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Diplomatic English

British oil dispute with Argentina deepens

Diplomatic English lesson plan = 2 x 90 mins or 3 x 60 min

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Ideas and Articles by David Robinson	

1st March 2010

Category: Diplomatic English / South Atlantic Oil / Falkland Islands

Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate

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Diplomatic English

British oil dispute with Argentina deepens

A new dispute is escalating in the South Atlantic between Argentina and Britain over the disputed Falkland Islands. This time, it is about black gold – oil. So far, it is only a diplomatic war of words between the two countries. The trigger for the latest bout of words was a ship called Thor Leader. Its cargo was pipes bound for the Falkland Islands where an oil drilling platform is about to start drilling for oil. Argentina has accused Britain of illegally promoting drilling operations. Geologists have estimated there could be up to 60 billion barrels of high grade oil in the 200 square mile seabed zone surrounding the Falkland's. That could make the Falklands one of the world's largest oil reserves, comparable with the North Sea, which so far has produced about 40 billion barrels of oil.

A British company, Desire Petroleum, is due to start drilling operations at the end of February in the disputed waters 100 miles north of the capital Port Stanley. A £20 million offshore oil rig, the Ocean Guardian, is expected to arrive shortly from the Scottish Highlands that Britain hopes will bring a black gold rush to the sparsely populated islands. In 2007, Argentina tore up an agreement between Britain and Argentina to co-operate over hydrocarbon discoveries. Argentina that still claims sovereignty over the islands, is now taking its case to the United Nations. It also said it might take the case to the International Court of Justice in the Hague. The Thor Leader, a foreign-flagged vessel, was carrying pipes made by the Techint Group in Argentina and was stopped in the southern port of Campana. Techint, who is the world's largest pipe maker, denied the pipes were bound for the Falkland's saying they were for clients in the Mediterranean.

The Argentinean Foreign Minister Jorge Taiana thought otherwise saying, "Evidence exists that indicate that the freighter was to be

used to supply material to oil industry activities that the United Kingdom is illegally promoting in the Malvinas Islands. The Argentinean government has energetically protested to the United Kingdom over each and every one of the British unilateral actions with which it has tried to explore or exploit natural resources in an area that is subject of a dispute over sovereignty." Mr Taiana added, "Argentina's claim to the islands remained "firm and permanent" and it would take all necessary actions in the legal and diplomatic framework to preserve our rights and our resources."

The British Foreign Office declined to comment on the claims from Argentina. It was the latest in a series of diplomatic spats over the licensing of private companies to drill for gas and oil in Falkland waters. Argentina's senior diplomat in Britain, Javier Pedrazzini, was recently hauled into the British Foreign Office in London for a dressing down after Buenos Aires passed a law claiming sovereignty over the Falklands. He left with a "note verbale" – a firm rejection of the claim – to take back to Buenos Aires. In retaliation, the Argentinean government summoned the charge d'affaires from the British Embassy to receive a "most forceful protest" about the dressing down incident.

Unconfirmed reports by the waiting oil platform crew claimed the platform had been shadowed by Argentinean aircraft as it made its journey. The Ministry of Defence in Britain was unable to confirm the reports, nor could the platforms' owners confirm any fly-over. The British Foreign Office has denied that the oil platforms are illegal. "We are absolutely clear this is legitimate business in Falkland Island waters and we will continue to reiterate our position that we have no doubt about our sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and the surrounding maritime waters," a spokesman said. To recall in April 1982, Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic. They were defeated and expelled by a British naval force. The conflict lasted a bloody 72 days and cost the lives of 255 British soldiers, and 649 Argentinean soldiers. Since 1993, the population of over 3,000 people on the self-governing overseas territory have all been legal British citizens. Britain has occupied the territory since 1833.

Diplomatic English – British oil dispute with Argentina... – 1st March 2010
DIPLOMATIC DEBATE 1

Student A questions

- 1) What is the latest on this story?
- 2) What is your opinion on this subject?
- 3) Why should the United Nations get involved?
- 4) Should Argentina be allowed to impose stricter controls on shipping to the Falkland Islands? Why? Why not?
- 5) How will the row effect relations between Argentina and Britain?
- 6) How serious is the Falklands row for Argentinean–UK ties?
- 7) What effect will it have on Argentinean-UK relations?
- 8) How do you think the situation can be resolved?

