English language magazine, 1998

Useful Idioms

Find the following idioms in the text and practice using them in sentences:

in time: ваътида, вовремя;

Customs officials: хизмат кўрсатувчи боғхона одамлари,
таможенники;

To have a try: татиб кўроми, попробовать;

Drug addict: гиёванд, наркоман;

Vocabulary

Make up and practice a short dialog between a teacher and a pupil on the topic of illegal drugs. Use the following words in your dialog.

valuable since Christmas alarmed
container shocked fool
battle dealer
at least drifter

Grammar Practical

Fill in the blank spaces with the correct article (*a*, *an*, or *the*), if necessary.

Last week in _____ Britain, police found _____ kilo of illegal drugs. _____ police questioned _____ teenager who was reading _____ magazine outside _____ house where _____ drugs were found. _____ teenager said she did not know where _____ drugs came from.

_____ next day, _____ anonymous caller told _____ police he had seen _____ young people selling _____ drugs across _____ street from his house. When _____ police arrived, they saw _____ same boy whom they had seen _____ day before. He was reading different magazine, but he was wearing _____ same clothes.

Comprehension Questions

1. Why are young people turning to drugs?
2. What are the dangers of drugs?
3. Why do some people think that drugs is exciting?
4. What happened to the British teenager who took the drug ecstasy?
5. Why did the ten-year-old want to be a dealer?

Discussion Questions

1. What kind of drugs are taken in Uzbekistan?
2. What is the "youth culture" of Uzbekistan like?
3. Is it normal for young people in Uzbekistan to experiment with drugs? Alcohol?

there?

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think this is something that could happen in Uzbekistan? Why or why not?
2. Why is life more difficult for girls and women in these countries than it is for men?
3. What do you propose as solution to the growing problem of female suicides in developing countries?
4. Should young women be given the same education and allowed to hold the same kinds of jobs as men?
5. Should women and girls be allowed to choose own future husbands?

For Further Study

You have been asked to join an international group of psychiatrists, social workers and doctors who are working to lessen the rate of female suicides in Third World countries. What can you advice the governments of these countries to do? How can you help prevent these women's suicides?

Meet with a group of your classmates to discuss this issue. Write a short report detailing the results of your meeting and offering some suggestions to the governments of these countries on how they can save the lives of their female citizens.

Religion

Article

Religious intolerance cited around world

A State Department report pointed to evidence of widespread religious persecution in Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan, all under varying degrees of authoritarian rule, and to discrimination in some democratic countries as well, including Israel and India. The report, covering 194 countries and territories, is the first of what will become an annual assessment of the state of religious freedom around the world. The most serious violators could eventually face economic sanctions.

The study stressed that religious persecution is not confined to a particular faith. "Throughout the world, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and other believers continue to suffer for their faith," it said.

their meaning:

acquire compensation
legally victim
availability massacre
harsh liability

extend
drastically

Grammar Practice

Fill in the blank spaces with the correct form of the verb in parentheses.

1. I don't know where he _____ (buy) that gun. You can _____ (buy) guns in our town.
2. Maybe he _____ (tell) his sister. You could _____ (ask) her tomorrow.
3. If you _____ (kill) someone with a gun, you will _____ (go) to prison.
4. It _____ (be) legal to own a gun in the United States.
5. Where _____ she _____ (buy) the bullets for her gun?

Comprehension Questions

1. What does the writer of this letter want for America?
2. Why are guns sold in America?
3. What is a product liability law? What happens if someone is injured while using a dangerous device?
4. Is it possible to find a person who sold a gun to a killer? Is it possible to find the manufacturer of a gun?
5. Does the author think that changing gun laws in the United States will reduce the danger to residents of that country?

Discussion Questions

1. The American constitution gives every American the right to own a gun. In your opinion, is this good or bad? Why?
2. What does Uzbek law say about guns?
3. Would you want everyone in your country to own a gun?
5. What do you think are some solutions for an increasingly violent world?
6. Explain the following quotation: "Guns don't kill, people do."
7. What makes people shoot other people?

