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HUMAN ORGANS FOR SALE



a talking points lesson for English reading & speaking

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Introduction

What are your human organs?

If someone needs a new organ, what can they do?

Who donates these organs?

Would you exchange one of your organs for an iPhone? Why/why not?

Reading

For a long time, there has been a profitable trade in human organs. Some people kindly leave their organs to charity as part of their final wishes before they die. Their liver, eyes or other body parts may then be used for the advancement of science — or be donated to someone truly in need, to improve the quality of their life.

But now some other people are seeing the large profits made from the sale of human organs and setting up agencies so they can trade in these body parts.

The internet helps these unscrupulous agents in finding donors to give up their organs. Usually, the people that surrender their body parts are in very unfortunate circumstances. They may be very poor. Or in need of some fast cash themselves to send their child to hospital for a life-saving operation.

It seems more than a little ironic that a man might give away one of his own organs to save the body and health of his own child.

But now there are even stranger situations in the sale of human organs. Some of these agents are offering sets of much sought-after goods in exchange for human organs.

One advertisement ran that offered a set of iPhone, iPad and iWatch to anyone that could give up one of their kidneys.

The agent was inundated with calls — usually from young people who figured that they have two kidneys, so losing one won't be much of a problem.

All in exchange for three gadgets that will be out of date in a year or two.

Of course, these organ donors are usually from poor parts of the world and see these items as luxury goods. They can show them off and make their friends and neighbours regard them with a certain amount of envy for a while.

But at what cost?

There seems to be no control over this. The donors are usually of an age where they can give full consent to hand over a vital human organ and so there is little the authorities can do about it.

But the agents are cashing in big time. All they have to do is bulk-buy some smartphones and other tech items and they get kidneys they can sell to the right buyer for very large sums of money.

It is a corrupt way of making money. From the naivety and greed of a young person, keen to be seen in a good light for a few months, but a whole lifetime of regret.

Essential Vocabulary

profitable trade	human organs	leave to charity
final wishes	liver	advancement
donated	truly in need	quality of life
unscrupulous	donors	surrender
unfortunate circumstances	fast cash	ironic
sought-after	kidneys	inundated
gadgets	out of date	luxury goods
show them off	envy	full consent
vital human organ	authorities	cashing in
big time	bulk-buy	tech items
corrupt	naivety	good light
whole lifetime	regret	

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Notebook—*a small book with pages of blank paper that students use to make notes when studying.*

"I left my notebook at home so I was unable to make any notes in my English class."

Questions

1. What is an organ donor? Do you have these in your country?
2. How many human organs can you name? What do they do?
3. What do you think of the organ agents in the article? Should they be punished? Why/why not?
4. What do you think of the young people giving up a kidney for an iPhone? Tell the class.
5. Would you do this? Why/why not? Think of three reasons why/why not.
6. Who buys these organs? What are their reasons for needing these organs?
7. Are people too greedy today for new gadgets? Have they become too big a status symbol?
8. For a young person who sells one of his kidneys, what problems could he have later in life? Do you think he will feel regretful?
9. If someone offered you a million dollars for one of your kidneys would you take it? How about ten million?
10. Would you offer one of your kidneys to a friend or family member if their life depended upon it?

Teacher's Notes

This could be met with absolute dismay in certain countries—tread carefully.

It does bring up some moral issues of how much people value certain items, like a brand new iPhone for example.

But like all contentious topics, they can work very well for you in the classroom.

Credits

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