Student B questions

- 1) Why is Argentina only now escalating the Falklands / Malvinas diplomatic dispute?
- 2) What will the United Nations do if the situation on the ground – or rather - in the sea - escalates?
- 3) How will this latest dispute affect the football world cup in South Africa?
- 4) **Update** - Following the recent Mexican summit the other Latin American countries have backed Argentina. What exactly does this mean?
- 5) What do you think the Falkland Islanders want from all this?
- 6) Do you think Britain might send another taskforce down to protect the Falkland Islands to bolster the islands current defences?
- 7) What do you anticipate happening if oil is actually discovered?
- 8) Do you think Argentina might attack the Falklands again?

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DIPLOMATIC DEBATE 2

Student A questions

- 1) What should the UN Secretary General do?
- 2) Do you think it right that Britain has prepared itself in case of conflict in the Falkland Islands? Explain your reasons.
- 3) Why has President Kirchner of Argentina made the recovery of Las Malvinas, as they are known in Argentina, a central theme of her presidency?
- 4) The Argentinean President is surely just after the oil that might be under the South Atlantic Sea, to create wealth for her country - isn't she?
- 5) How much is 60 million barrels of oil worth today?
- 6) Do you anticipate the Argentineans will blockade the waters around the Falkland Islands?
- 7) Exactly what is the latest 'legitimate' Argentinean claim? (The Falklands lie outside the 200 mile economic zone)

Student B questions

- 1) What will Argentina's allies (Venezuela, Chile and Brazil) do?
- 2) Is it a 'unilateral act of aggression' – as Argentina says it is - Britain is doing by starting oil exploration? Explain your reasons.
- 3) The Falkland Islands legislative assembly has said it had "every right to develop a hydrocarbon industry within our waters" Do you agree with this? Why? Why not?
- 4) Do you think the tension between Britain and Argentina will get worse before it gets better?
- 5) Why should Argentina claim it is their right to the seabed where the drilling is to take place?
- 6) Should the Argentinean President meet the British Prime Minister to discuss the dispute head to head?
- 7) What should the United Nations do?

Diplomatic English – British oil dispute with Argentina... – 1st March 2010
DIPLOMATIC EXERCISES

1. The Falkland Islands: Where are they? What is the Argentinean name for them? What is the capital of the Falkland Islands? Why are they in the news again? Name three other things you know about them. (**Look on Google maps**)

2. Dictation: The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self correct your work from page two - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. 10 is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than 20 - we need to do some work!

3. Reading: The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

4. Vocabulary: Students now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

5. The article: Students look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?

6. Let's think! Think of three current Diplomatic issues between Britain and Argentina. Then add three ways diplomats might resolve them. Write them below. Explain to your partner why you chose these?

Three current diplomatic issues	Three ways diplomats might resolve them
1	1
2	2
3	3

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

7. Let's draw! In pairs draw and label an oil rig on the board.

8. Let's do 'The Article Quiz': Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score one point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) Name the countries.
- 2) Name the island.
- 3) Who owns the island?
- 4) Name the capital on the island.
- 5) Where is the island?
- 6) Who attacked the island? When?

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Student B

- 1) What did the unconfirmed reports say?
- 2) How many people live on the island?
- 3) How many soldiers died in the last conflict?
- 4) Who is the Argentinean Foreign Minister?
- 5) How much is the oil rig worth?
- 6) What is black gold?

9. Presentation: In pairs, groups or individually: Prepare in class or at home a two minute presentation on: **The Falklands**. Stand at the front of the class to give your presentation. The class can vote on the best presentation. Class – After the presentations go through the strong and weak points on each presentation. Learn from the results.

10. The Falklands War: In pairs briefly discuss what you know about the Falklands War. List three main points from your discussion. *5-minutes*

- | |
|---|
| 1 |
| 2 |
| 3 |

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

11. Black gold: In pairs briefly discuss the implications of finding black gold in the South Atlantic. List three main points from your discussion. *5-minutes*

- | |
|---|
| 1 |
| 2 |
| 3 |

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

Note: The teacher may decide to role play 11-13 in front of the class

12. Let's talk! Radio Falklands: *In pairs*. Imagine you are in the *Radio Falklands* radio studio. One of you is the presenter. The other student is a visiting British diplomat from London who has been sent on a fact finding mission. The presenter interviews the diplomat who describes the latest British viewpoint.

13. Let's talk! Radio Argentina – English service: *In pairs*. Imagine you are in the *Radio Argentina* radio studio. One of you is the presenter. The other student is the Argentinean President. The presenter interviews the Argentinean President who gives the latest Argentinean viewpoint.