For Further Study

Find a similar article about a gun-related issue and give a short summary. Ask your course-mates' opinions about gun control in

produced male heirs.

These aren't depressed or mentally ill women, either. Early results from a study being conducted by a Canadian psychiatrist suggest that most of these suicides are impulsive acts — often precipitated by a family quarrel — committed by otherwise sound women.

Social workers and doctors are working together to devise suicide prevention strategies — including family counseling and emergency hot lines - in some of China's larger cities. But these services aren't available in rural areas.

Although suicide is viewed in the West as an act of weakness, in China it can be considered "a demonstration of strength and conviction; a time-honored resort of women who have been maligned, shamed or wronged."

The same is true in Pakistan, where female suicide is also a growing problem. Here, too, the standard victim is a young woman living in the countryside, although in Pakistan the suicides more commonly precede arranged marriages. In the southeastern Pakistan province of Sindh alone, 60 to 100 girls and women kill themselves each month.

Female suicides are also up in Afghanistan, where women's lives have dramatically worsened since the fundamentalist Islamic Taliban took control of the government four years ago and forbade women to work.

Besides the social and cultural problems created by the Taliban's oppression of women, the regime has also created serious economic problems for the many Afghan families who once depended on women's incomes. In the capital city of Kabul alone, roughly 40,000 female civil servants lost their jobs. One psychiatrist said that poverty was leading many Afghan women to commit suicide: "They have no bread, no food, nothing."

Utne Reader, September-October 1999

Useful Idioms

Find the following idioms in the text and practice using them in sentences:

vaunted economic revolution: южак иытисодий иныилоб,

высокооцениваемая экономическая революция;

to be at the mercy of someone :бирорнинг ыцли остида, быть под руководством кого-либо;

oppressed by: -дан сишилмоы / эзилмоы, притеснять, угнетать;

to depend on: бошлыы бцлмоы, зависеть ;

arranged marriage: севгисиз турмуш ыуриш, брак по расчету;

off from her job when she has a baby? Write a well-organized essay describing the situation for women in the country you have chosen.

Women's Issues

Article

Oppressed by tradition and politics, Third World women are choosing suicide.

No Exit Here

by Lynette Lamb

Much has been made of China's vaunted economic evolution and its inevitable impact on global trade, politics, and the environment, but the collision of Western-style development and traditional culture may be creating a more immediate — and troubling — issue: Chinese women are killing themselves at an alarming rate.

A quarter of the world's women live in China, but the country is home to more than half the world's female suicides— about 500 a day. Indeed, World Bank researchers found that China's female suicide rate is nearly five times the global average. It is the only country where female suicide victims outnumber male suicides.

The phenomenon is especially common among young, rural Chinese women.

(Three times as many suicides take place in the countryside as in the cities.) The continuing low status of rural women has collided with the nation's growing market economy. Although the communist government 50 years ago granted women equal access to divorce, education, and jobs, those rights — along with the majority of money-making opportunities — are found primarily in China's major cities.

And thanks to television, rural women now know their urban counterparts have more money and freedom, while their own lives aren't significantly different from those of their great-grandmothers. Arranged marriages are still common, sons are still treated like "little emperors," and daughters — if they aren't aborted or abandoned — are rarely educated. Once they're married, young brides are the mercy of their husbands' families, particularly their mothers-in-law, whom they are expected to wait on like servants. Young women begin to command respect only when they have

general.

Youth

Article

Japanese children are forfeiting their holidays to study for private-school entrance exams

Student crambers hole up in Tokyo hotel

by Miwa Suzuk (in Tokyo)

It is The New Year holiday in Japan and time for private-school entrance exams.

Sporting a headband with the motto "Sure to pass the exam," 11-year-old Takuma Horii crams for the February exams with a group of fellow sufferers at Tokyo's Hotel Metropolitan.

