

## 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 who still claims sovereignty over the Falkland 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

**Category: South Atlantic / Falkland Islands / Oil**  
**Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate**

natural resources in an area that is the subject of a dispute over sovereignty.” Mr Taiana added, “Argentina’s claim to the Falkland 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.

## EXERCISES

**1. Geography: The Falkland Islands:** Where are they? What sea surrounds them? What is the capital of the Falkland Islands? Draw a map on the board then look on Google maps.

**2. The Falkland Islands:** What do you know about oil being discovered and looked for around the Falkland Islands?

**3. 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. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

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

**5. 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.

**6. The article:** Students look through the article with the teacher.

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

**7. Let's think!** In pairs. Think of five things you know about the Falkland Islands. Then add five different types of industry on/around the Falkland Islands. Write them below. Explain to your partner why you chose these.

Five things about the Falkland Islands	Five different types of industry on/around the Falkland Islands
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

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

**8. Let's draw!** In pairs. On the board draw and label an oil rig.

British oil dispute with Argentina deepens – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2010

9. 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 islands.
- 3) Who owns the islands?
- 4) Name the capital on the islands.
- 5) Where are the islands?

**Student B**

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

10. **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.

11. **The Falklands War:** In pairs, briefly discuss what you know about the Falklands War. (You may need to use the internet for this) *5-minutes*.

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

12. **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 13-14 in front of the class**

13. **Let's talk! Radio Falklands:** *In pairs*. Imagine you are in the *Radio Falklands* radio studio. One of you is the presenter who is about to interview the other student who is a local person giving their views on the situation.

14. **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 Argentinean viewpoint.

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

## DISCUSSION

### Student A questions

- 1) What is your opinion on this subject?
- 2) Did Argentina impose stricter controls on shipping to the Falkland Islands?
- 3) What effect did the dispute have on Argentinean-UK relations?
- 4) How much is 60 million barrels of oil worth today?
- 5) Was it a 'unilateral act of aggression' – as Argentina said it was – by Britain starting oil exploration? Explain your reasons.
- 6) Should the Argentinean President meet the British Prime Minister to discuss issues more often?
- 7) Do you think it right that Britain has prepared itself in case of conflict in the Falkland Islands? Explain your reasons.
- 8) Exactly what is the latest 'legitimate' Argentinean claim? (The Falklands lie outside the 200 mile economic zone)

### Student B questions

- 1) Why did Argentina escalate the Falklands / Malvinas dispute?
- 2) What do you think the Falkland Islanders want from all this?
- 3) Might Britain in the future continue to send a taskforce down to protect the Falkland Islands to bolster the islands current defences?
- 4) What do you anticipate happening if large amounts of oil are actually extracted?
- 5) Do you think Argentina might attack the Falklands again?
- 6) Why should Argentina claim it is their right to the seabed where the drilling took place?
- 7) 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?
- 8) Why did President Kirchner of Argentina make the recovery of Las Malvinas, as they are known in Argentina, a central theme of her presidency?

## SPEAKING

### *The Falkland Islands: Black Gold in the South Atlantic*

*Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1*

The issues:-

- 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 dispute?

The teacher can moderate the session.

## 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 – (1)\_\_\_\_. So far, it is only a (2)\_\_\_\_ war of words between the two countries. The (3)\_\_\_\_ for the latest (4)\_\_\_\_ of words was a ship called Thor Leader. Its (5)\_\_\_\_ 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. (6)\_\_\_\_ have estimated there could be up to 60 billion barrels of high grade oil in the 200 square mile (7)\_\_\_\_ 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 (8)\_\_\_\_ of oil.

*barrels*

*oil*

*cargo*

*bout*

*trigger*

*seabed*

*Geologists*

*diplomatic*

A British company, Desire Petroleum, is due to start (1)\_\_\_\_ operations at the end of February in the disputed waters 100 miles north of the capital Port Stanley. A £20 million (2)\_\_\_\_ oil rig, the Ocean Guardian, is expected to arrive shortly from the Scottish Highlands that Britain hopes will bring a (3)\_\_\_\_ rush to the (4)\_\_\_\_ populated islands. In 2007, Argentina tore up an agreement between Britain and Argentina to co-operate over (5)\_\_\_\_ discoveries. Argentina who still claims (6)\_\_\_\_ over the Falkland 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 (7)\_\_\_\_, 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 (8)\_\_\_\_ were bound for the Falkland's saying they were for clients in the Mediterranean.

*offshore*

*sovereignty*

*drilling*

*black gold*

*vessel*

*hydrocarbon*

*pipes*

*sparsely*

## 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 who still claims sovereignty over the Falkland 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**

## 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

### 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.

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