14. Let's talk! United Nations Radio: *In pairs*. Imagine you are in the *United Nations Radio* studio. One of you is the presenter. The other student is a top UN diplomat. The presenter interviews the UN diplomat who gives the latest UN viewpoint on the Argentinean and British diplomatic viewpoints.

15. Let's write! Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher: **Black gold in the South Atlantic?** Your e-mail can be read out in class.

Diplomatic English – British oil dispute with Argentina... – 1st March 2010
GAP FILL: READING

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

British oil dispute with Argentina deepens

A new dispute is escalating in the South Atlantic between Argentina and Britain over the disputed Falkland Islands. This time, it is about black gold – _____. So far, it is only a _____ war of words between the two countries. The _____ for the latest _____ of words was a ship called Thor Leader. Its _____ was pipes bound for the Falkland Islands where an oil drilling platform is about to start drilling for oil. Argentina has accused Britain of illegally promoting drilling operations. _____ have estimated there could be up to 60 billion barrels of high grade oil in the 200 square mile _____ zone surrounding the Falkland's. That could make the Falklands one of the world's largest oil reserves, comparable with the North Sea, which so far has produced about 40 billion _____ of oil.

barrels

oil

cargo

bout

trigger

seabed

Geologists

diplomatic

A British company, Desire Petroleum, is due to start _____ operations at the end of February in the disputed waters 100 miles north of the capital Port Stanley. A £20 million _____ oil rig, the Ocean Guardian, is expected to arrive shortly from the Scottish Highlands that Britain hopes will bring a _____ rush to the _____ populated islands. In 2007, Argentina tore up an agreement between Britain and Argentina to co-operate over _____ discoveries. Argentina that still claims _____ over the islands, is now taking its case to the United Nations. It also said it might take the case to the International Court of Justice in the Hague. The Thor Leader, a foreign-flagged _____, was carrying pipes made by the Techint Group in Argentina and was stopped in the southern port of Campana. Techint, who is the world's largest pipe maker, denied the _____ were bound for the Falkland's saying they were for clients in the Mediterranean.

offshore

sovereignty

drilling

black gold

vessel

hydrocarbon

pipes

sparsely

CASE STUDY

The Falkland Islands: Black Gold in the South Atlantic:

Allow 30 - 60 minutes

Groups / pairs / 1 to 1

Your chosen country _____

Diplomatic information

You are a diplomat at the United Nations. You are with fellow diplomats from other countries. **You are using diplomatic English!**

Background

The Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic have recently hit the news again since the British started to organise a drilling platform and put it in seas north of the islands capital Port Stanley. There is the possibility that oil might be discovered.

The Argentinean President Cristina Fernández has decided to step up pressure on the exercise by opening an old Argentinean chestnut – or war wound - **the Falkland Islands / the Malvinas** in Argentinean. She has demanded that the entire seabed around the islands and the islands become Argentinean.

In 1982 saw the Falklands war where many lost their lives. Suddenly with the real possibility of oil being discovered in the British controlled area of the South Atlantic the current Argentinean President is now once again interested in them...

The unanswered questions...

What are the arguments for the current dispute now escalating week by week? How much is at stake here? Could it be her reason is purely financial? Could this be her way of raising much needed money that the country desperately needs?

Could it be her way of deflecting the real issue – the desperate state of the Argentinean economy? In December, **and this was not widely reported**, that Argentina's finances were proved to be dire.

Could oil and gas solve Argentina's debt issue? Why doesn't Argentina organise its own test drilling using a platform of its own? Why disrupt the British drilling platform? Why create a diplomatic incident? Does the United Nations really care about this tit for tat dispute?

Argentinean and British representatives

Two students are the Argentinean and British representative diplomats at the United Nations in New York.

The other UN representatives

The remaining students each represent a different country. List your chosen country above.

Brainstorming session

After appointing a Chairperson to lead the session, brainstorm some ideas together about the issue. Discuss the background, the unanswered questions, the crunch issues below and your own thoughts and ideas. What's the first thing you might do? (To help you look on the internet)

Presentation, Recommendations and Conclusions

At the end of the brainstorming session the Chairperson can sum up the groups ideas by giving a short **presentation** to the teacher. Present it visually or use the board etc... Try to be imaginative!

At the end of the presentation - sum up any agreed **recommendations and conclusions** made by the group.

The crunch issues	Write down as notes your ideas for debating, solutions and agreed points. You will need them later for your report.
1) How important is the exploration of the South Atlantic for oil and gas?	
2) How might Port Stanley change?	
3) Who will move to the islands?	
4) What will Argentina do next?	
5) What further oil and gas exploration might there be?	
6) The United Nations role – if any – in this current dispute?	