"He is so devoted and I'm moved to tears," the boy's tutor, Ikuko Watanabe, said excitedly during a two-hour teaching session in a tiny room at the hotel.

Takuma is one of 22 students aged between 11 and 17 on the six-day New Year Special Training course, which offers private lectures in hotel rooms for the children of parents prepared to fork out huge sums of cash.

The Japan institute for Tutors, a company organizing 75, 000 private teachers, has offered the service for 22 years to detach children from their everyday life.

Six of the most experienced tutors stay at the hotel and teach the children during the crash course, institute president Noboru Furukawa said. Ten of the 22 children even remain at the hotel overnight to "increase concentration on studies ," while others commute.

Excluding hotel room charges and meals, the fee for the six days will be 576,000 yen (\$7,800) for 36 hours of head-to-head study with a tutor, plus 40,000 yen (\$540) for enrollment and counseling costs.

For Takuma, this exam cramming was his first experience of spending nights away from his family or friends. "I'm very grateful," the boy said shyly of his parents' decision to send him to the course, while admitting he was suffering a skin rash "under the pressure." Outside the room, his mother, Akiko, said: "I'm trying not to come to see my son as he needs mental training towards the exam."

Ms. Watanabe, the tutor, acknowledged that the mental pressure sometimes triggered physical ailments.

Japan's economic woes have not discourage parents from spending on education, the 64 year-old pioneer of the tutoring business said. "Higher education is an asset parents can give their children... Spending on education is to making savings that will never diminish."

Tomomi, 12, confessed that she was "a bit sorry" that she could not enjoy the holiday season. "Please, please tape the television music programs while I'm away," she asked her mother.

But the institute may not approve of pop music — it produces its own goods for students, ranging from conventional study books to tapes of a song for students and tutors, entitled *Striding Along the Way of Hope with You*.

Toronto Globe and Mail, January 5, 1999

Useful Idioms

Find the following idioms in the text and practical using them in sentences:

to be devoted: садоياتли бцлмоы, быть преданным;

to fork out huge sums of cash: кцп пул бермоы, дать много денег;

a crash course: тициз курс, направленный курс;

head-to-head study: якка тарзда цыиш, индивидуальное обучение;

exam war: имтиьон жанги, война экзаменов;

Vocabulary

Write a similar news article about students in Uzbekistan, using the vocabulary below:

to sport	aliment
to cram	pressure
tutor	an asset

Grammar Practice

Combine the sentences in each exercise to make one complex sentence.

1. It is the New Year holiday in Japan. It is time for children to study. These children must study for entrance exams. They must study for 10 hours each day.
2. Takuma is a student. He is 11 years old. He is studying for the entrance exam. He is studying with a tutor. He is studying at special cram course. The cram course is at a hotel.
3. The Japan Institute for Tutors is a company. The company organizes 75,000 private teachers. The company has organized a

Grammar practice

Fill the blank spaces with the correct form of the verb in parentheses.

1. The proportion of women who ____ (remain) childless ____ (be) expected to double.
2. Many young women in Britain ____ (not want) to have children.
3. The population of Britain may ____ (start) to fall if this trend ____ (continue).
4. ____ you ____ (want) to have children? My sister ____ (hot want) any.
5. Surayo ____ (want) to have four children; I only ____ (want) one child.

Comprehension questions

1. What is happening to the proportion of childless women in Britain?
2. Why are women in the UK choosing not to have children?
3. What are the consequences of this trend for British society?
4. When was the last time the British population stopped growing and turned downward?
What happened then?
5. What could be the long term effects of this decline in the percentage of British women having children?

Discussion Questions

1. What is the situation in Uzbekistan? Are women choosing to have more or fewer children than ten years ago?
2. Should a woman be able to choose for herself how many children she has?
3. What is the ideal age a woman to have children: under 20, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35 older?
4. Where do you think a "woman's place" is - in the home or at the office?
5. Must a woman be married in order to have children?

