Before reading the accompanying article, please read the following sentences and check whether or not you agree with them.

1. Hurting animals for entertainment is wrong. (Ex: Hunting, Cock fights, etc…)
   Agree  Not Sure  Disagree
   [ ] [ ] [ ]

2. What’s considered wrong in one culture should be wrong in all cultures.
   Agree  Not Sure  Disagree
   [ ] [ ] [ ]

3. What’s fine in one culture should be acceptable in all cultures.
   Agree  Not Sure  Disagree
   [ ] [ ] [ ]

4. It’s ok to judge something (say whether it’s right or wrong) without having experienced it.
   Agree  Not Sure  Disagree
   [ ] [ ] [ ]
About bullfighting - and bullfighting vocabulary you are sure to hear

One of our interns prepared this article about bullfighting for the English language press in Spain. Much of the vocabulary of the corrida has made its way into everyday Spanish conversation, as colorful metaphor. The article explains the corrida, without condoning or condemning it, and gives you some of that corrida-inspired vocabulary, so you'll know recognize it when you hear it!

Bullfighting

Few modern day spectator sports provoke quite as much controversy as bullfighting and yet it would be difficult to imagine Spanish identity without it.

To its supporters it is a way of life, an art form involving ceremony and ritual. To its detractors it amounts to little more than barbaric torture and slaughter. Yet to many foreigners, for whom the killing of an animal for sport in a ring is a totally alien concept, Spanish bullfighting is a complex tradition to understand or accept – both in physical and moral terms.

A bullfight is about many things – performance, bravery, skill and death. No doubt it is also bloody and shocking, but its supporters argue that a bull is better off dying on the point of a matador’s sword than in the abbatoir (matadero). To witness a bullfight might not necessarily mean to condone it, but it may provide an insight into this Spanish tradition and make parts of Spanish identity a little easier to understand.

Bullfighting’s origins

Bullfighting of one form or another has been around for centuries and its precise history is difficult to chart. Strong evidence exists to suggest that its roots can be traced back to prehistoric bull worship and sacrifice by the Celtic-Iberians, whilst others have argued that its origins actually lie in the traditions of Ancient Rome, when human vs. animal combat was a popular warm up act to the gladiatorial sports. Alternatively, bullfighting may have been introduced to Iberia by the Moors in the
Spanish bullfighting originated in the 11th century, where the bull was fought on horseback using a javelin (similar to the modern Portuguese bullfight).

However by the Middle Ages, bullfighting in Spain had evolved into a sport practiced by the nobility in a similar manner to hunting and jousting. Religious festivals, royal weddings and events celebrated with fights in the town or city’s plaza, where noblemen would ride competing for royal favour. In the 18th century, it has been argued that the Spanish king Felipe V took exception to the sport and banned it, saying that it set a bad example. However its popularity was such that the commoners kept the sport going, and, since they could not afford the horses began the practice of dodging the bulls on foot and using capes to aide in positioning the bulls.

By the 1720s this new form of bullfighting was drawing even larger crowds, prompting the construction of dedicated bullrings. Initially they were square in shape, but later the design changed to a circle to discourage the cornering of any action. The bullfight, or corrida, has changed little since 1726, when Francisco Romero fought on foot and paved the way for the modern style seen today.

**The modern corrida**

A Spanish bullfight involves three *matadores or toreros* and six bulls, the bulls being at least four years old and and weighs 460-600 k. Each matador has six assistants – two *picadores* or “lancers”, mounted on horseback, three *banderilleros* or “flagmen” and a *mozo de espada* or “sword servant”. Collectively they make up a *cuadrilla* or team of bullfighters.

The whole spectacle is highly ritualized and conforms to a time honoured set of rules and traditions, opening with a parade of all the participants into the arena to salute the presiding dignitary, accompanied by music from a band. Two * alguacillios* on horseback look up to the president’s box and symbolically ask for the keys to the *puerta de los toriles*, the door behind which the bulls are waiting.

The fight is divided into three stages and on the release of the first bull the first stage, the *tercio de varas*, begins. The matador and banderillos test the bull for its ferocity and the matador has his first confrontation with the bull using a gold and pink dress cape or capote. Then two picadores enter the ring on horseback and one
Spanish I

Spanish I

stabs the mound of muscle in the back of the bull’s neck. Although this seems unnecessary, doing so lowers the bull's blood pressure so that it does not have a heart attack and weakens its massive head and neck muscles.

The second stage, or tercio de banderillas, sees the three banderilleros each attempt to plant two barbed sticks into the bull's neck. This further weakens the bull's neck whilst spurring the bull into making more ferocious charges.

The final stage, the tercio de muerte, sees the matador back in the arena, alone and armed with a smaller, red cape and a sword. He uses the cape to attract the attention of the bull in a series of moves, demonstrating both his control over it and his daring by getting very close to it and even turning his back on it and walking away!

This faena, or work, is the most important part of the fight and the matador must attempt to manoeuvre the bull into position so that he can stab it between the shoulder blades and cleanly pierce the aorta or heart. This final act is often very quick and the bull dies instantly and is carried out by harnessed horses.

