

Parliament brings end to 700 years of hunting

Level 3 | Advanced

1 Key Vocabulary

Fill the gaps using these key words from the text:

override	scupper	barbaric	entrenched	fitting
invoke	compromise	disobedience	hound	brace oneself

1. If someone has _____ opinions, these opinions have existed for a very long time and it is difficult to change them.
2. _____ means extremely violent and cruel.
3. A _____ is a hunting dog.
4. If you _____ a rule or a law, you use it in order to achieve something.
5. _____ means not obeying orders or rules.
6. If you _____, you get ready for something unpleasant.
7. If you _____ someone's plans, you spoil those plans.
8. A _____ is a way of solving an argument in which both sides accept they cannot have everything they want.
9. If you _____ someone, you use official authority to ignore or change a decision they have made.
10. _____ is another word for 'appropriate'.

2 What do you know?

Choose the best answer in each case.

1. For how long has fox-hunting with dogs existed in England and Wales?
 - a. 70 years
 - b. 370 years
 - c. 700 years
2. How many jobs depend on fox-hunting?
 - a. 800
 - b. 8,000
 - c. 80,000

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3. What, in UK politics, is the Parliament Act?
 - a. A law that allows Parliament to make laws.
 - b. A law that allows the House of Commons to ignore votes in the House of Lords.
 - c. A law that requires the House of Commons to respect votes in the House of Lords.

4. Which English writer wrote the lines 'Cry havoc and let loose the dogs of war'?
 - a. William Shakespeare
 - b. Charles Dickens
 - c. Lord Byron

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Patrick Wintour

The British government recently invoked the Parliament Act, overriding the opposition of the House of Lords and bringing to an end almost 700 years of fox-hunting in England and Wales. Within hours, the Queen gave her royal assent and the total ban on hunting with dogs will be enforced.

In the first signs of the campaign of civil disobedience and protest promised by pro-hunt supporters, a demonstration was staged at the state banquet at Windsor Castle where the Queen was hosting the French president, Jacques Chirac, and Tony Blair.

After a day of parliamentary confusion, Mr. Blair conceded that his efforts to delay the Act until after the British general election had failed.

There are 318 registered hound packs in England and Wales, including 184 foxhound packs. Around 8,000 jobs depend on hunting, while 15,000 to 16,000 people, such as hoteliers, could also be affected by the ban. The government and police forces around the country must now get ready for the possibility of unrest over the next three months.

Parliament was marked by political manoeuvring by both pro- and anti-hunters as they sought to cast their opponents as the true enemies of compromise and reason. The government made a final attempt to reach a compromise but this was unsuccessful.

By a majority of 151 the MPs agreed to delay the implementation of the bill until July 2006, but rejected the government's preferred option of 2007. Within hours the Lords, albeit by the surprisingly narrow margin of 153 to 114, voted to reject the 18-month delay, leaving the Speaker with no alternative but to invoke the Parliament Act to override the peers' objections.

Tony Blair voiced regret at the outcome of the votes. Explaining that he had been seeking a way through "very, very entrenched views on both sides", the prime minister accepted that hunting would now be a legal and election issue: "There are people who feel passionately that hunting is integral to their way of life.

There are people who feel equally passionate that it is barbaric and cruel."

With the threat of running battles between police, hunters and landowners ahead of the election the pro-hunt, campaigners were urged to accept the will of parliament. "The hunting community say they are law-abiding people, so we expect those involved in hunting to cease their activity when they are required by law to do so," said one MP. The Tory rural affairs spokesman, James Gray, called for mass legal disobedience. Quoting Shakespeare, he said passing a ban with no delay sent a message to the countryside that read: "Cry havoc and let loose the dogs of war."

Simon Hart, chief executive of the Countryside Alliance, was furious to see his seven-year battle fail. "The chaos and deceit that has surrounded today's events is a fitting finale to what has been one of the most ridiculous, dishonest and time-consuming episodes in parliamentary history," he said.

Within 24 hours the alliance had made good its threat to launch a legal challenge against the ban, saying it was confident it could prove that the 1949 Parliament Act had always been illegal, although it has been used four times, once by Margaret Thatcher.