For further study

Research the statistics from another country. Find out the average age for women there to have children, what percentage of women have children, and whether most women with children are married or not. Do many women in this country work outside their homes? What are the government's policies regarding maternity leave (giving a woman time

Death in 1347-51.

Officials of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) expect that the United Kingdom's population, now more than 58 million, will start falling after 2025, and drop to about 55 million by 2075. According to ONS forecasts more than 20% of women born since 1964 will have no children. Latest figures show that born in 1969 were childless at age 25, as were 23% of those born in 1959 at age 35. The forecast of 20% childlessness by the age of 45 among those born since 1964 compares with 10% with of women born in 1944 and 13% of those born in 1949.

Bob Armitage, an ONS statistician, said that the trend stemmed from "things like women choosing to remain in employment, or to go through education." He added, "It is a problem. We are likely to have a population more heavily weighted to the elderly."

The birth rate among women aged 25-29, the peak age for having babies, fell last year to its lowest level since 1941. The rate among women aged 30-34 is higher than that among those aged 20-24, indicating that women having children are increasing doing so after establishing a career.

Guardian Weekly, 1999

Useful Idioms

Find the following idioms in the text and practice using them in sentences:

a downward (an upward) trend: *посаиш (ошиш), повышение (понижение);*

to set out: *кўрсатмоы, показать;*

to go through education: *цыишни тугатмоы, заканчивать учебу;*

Vocabulary

Act out a dialog between a young woman explains to her mother why she doesn't want to have children. The mother should ask questions about future population problems if many women don't have children.

Use the following words in your dialog:

proportion	to stem from
to underscore	to establish
a blip	to terminate
forecast	pregnancy
childlessness	

cram course. The cam course is at a hotel.

4. Some children will stay at the hotel. They will stay several nights at the hotel. They will not see their parents.

5. The students will study at the hotel. They will study hard. They will study for exams. They will not watch television. The television has programs. These programs are about music.

Comprehension Questions

1. For what are these Japanese students studying?
2. What have they given up to cram for the exams?
3. For how long has this service been offered?
4. How mach money does the course cost? What is included?
5. Do the children enjoy spending so much time studying?

Discussion Questions

1. What is the benefit of higher education, according to the article?
2. How is this situation similar to or different from Uzbekistan?
3. If you had the money, would you pay to send your child to a special tutor?
4. What do you think the children are missing by spending their vacation time studying? Do you think they are better off in the long run?

For Further Study

Debate the merits of cramming for exams.

One side represents people who believe that children should be allowed to enjoy their childhood, play games and have fun. The other side should argue that children need to study for exams, because if they don't they will lose out in the long run.

Present your arguments in an orderly manner. Try to think of counter-arguments to the other side's arguments.

Youth

Article

Young adults are staying home longer out of economic necessity. Statistics Canada points to higher university enrollments, unemployment, and the tendency to marry later in life.

Between a rock and mom's place

by Luiza Chwialkowska

Record number of young adults in their 20s and early 30s were more likely to be living with mom and dad in 1996, the most recent year for which census data is available, than at any time during the previous 15 years.

These findings came as surprise, and a relief, to young people around the country who have been the butt of jokes because they live with their parents.

"I was reassured. I thought, thank God, I'm not the only one," said Ann McGerrigle, 30, an investment who has been living with her parents in Toronto for the past two years. "I was surprised at how many people do."

Statistics Canada said the growing tendency of young adults to live with their parents may be due to higher university enrollments, higher rates of unemployment among young adults, and the tendency of young people to get married later in life.

But many young adults return home after university to re-establish relationships with their parents, escape job pressures, and save money.

"I wanted to own the next place I live in, and I knew I couldn't save up to buy anything if I had to pay rent," says Ms. McGerrigle, who concedes that living at home requires sacrifices, such as indulging her parents' taste for television shows. "Overall, it's worked out really well," she says. "As my parents get older, I appreciate the time I have with them."