If the crowd believes that the matador has done well, the arena rises to their feet and waves white handkerchiefs, shouting in approval. The president judges the performance and will award the bull's ears, tail and occasionally hoof to the matador as a prize. The matador then does a lap of honour around the ring, people throwing hats, scarves, flowers and even jugs of wine down to him! League tables of matadors are maintained each season based on the number of bulls they have fought and the number of ears and tails awarded.

When the sixth and final bull is dead, the matadors and their teams return to the ring and cross the arena in a symbolic act – that man has defeated death and is immortal.

Spain's Bullrings

Many of Spain's bullrings are hundreds of years old, and even if you don't fancy seeing the fight are well worth a visit for their architecture whilst many also house little museums. A law passed in 1996 organised bullrings, or plazas de toros, into three categories according to their age, size and number of events staged there each year. The rings in Bilbao, San Sebastián, Zaragoza, Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia,
Córdoba, Seville and Málaga are all classed as first class rings. The oldest bullring in Spain is in Ronda and dates from the 1700s whilst Seville’s ring, the Real Maestranza, has a seating capacity of 10,000!
After reading the bullfighting article, answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. What do you think happens if a matador does not meet the crowd’s approval?

2. What are the names of the three stages involved in a bullfight?
   1.
   2.
   3.

3. Do you know of any other traditions from other cultures that are controversial like bullfighting is in Spain? Why do you think they are controversial?

4. What do you think is the most dangerous part of the bullfight? Why?

5. How many bulls and matadors participate in a corrida?
6. Do you think the author of this article supports or opposes bullfighting? Why?

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7. Do you think bullfighting is barbaric or more of an honored tradition?

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8. What did Francisco Romero do for bullfighting?

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9. Would you consider bullfighting a “sport?” What about cheerleading or chess?
   What makes something a sport in your opinion?

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boullfighting worksheet answer key

1. What do you think happens if a matador does not meet the crowd’s approval?
   Text-implicit. Students must have read what happens when the crowd approves of a matador and then make their own guess as to what might happen when they do not approve.
   
   If the matador does not kill the bull or is unable to complete all three stages, the crowd might boo him out of the arena. If the matador gets hurt though I think that the crowd might respond more out of respect even if he is unable to complete all three stages of the corrida.

2. What are the names of the three stages involved in a bullfight?
   Text-explicit. These answers are found at the beginning of the paragraphs in the middle part of the article.
   1. Tercio de Varas
   2. Tercio de Banderillas
   3. Tercio de Muerte

3. Do you know of any other traditions from other cultures that are controversial like bullfighting is in Spain? Why do you think they are controversial?
   Experience-based. Students must use their own background knowledge to find traditions similar to bullfighting and to think about what makes something controversial in their eyes.
   Ultimate Fighting, Kickboxing, Gladiator Death Match, cock fights, dog fighting, etc… These might be considered controversial because they could be deadly to the participants, and in the case of the gladiators, they did not always have a choice as to whether or not they wanted to participate. Cock fighting and dog fighting involve animal cruelty much like bullfighting, but unlike bullfighting these two do not cause any harm to the humans involved.

4. What do you think is the most dangerous part of the bullfight? Why?
   Text-implicit. In order to answer this questions students must have read the three parts of the bullfight and know what happens in each part and then decide on their own which part they think involves the most danger.
   I think that the Tercio de Varas would be the most dangerous because at this point the bull is healthy and has no injuries and would be most likely to cause harm during this point. Once the bull begins bleeding it will lose strength as well. Also, I would guess that the bull has the most adrenaline and energy during this first part.

5. How many bulls and matadors participate in a corrida?
   Text-explicit. The answer to this question is taken straight from the text.
   Three matadors and six bulls participate in the corrida.

6. Do you think the author of this article supports or opposes bullfighting? Why?
   Text-implicit. In order to decide whether the author supports or opposes bullfighting students must have read the article and be able to understand the overall message that the author is trying to portray. This involves having students read between the lines and try and find an opinion from the article without it being specifically stated.
I think that the author supports bullfighting because they did not say anything about not liking the way things are done. The beginning paragraph talks about how it is often misunderstood and that sometimes just visiting a bullfight is the best way to better understand what they are all about.

7. Do you think bullfighting is barbaric or more of an honored tradition?
   Experience-based. This question requires students to use their own experiences to decide whether or not bullfighting is barbaric to them. This question has no right or wrong answer and it cannot be found in the text; students must think for themselves. **In my personal opinion, bullfighting is a tradition that I do not understand and I cannot really say my opinion regarding it. I think that the point of bullfighting is not to harm animals, but to follow a time-honored tradition. The men involved are old enough to know the possible consequences of their involvement and the art is considered to be something beautiful to the people of Spain.**

8. What did Francisco Romero do for bullfighting?
   Text-explicit. This question is found in the first portion of the text. **Francisco Romero was the first to bullfight on foot only in 1726. He is the father of modern-day bullfighting.**

9. Would you consider bullfighting a “sport?” What about cheerleading or chess? What makes something a sport in your opinion?
   Experience-based. In order to answer this question students must use their own opinion of what makes up a sport to determine whether bullfighting really is a sport. Hopefully this question will have students take a step back and be able to look at their culture and determine what they think makes something a sport. **I think that a sport can be anything that involves physical movement, however small, and strategy. In that case, bullfighting is a sport, as well as cheerleading, chess, and just about any other recreational activity. They require the use of your body, sometimes more than others, and they require some kind of planning or wit in order to win.**