Homework

Students to send a short written *article/report* by email to the teacher highlighting the proposed solutions discussed in the meeting.

The teacher can moderate the session

Diplomatic English – British oil dispute with Argentina... – 1st March 2010
GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

British oil dispute with Argentina deepens

A new dispute is escalating in the South Atlantic between Argentina and Britain over the disputed Falkland Islands. (1)___ time, it is (2)___ black gold – oil. So far, it is (3)___ a diplomatic war of words between the two countries. The trigger for the latest bout of words was a ship called Thor Leader. Its cargo was pipes bound for the Falkland Islands (4)___ an oil drilling platform is about to start drilling for oil. Argentina has accused Britain of illegally promoting drilling operations. Geologists have estimated there (5)___ be up to 60 billion barrels of high grade oil in the 200 square mile seabed zone surrounding the Falkland's. (6)___ could make the Falklands one of the world's largest oil reserves, comparable (7)___ the North Sea, (8)___ so far has produced about 40 billion barrels of oil.

that

with

about

could

this

only

which

where

A British company, Desire Petroleum, is (1)___ to start drilling operations at the end of February in the disputed waters 100 miles north of the capital Port Stanley. A £20 million offshore oil rig, the Ocean Guardian, is expected to arrive shortly (2)___ the Scottish Highlands (3)___ Britain hopes (4)___ bring a black gold rush to the sparsely populated islands. In 2007, Argentina tore up an agreement between Britain and Argentina to co-operate over hydrocarbon discoveries. Argentina that still claims sovereignty over the islands, is now taking its case to the United Nations. It (5)___ said it (6)___ take the case to the International Court of Justice in the Hague. The Thor Leader, a foreign-flagged vessel, was carrying pipes made by the Techint Group in Argentina and was stopped in the southern port of Campana. Techint, (7)___ is the world's largest pipe maker, denied the pipes were bound for the Falkland's saying (8)___ were for clients in the Mediterranean.

might

also

that

will

due

they

who

from

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SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	energetically	11	Malvinas Islands
2	illegally	12	Falkland Islands
3	unilateral	13	escalating
4	permanent	14	bout
5	necessary	15	retaliation
6	geologists	16	reiterate
7	sovereignty	17	legitimate
8	Mediterranean	18	comparable
9	Argentinean	19	sparsely
10	evidence	20	hydrocarbon

WEB LINKS

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/443cd238-1cdb-11df-8d8e-00144feab49a.html>

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601108&sid=aR6Z0CCEjhxQ>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8525734.stm>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8523894.stm>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8521429.stm>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/southamerica/falklandislands/7272926/British-firms-could-be-hit-in-revenge-for-Falklands-oil-drilling.html>

ANSWERS

GAP FILL: British oil dispute with Argentina deepens: A new dispute is escalating in the South Atlantic between Argentina and Britain over the disputed Falkland Islands. This time, it is about black gold – **oil**. So far, it is only a **diplomatic** war of words between the two countries. The **trigger** for the latest **bout** of words was a ship called Thor Leader. Its **cargo** was pipes bound for the Falkland Islands where an oil drilling platform is about to start drilling for oil. Argentina has accused Britain of illegally promoting drilling operations. **Geologists** have estimated there could be up to 60 billion barrels of high grade oil in the 200 square mile **seabed** zone surrounding the Falkland's. That could make the Falklands one of the world's largest oil reserves, comparable with the North Sea, which so far has produced about 40 billion **barrels** of oil.

A British company, Desire Petroleum, is due to start **drilling** operations at the end of February in the disputed waters 100 miles north of the capital Port Stanley. A £20 million **offshore** oil rig, the Ocean Guardian, is expected to arrive shortly from the Scottish Highlands that Britain hopes will bring a **black gold** rush to the **sparsely** populated islands. In 2007, Argentina tore up an agreement between Britain and Argentina to co-operate over **hydrocarbon** discoveries. Argentina that still claims **sovereignty** over the islands, is now taking its case to the United Nations. It also said it might take the case to the International Court of Justice in the Hague. The Thor Leader, a foreign-flagged **vessel**, was carrying pipes made by the Techint Group in Argentina and was stopped in the southern port of Campana. Techint, who is the world's largest pipe maker, denied the **pipes** were bound for the Falkland's saying they were for clients in the Mediterranean.