Men are more likely than women to live with their parents. In 1996, 23 % of women aged 20-34 lived in the parental home, up from 16 % in 1981. During the same period, the proportion of men in the same age group and living at home increased to 33% from 26%. Live-at-home men say they face a double standard; they complain of being considered unmanly.

"I'm always nervous when I introduce myself to a woman," says a 28 year-old Toronto man, a writer, who refused to be named for fear of being teased by friends and colleagues. "I always try to steer away from get-to-know-you questions like, 'What do you do?' because I know that the dreaded, 'Where do you live?' is coming next."

His decision to stay home is based on family values, he said. "I've resorted to lying, telling people I've got loads of student loans and desperately need to save cash. People understand that. They can't understand that I have very close relationship with my parents

4. How do they punish children who refuse to join up?

5. What is the minimum age set by most governments for military recruitment? Which countries have different age requirements?

6. How old are the youngest children known to be serving in some African armies?

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think should be the minimum Age for recruitment in the armed forces?
2. What is the long term danger of recruiting children for wars in Africa?
3. What factors in a child's life are vital for his healthy development?
4. Should a country require all its citizens to join the armed forces or should joining the armed forces be voluntary (only if a person wants to join)? Why?
5. Should both men and women serve in the army? Should they both do the same kind of jobs? Why or why not?

For Further Study

Create a dialogue between a United Nations representative and the leader of a rebel group in Angola, who is recruiting children as seven years old into his army. Include his reasons for doing this and try to give him some alternatives to using children in his army.

Women's Issues

Article

Twice as many women opt not to have children

At least one in five women now in their 20s and 30s will have no children, government statisticians predicted last week as they set out how Britain's population will start to fall for the first time since record began.

The proportion of women who remain childless is expected to double, compared with those now in their 40s and 50s, as growing numbers decide to put careers first. The trend was underscored by figures showing that the abortion rate in inner London, where the number of working women is the highest, has reached 35% of all pregnancies. The national average is about 20%. Apart from a blip in 1983, Britain's population has been growing for hundreds of years and may not have been on a downward trend since the Black

leaders risked a terrible if they ignored such recruitment policies. "What is becoming clearer to these governments is that they have no choice but to deal with the children of war. They could be sitting on a time bomb. These children could unravel any peace efforts if they are given no future."

Guardian Weekly, April 25, 1999

Useful Idioms

Find the following idioms in the text and practice using them in sentences:

to man a checkpoint: текширув пункти, работати на

проверочном пункте;

a terrible legacy: нохуш мерос, случайное наследство;

the rest of: бюлган ыисми, остаточное;

to deal with: аловыада бцлмоы, иметь дело;

Vocabulary

Write a brief summary of the article to explain its meaning to a friend in England. Use the following words in your summary. Be sure that their meanings are clear.

coalition to volunteer

to abduct

the front line gunpoint

combatant

to recruit combat

Grammar Practice

Fill in the blank spaces with the correct article (*a, an, or the*), if necessary.

_____ report from _____ coalition on children's rights groups says that many _____ children in _____ Africa are forced to work as _____ soldiers in _____ armies of both _____ governments and _____ rebel groups. Many of these _____ children must serve on _____ because they stand closer to _____ danger. _____ report describes _____ 14 year-old girl who was abducted by _____ rebel group in _____ Uganda. They did not give her _____ gun. _____ United Nations says _____ recruitment of children is very bad.

Comprehension Questions

1. What is happening to children in Africa?
2. Who wrote this report?
3. How are children used in wars?

and want to live at home. "

"It's not like my boyfriend can stay over or watch movies for hours on the couch," says Joanne Cole, 27, who moved to her parents' home two years ago. "There's always somebody around. That part is a little strange."

The number of married children living with their parents has also increased. In 1996, 3% of married women and 4% of married men aged 20-34 were living with their parents, more than double the proportions 15 years earlier.

The Toronto writer, however, worries if he will ever join ranks. "I don't really need to move out until I meet a woman I love," he says. "But, then again, I suppose that's a tad difficult when I'm too shy to meet women in the first place because I'm embarrassed by living at home."

