CELEBRITY CRIMES

Level: intermediate to advanced

The following four speaking activities are all connected to the theme of celebrity crime. They can be used individually or in conjunction with each other. Any or all of these activities can be used as supplementary material for any coursebook unit on crime (common in most upper intermediate coursebooks).

For updated information on celebrity crimes or to design your own activities similar to the ones below, look at the following websites:
www.celebritycrimewatch.com
www.thesmokinggun.com/mugshots/
www.crime.about.com/cs/celebritycriminal/

Speaking activity #1: Rogue's Gallery

Level: intermediate
Copy the worksheet for every two students in the class. Cut the sheet into A and B. Divide the class into pairs and give each student worksheet A or B. Instruct them that they must find out the missing information from their worksheet. Do an example with one student:
When was Jennifer Capriati arrested?
In May 1994.
What was she arrested for?
For possession of drugs.

Language practised: past passive questions

Speaking activity #2: He looks like…

Level: upper-intermediate +
Preparation: Go to the webpage www.thesmokinggun.com/mugshots/ and print off photos of celebrities that you think your students will be familiar with (around 4 or 5 will do, some examples are provided below). Cut each picture in half. Give each student half a picture. Tell them that they must find the other half of their picture, but they cannot show anyone their picture. They must describe their photo. While students are mingling and finding the other half of their photos, write the following on the board:

NAMES: Michael Jackson, Nick Nolte, Ozzy Osborne, Bill Gates, Eminem
ARRESTED FOR: Child molestation, drunk driving, public intoxication, traffic violation, gun possession

(Note: the names and charges above appear in a corresponding order - the first name refers to the first charge - mix them up when you write them on the board)

When all the students have found their partners, ask them to sit down together. They must try to guess who the person is in their picture and what they were charged with.

Language point: vocabulary to describe someone's face, crime vocabulary

Speaking activity #3: Role play the Celebrity Crime

Level: intermediate to advanced

Divide the students into groups of three. Give each group a copy of the texts below. Ask them to choose one celebrity crime. Explain that one person in the pair is the celebrity accused of the crime, and one person is the police officer. The third person is the lawyer representing the celebrities (celebrities always have a lawyer with them in these cases!). Instruct the groups to role play the situation. The police officer must ask the celebrity questions, and the lawyer and the celebrity must try to explain their situation.

Note: you could do this activity as a follow up to #2 above.

Language point: past tenses in narratives, crime vocabulary

Celebrity Crimes

Tennis star Jennifer Capriati was arrested in Florida in May 1994 and charged with possession of marijuana after the police went to her hotel room in search of a girl who had run away.

Actor Nick Nolte was arrested by the California Highway Patrol on September 11, 2002 and charged with driving under the influence (drunk driving).

Marshall Mathers, III (aka Eminem) was arrested twice in June 2000 on gun charges in Michigan. The rapper was arrested for carrying a concealed weapon and assault after fighting with a man he saw kissing his ex-wife Kim outside of a club.

John Osbourne (aka Ozzy Osbourne) was arrested by Memphis police in May 1984 and charged with public intoxication. According to the police report, Ozzy was "staggering drunk" when stopped.

Microsoft boss Bill Gates was arrested and photographed the police in New Mexico police in 1977 after a traffic violation.

Michael Jackson was arrested in November 2003 by Santa Barbara police in California on charges of inappropriate behaviour and child molestation.

Film star Winona Ryder was arrested in September 2001 for trying to steal $5500 worth of merchandise from a store in Beverly Hills.

Speaking activity #4 Celebrity crimes discussion questions

Level: intermediate to advanced
Note: This activity can be done after any of the activities #1 to #3.

Divide students into groups of three or four. Give each group a copy of the questions below. Ask groups to report back anything interesting they discussed.

1. What kind of punishment would you suggest for some of the people accused in the photos? What kind of punishment do you think they received?
2. Are there any celebrities from your country that have been accused of a crime? Who? What crime?
3. Do you think that rich and famous people are treated differently by the law in your country?
4. Do celebrities have a responsibility to act as role-models for society?

STUDENT A

CELEBRITY	ARRESTED IN...	DATE.	CHARGED WITH
	California		Child molestation
Nick Nolte, Film star		Sept, 2002	
	Florida		Marijuana possession
Marshall Mathers III (Eminem), Rap star		June 2000	
	New Mexico		Traffic violation (details unknown)
John Ozborne (Ozzy Osborne) Rock star		May 1984	

STUDENT B

CELEBRITY	ARRESTED IN...	DATE.	CHARGED WITH
Michael Jackson, pop star		Nov 2003	
	California		Drunk driving
Jennifer Capriati, tennis star		May 1994	
	Michigan		Carrying a concealed weapon and assault
Bill Gates CEO, Microsoft		1977	
	Memphis		Public intoxication