

Elizabeth Gilbert was ridiculed for shelving her Russia-set novel, but I quite admire her

Level 1: Elementary – Teacher's notes

Article summary: Gilbert has announced that she will withhold publication of her new novel set in Russia in response to Ukrainian fans' comments. Some have criticised this decision of self-cancelling, making people question Gilbert and what cancel culture claims to achieve.

Time: 60–90 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking

Language focus: Vocabulary: collocations

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to introduce the author Elizabeth Gilbert and the topic of cancel culture and get students to think about the consequences in different contexts.

2. Key words

- a. Divide the class into two groups. Assign each half of the class one-half of the items (1–5 or 6–10). Then sub-divide each group into pairs and ask them to complete the activity. Once they have completed it, ask them to compare their answers with other pairs. Then regroup students so they can exchange their answers and complete the rest of the items.

Key:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. <i>novel</i> | 6. <i>admire</i> |
| 2. <i>destroy</i> | 7. <i>apologise</i> |
| 3. <i>annoy</i> | 8. <i>negative</i> |
| 4. <i>gesture</i> | 9. <i>creative</i> |
| 5. <i>arrogant</i> | 10. <i>meek</i> |

3. Comprehension check

- a. Ask students to decide whether the statements are true or false and correct the false ones.

Key:

1. *False. She will lose money.*
2. *False. Her novel is not about Putin, but some readers are upset because it is set in Russia.*
3. *True*
4. *False. It was not a self-help book, although some people use it as that. It was about her life.*
5. *True*
6. *True*
7. *False. The writer thinks Gilbert is more interesting than people think.*

4. Key language

- a. Students could be asked to do this exercise in pairs and highlight the phrases in the article.

Key:

1. *agree*
2. *post*
3. *publish*
4. *receive*
5. *destroy*
6. *send*
7. *annoy*
8. *go*

- b. Ask students to do this individually and then share their answers in pairs.

Key:

Students' answers.

5. Discussion

- a. Allow students time to note down their ideas about each question and encourage them to elaborate on their opinions.

6. In your own words

- a. First, divide the class into two groups. Assign each group a side, for or against the statement. Then sub-divide each group, so students work in pairs or small groups to brainstorm and prepare for the debate.

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Regroup students to form new groups with opposing sides of the argument. These can be groups of four to six. Ask them to have an informal debate and polish their ideas/arguments. When students have had one round of informal discussions, you can set up a formal whole-class debate where you will be a moderator.

Give each team member one minute to present their argument and 30 seconds to each team for counterarguments. Try to call on different students to make sure they all participate.

At the end of the debate, get students to identify the other side's strongest and weakest arguments.