National Post, Canada, March 12, 1999

Useful Idioms

Find the following idioms in the text and practice them in sentences:

To save up: тцпламоы, йищмоы, копить;

To stay over: бюлмоы, отставать;

To move out: кцчмоы, переехать;

the butt of jokes: масхара, шутки;

a growing tendency: ошиб бораётганг интилиш, растущая тенденция;

to indulge someone's taste for something: цзига эп кцрмоы, позволить себе;

to join ranks: аъзо бцлмоы, присоединяться;

Vocabulary

Explain in English the meaning of the following words and phrases. Use them in sentences to show you understand.

record numbers to pay rent to be

teased

census data to resort to something

relief a double standard

Grammar Practice

Fill in blank spaces with the correct preposition.

Many young people _____ Canada live _____ home _____ their parents. Some these young people live _____ the same room they

had has children. Many _____ them have graduated _____ university and work _____ good films. _____ many years, this trend has been growing.

Some _____ these young men like to go _____ bars. They don't tell their friends they live _____ their parents. If their friends heard _____ this, the young men would be the butt _____ many jokes. One _____ these young men says that when he introduces himself _____ women, he street away _____ the topic _____ "where do you live?"

Comprehension Questions

1. Many at least four reasons young people return to live at their parents homes.
2. Which group is more likely to live with their parents, men or women?
3. why is the Toronto writer embarrassed to introduce himself to women?
4. What are some of the problems young Canadians face living at their parents' homes?
5. What are some of the benefits for these young people of living with their parents?

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think about these statistics— are you surprised that Canadians are surprised by them?
2. What is the situation among young people in Uzbekistan? Are more or fewer unmarried young people choosing to live with their parents?
3. Give some reasons why the situation is different in Uzbekistan.
4. Are young people in Uzbekistan embarrassed to live with their parents? Why or why not?
5. If you had the choice, would you choose to live alone or with your parents?

For Further Study

Imagine you have a pen-friend in Canada who writes that she will soon be moving back to her parents' house. She has spent the last five years living in a different province as she studied at university. Now she has told that she doesn't know how she will like it. Write a letter back to her, telling her about how young people live in Uzbekistan. Describe your national customs and traditions to her, and try to explain why many people see the situation differently here. Ask her some questions about how she feels in the situation.

Youth

Article

African children sacrificed on front line

by Peter Moszynnski (in Maputo)

More than 120,000 African children are serving as soldiers — across the continent, a coalition of children's rights groups revealed in a report. Stuart Maslen, of the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, said the report represented "a catalogue of shocking abuse against African children."

Often in the front line and sometimes barely big enough to carry a rifle, children are recruited or forced to serve in armies in countries to serve in armies in countries including Angola, Burundi, Congo-Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Uganda, According to the coalition.

"Some children volunteer to join the armed forces, but tens of thousands of children are forced to join up, sometimes at gunpoint," the coalition said. "When not engaged in combat, children are often used to man checkpoints. Adults tend to stand further back so that if bullets start flying, the children will be first victims."

The coalition tells the story of a 14 year-old girl, identified only as Concy, who was abducted in Uganda by the rebel Lord's Resistance Army. She says: "I was not given a gun, but I helped in the abductions and grabbing of food from villagers. Girls who refused to become LRA wives were killed in front of us serve as a warning to the rest of us."

The coalition, based in Switzerland, counts UNICEF among its members. It released the report during a conference in Mozambique's capital, Maputo, on the use of children as soldiers In Africa.

Most African governments set 18 as the minimum age for military recruitment, but others, including Angola, Burundi, Rwanda and Chad, have recruitment ages ranging from 15 to 17, the report said. In practice, however, countries such as Angola, Sierra Leone and Uganda recruit children as young as seven into government armed forces.

Rebel groups across the continent also have boys and girls among their combatants, the report said.

At the conference Olara Otunnu, the United Nations special representative for children in armed conflict, said that Africa's