

## Prince Harry's gaffe

### 1 Lead in

Read the definition of 'gaffe' from the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*. Then discuss the questions below.

gaffe /gaef/ noun [C] an embarrassing mistake that you make in public, especially one that offends or upsets someone.

1. Which of the following situations would you describe as a 'serious gaffe'? Have you ever made any of these gaffes? Can you think of other examples of gaffes?
  - a. getting drunk and criticising the boss at a Christmas party.
  - b. forgetting your boy/girlfriend's birthday.
  - c. accidentally sending an e-mail to the wrong person – somebody you don't want to hear the information in the e-mail!
2. Have you ever made a 'gaffe'? Where were you? What did you do or say? What were the consequences?

### 2 Reading 1

**Prince Harry is the youngest son of the late Princess Diana, and Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales. Prince Charles is the oldest son of Queen Elizabeth II, and heir to the British crown.**

**Read the passage and answer the questions.**

1. What did Harry wear at the fancy dress party?
2. Where did he wear it?
3. Why is it a serious gaffe?

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### 3 Reading 2

Read the passage again and answer the questions below. Discuss them with a partner.

1. Which people have criticised Harry's behaviour?
2. What punishments have been suggested?
3. What has Prince Charles done to discipline his son?

### 4 Vocabulary in context

Match the sets of words in 1 – 4 to their definitions in a – b.

- |                    |                           |                             |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. tell (s.o.) off | give (s.o.) a telling-off | give (s.o.) a dressing down |
| 2. thoughtless     | insensitive               |                             |
| 3. condemn         | round on                  |                             |
| 4. shameful        | disgraceful               |                             |

- a. not thinking about other people's feelings
- b. reacting angrily and criticising someone strongly
- c. describing behaviour that is very bad
- d. talking to someone angrily for doing something wrong

### 5 Follow up

Discuss the questions below with your partner.

1. Do you think Harry made a serious gaffe? Or do you think other people are taking it too seriously?
2. How would you describe Prince Harry? What do you think he is like?
3. What do you think Harry's punishment should be?

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### World, and father, condemn Harry's gaffe

Sandra Laville and Richard Norton-Taylor

Prince Charles's household was forced into a huge damage-limitation exercise recently after Prince Harry was pictured in a Nazi uniform complete with swastika armband at a fancy dress party early this month. As the world prepared to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, politicians and Jewish leaders labeled his actions "offensive", "insensitive" and "shameful". With Israel's foreign minister and the Simon Wiesenthal Centre also rounding on the prince, Clarence House was forced to let it be known that his father had given him a severe dressing-down. There have been calls for Harry to go further than the apology he released.

Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean of the US-based Simon Wiesenthal Centre, said the prince, 20, should be told to accompany the British delegation to Auschwitz next week. "This was a shameful act displaying insensitivity for the victims, not just for those soldiers of his own country who gave their lives to defeat Nazism, but to the victims of the Holocaust." The Israeli foreign minister, Silvan Shalom, said wearing the Nazi symbol was disgraceful, while the head of foreign policy for the EU, Javier Solana, simply said: "It's not an appropriate thing to do."

Prince Harry's costume was exposed by *The Sun* newspaper, which published a picture of him wearing the Afrika Corps uniform at a themed "colonial or native" fancy dress party thrown in Gloucestershire by Richard Meade, an

Olympic gold medal-winning three-day eventer.

Clarence House insisted the prince would not make a public appearance to say sorry. "He has apologised already in a statement and said it was a poor choice of costume," a spokeswoman said. Prince Harry would not be attending the event at Auschwitz, she added. "It would be a distraction and detraction from the importance of the occasion."

But royal sources made it clear that Prince Harry had received a telling-off. "He has spoken to his father. It is fair to say his father recognises he has made a serious mistake," *The Guardian* was told. There were reports that Prince Charles had ordered his son to pay a private visit to Auschwitz. Some MPs asked whether Prince Harry's lack of judgment made him suitable for officer training at Sandhurst, where he is due in May. Labour backbencher Doug Henderson called for him to withdraw his application. "I don't think this young man is suitable for Sandhurst," he said. Defence sources told *The Guardian* that the prince's behaviour would not affect his place at Sandhurst. Had he been in officer training at the time, however, they said he would in all likelihood have been thrown out.

*The Guardian Weekly* 2005-21-01, page 11

#### Glossary:

Clarence House = home and offices of Prince Charles

Auschwitz = a Nazi concentration camp where thousands of Jewish people were murdered in the early 1940s

Sandhurst = Britain's premier military officer training centre

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### Teacher's notes – Prince Harry's gaffe

**Lead-in:** It is a good idea to find pictures of Prince Charles and Prince Harry, who regularly appear in many glossy magazines, to help introduce the lesson and some of the vocabulary. You could put them on the board, ask the students who they are, and what they know about them.

Read out the definition of 'gaffe' from the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*, then ask students to discuss the questions in pairs.

Answers: Students' own ideas.

### Reading 1:

**Cultural note:** Prince Harry is the youngest son of the late Princess Diana, and Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales. Prince Charles is the oldest son of Queen Elizabeth II, and heir to the British crown. Harry's older brother is Prince William, next in line to the throne after Charles, which makes Harry, currently, third in line to be king. Harry has regularly been in the newspapers as a result of allegedly drunken or in appropriate behaviour.

Ask students to read the passage and answer the questions.

Answers:

- 1 A uniform of the Nazi Afrika Corps with a swastika armband
- 2 At a fancy dress party in Gloucestershire – at the home of Olympic sportsman, Richard Meade.
- 3 Because many people, particularly in the Jewish community, think it is inappropriate and insensitive for members of the Royal family to wear Nazi insignia.

**Reading 2:** Ask students to read the passage again and answer the questions, then ask them to discuss with a partner.

Answers:

- 1 politicians and Jewish leaders; Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean of the US-based Simon Wiesenthal Centre; the Israeli foreign minister, Silvan Shalom; the head of foreign policy for the EU, Javier Solana, some MPs; Labour backbencher Doug Henderson
- 2 should be told to accompany the British delegation to Auschwitz; should make a public appearance to say sorry; should not be allowed to go to Sandhurst
- 3 He has given him a dressing down/telling-off; he has made a statement of apology; he may make a private visit to Auschwitz

**Vocabulary in context:** Ask students to match the sets of words in 1 – 4 to their definitions in a – b.

Answers: 1d, 2a, 3b, 4c

**Follow-up:** Ask students to discuss the questions with their partner.