



DEMONSTRATIONS AND PROTESTS

George Floyd's death:
Violence erupts on sixth day of protests

1. How to Talk About Demonstrations and Protests

Here are some words and phrases to help you talk about political protests in English. Read the text and complete the gaps with the words below.

taken to the streets

disperse

charge

banners

anti-government protests

protesters

placards

slogans

barricades

megaphones

turn violent

chant

Already this year there have been 1. in Tunisia and Egypt, where people have 2. (= to demonstrate along with others) to voice their anger. Turn on the news and you can see people holding up 3. (message written on a rectangular piece of cardboard, and attached to a stick) and 4. (message written on a long strip of material), on which they have written 5. (short messages). Demonstrations and protests are also noisy: people use microphones, 6. (a cone-shaped instrument), or they 7. their protests all at once.

In many cases, protests are peaceful, but in some occasions, they can 8. The police react by trying to contain the demonstrations, but the demonstrators in some cases erect 9. (barriers reinforced by whatever is available), then throw missiles from behind them.

In the UK, police practise the controversial technique, where they pin 10. into a small holding area, not allowing anyone out. Mounted policemen (on horses) might also 11. (run towards them) protesters in order to 12. the crowd.

1. Why do people organize/take part in demonstrations? Talk in pairs and write down the possible reasons.

- a.
- b.
- c.

2. What do you know about George Floyd's death?

3. Watch the video 'As a black American I am terrified' and answer the questions.

https://www.bbc.com/news/video_and_audio/must_see/52854527/george-floyd-as-a-black-american-i-am-terrified

- a. What caused the protests in Minneapolis?
- b. How many people protested on the streets?
- c. Why was George Floyd stopped by the police?
- d. How many police officers have been fired so far?
- e. What was Donald Trump's reaction to the situation?
- f. Are the protest peaceful?
- g. What are other cases of African Americans who have been recently killed?
- h. Do white people support the protesters?

**4. VOCABULARY FROM THE TEXT. How many of the words below do you remember?
Check the meaning of the words you do not know.**

riot	to loot	deserted
custody	civil unrest	to reignite
clash	backlash	outrage
curfew	assassination	to reflect
tear gas	to kneel	troops
to disperse	to plead	to deploy
to set on fire	outbreak	casualties

5. Read the text and answer the questions.

- a. What safety measures have been introduced by some of the cities?
- b. How did the police try to disperse crowds?
- c. What examples of damage are given in the text?
- d. How many cities have experienced protests in the USA?
- e. What other reasons, apart from racism, are given for the outbreak of frustration?
- f. How many states had to use troops to deal with the outbreak of anger?
- g. Are there any casualties among the protesters?
- h. Why have more than 4000 people been arrested?
- i. Why was the lorry driver speeding towards the crowd?

Violence has erupted in cities across the US on the sixth night of protests sparked by the death in police custody of African-American George Floyd.

Dozens of cities imposed curfews, but many people ignored them, leading to stand-offs and clashes.

Riot police faced off with protesters in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and LA, firing tear gas and pepper bullets to try to disperse crowds.

Police vehicles were set on fire and shops were looted in several cities.

The country is experiencing the most widespread racial turbulence and civil unrest since the backlash to the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968.

The outpouring of anger began last Tuesday, after a video showed Mr Floyd being arrested in Minneapolis and a white police officer continuing to kneel on his neck even after he pleaded he could not breathe and fell unconscious.

More than 75 cities have seen protests, with streets only days ago deserted because of coronavirus full of demonstrators marching shoulder to shoulder. Some US officials have warned of protest-connected virus outbreaks.

The Floyd case has reignited deep-seated anger over police killings of black Americans and racism. It follows the high-profile cases of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Eric Garner in New York and others that have driven the Black Lives Matter movement.

For many, the outrage also reflects years of frustration over socio-economic inequality and discrimination, not least in Minneapolis itself, where George Floyd died.

What happened in the latest protests?

About 16,000 troops from the National Guard - the US reserve military force for domestic emergencies - have been deployed to deal with the unrest across twenty four states and Washington, DC, where crowds once again gathered near the White House on Sunday night.

Demonstrators lit fire to buildings there, including a historic church known as the church of the presidents, and threw stones at riot officers. Police used tear gas in response.

In Louisville, Kentucky, a man was shot dead in a confrontation between protesters, police and the National Guard after midnight. Shots were fired at police officers and guard troops as they moved to disperse a crowd in a car park and they "returned fire", leaving one man dead, Louisville Metro Police said.

As on Friday and Saturday, demonstrations that had been peaceful during the day again descended into violence as night fell.

Police vehicles were vandalised and set alight in several cities, while riot officers continued to respond with tear gas and flash grenades.

At least 4,400 people have been arrested in several days of protests, according to the Associated Press news agency, for offences including blocking motorways, looting and breaking curfew.

A 19:00 curfew has now been imposed in Washington DC for Monday and Tuesday nights.

In Minneapolis, a lorry driver was arrested after reportedly breaching a road barrier before speeding towards a crowd of protesters marching along a major motorway. The driver was taken to hospital with minor injuries and later to the county jail.

There were no immediate reports of other casualties.

Minnesota's Governor Tim Walz said the motive of the driver was unclear, adding: "To not have tragedy and many deaths is simply an amazing thing."

6. **Watch the news.** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6ZQhHISuaQ>

a. **Why are the protests organized?**

b. **Watch the news again and answer the questions.**

1. What are the reasons of protest?
2. Where do the protests take place?
3. What do the Brits fear?
4. What did the government in Italy do that infuriated people?
5. Why do the New Yorkers line in the streets?
6. What is the official advice in the USA?
7. What is the topic of Joe Biden speech on Wednesday?

7. **Extra activity. Watch the news from Iran, make notes and prepare a short written summary.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6NWPctLyLBo>

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