

Taboo or not taboo? (That is the f**king question!)

Activity 1

How many English taboo words do you already know? Work with your partner to brainstorm as many taboo words (and their meanings) as you can.

Activity 2

Match the following English taboo words with their **literal** meanings below.

hell piss crap balls bloody bollocks bastard shit prick bugger fuck cunt

1. testicles
2. testicles
3. to have sexual intercourse
4. (religious) the opposite of paradise
5. to urinate
6. to defecate, excrement
7. to defecate, excrement
8. a woman's sexual organ (vagina)
9. a man's sexual organ (penis)
10. to have anal intercourse, a person who has anal intercourse
11. a child whose parents are not married
12. no real meaning (used for emphasis)

Activity 3

Put the words from Activity 2 in the columns below depending on how offensive they can be.

Moderately offensive

Very Offensive

Extremely offensive

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Activity 4

Match the words from Activity 1 with their uses and functions below. (More than one answer is possible).

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. to express annoyance/disbelief | 4. to order someone to go away (with the particle 'off') |
| 2. to express surprise | 5. to intensify adjectives and adverbs |
| 3. to insult someone | 6. to talk about organizational mistakes (with 'up') |

Activity 5

The letters in the taboo words in the sentences below have been jumbled up. Solve the anagrams.

1. 'My boss is obdoyl hopeless. Yesterday he kufdec up the presentation he was giving.'
2. 'Stih! I've broken another fingernail.'
3. 'Can I help you?' 'No, sips off, you stupid nuct.'
4. 'That film was prac, wasn't it?' 'Yes, the plot was a load of loobclsk/labsl.'
5. 'Why don't you just grubeg off and leave me alone?'

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Activity 6

Read the following questions and use them to start a conversation with your partner.

1. Do you use taboo words in your own language? Why/not?
2. Why do you think some people use taboo words a lot?
3. Why do you think some people are particularly offended by taboo words?
4. Why do students often find it easy to remember taboo words in English?
5. How useful is it for you to know taboo words in English?
6. Do you think learning taboo words is a waste of time? Why/not?
7. Do you think teachers should teach taboo words to students or not? Why?

Activity 7

*Go to **EnglishClub.com** and click on the 'TP Homework' icon. Use the information you find there to answer the questions below.*

1. What three categories does the article divide taboo words into?
2. What alternative word for 'fucking' is suggested?
3. Which gesture (which is offensive in Britain but not elsewhere) is mentioned?
4. What is the answer to the Quick Quiz?

Activity 8

'English teachers should teach taboo words to students.' What do you think?

If you would like to express your opinion on this subject go to **EnglishClub.com** and click on the 'TP Discussion' icon to take part in the forum discussion there.

N.B. Netiquette! PLEASE CHANGE THE DEFAULT SUBJECT LINE TO INDICATE THE OPINIONS IN YOUR POST BECAUSE IN A BUSY THREAD IT HELPS PEOPLE DECIDE WHICH POSTS TO READ!

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