Meanwhile there was further confusion last weekend when the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, warned that police needed more time to gather intelligence on rebels and suggested that riders would not be prosecuted for killing foxes unless it was clearly deliberate. He said he had wanted the ban delayed to allow detailed preparations to combat the expected mass disobedience.

Police have warned that they could be stretched to the limit in dealing with the disorder. Jan Berry, who chairs the Police Federation of England and Wales, said that opposition to the new law would put a huge strain on small rural forces.

The Guardian Weekly 26-11-2004, page 11

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3 Comprehension check

Match the beginnings with the endings:

1. A demonstration at Windsor Castle ...
 2. The government invoked the Parliament Act ...
 3. Tony Blair ...
 4. Pro-hunt campaigners ...
 5. The Conservative party ...
 6. The Countryside Alliance believes ...
 7. The police have warned ...
 8. Many country people ...
-
- a. ... because the House of Lords voted to reject the compromise motion.
 - b. ... are expected to begin a campaign of civil disobedience.
 - c. ... the Parliament Act is illegal.
 - d. ... are firmly opposed to a ban on fox-hunting.
 - e. ... was the first sign of a campaign of civil disobedience.
 - f. ... their resources will be seriously stretched by disorder in the countryside.
 - g. ... supports mass legal disobedience.
 - h. ... was in favour of delaying the ban until after the general election.

4 Vocabulary - definitions

Match the underlined words with the definitions given below:

1. Within hours, the Queen gave her royal assent.
 2. ... albeit by the surprisingly narrow margin of 153 to 114.
 3. ... hunting is integral to their way of life.
 4. ... to combat the expected mass disobedience.
 5. ... campaigners were urged to accept the will of parliament
-
- a. forming an essential part of.
 - b. agreement.
 - c. to do something to stop something bad from happening.
 - d. the decision.
 - e. a word used to introduce a comment that slightly changes the effect of what was said before it.

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5 Vocabulary - collocations

Find the verbs in the text that collocate with these nouns

1. to _____ a demonstration
2. to _____ an attempt
3. to _____ a compromise
4. to _____ a bill
5. to _____ the will of parliament
6. to _____ a legal challenge
7. to _____ intelligence

6 Grammar focus - modal verbs

Look at this example from the text

The total ban on hunting with dogs will be enforced from next year.

Make similar sentences about the future using the information in the text, modal verbs and the following prompts:

1. 15,000 to 16,000 people/ affect/ the ban
2. Police/ stretched to the limit
3. There/ widespread unrest/ in the countryside
4. The prime minister/ accept/ hunting/ a legal issue
5. The Home Secretary/ suggest/ riders/ not prosecute
6. The police/ say /opposition to the new law/put/ a strain/ small rural forces

7 Discussion

1. Should hunting with dogs be made illegal?
2. Should the lower, elected house of parliament overrule the higher, unelected house?

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KEY

1 Key words

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 1. entrenched | 2. barbaric | 3. hound | 4. invoke | 5. disobedience |
| 6. brace yourself | 7. scupper | 8. compromise | 9. override | 10. fitting |

2 What do you know?

1. c; 2. b; 3. b; 4. a

3 Comprehension Check

1. e; 2. a; 3. h; 4. d; 5. g; 6. c; 7. f; 8. b

4 Vocabulary Definitions

1. b; 2. d; 3. a; 4. e; 5. d;

5 Vocabulary Collocations

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. to stage a demonstration | 2. to make an attempt |
| 3. to reach a compromise | 4. to implement a bill |
| 5. to accept the will of parliament | 6. to launch a legal challenge |
| 7. to gather intelligence | |

6 Grammar Focus Modal verbs

- 15,000 to 16,000 people could be affected by the ban.
- Police will be stretched to the limit.
- There will be (could be) widespread unrest in the countryside.
- The prime minister accepted hunting would be a legal issue.
- The Home Secretary suggested riders would not be prosecuted.
- The police said opposition to the new law would put a strain on small rural forces.