

U.K. court says calling a man 'bald' is sexist

17th October 2024



A court in the U.K. has said calling a man "bald" is sexist. The judge in the court said using the word could break equality laws. The judge said this was because the word bald is "inherently related to gender".

This means that because most people who are bald are men, it is wrong to use the word against a man. This sex discrimination case came after a worker took his company to court. The boss called the worker bald. The worker said he had an argument with his boss. The boss angrily called the worker "bald" and fired him. The worker won a case of unfair dismissal in the court. The judge said the word bald was harmful, and that using it was sexual harassment.

The court had to decide if the word bald was simply an insult, or whether it was harassment. Lawyers for the boss' company said calling a man bald was not sexual harassment. They said that women can also be bald. In court, they argued that: "In order to be related to sex, it would have to apply to that sex to the exclusion of the other sex." They said that because women can also be bald, it could not be harassment. A court judge disagreed with the boss' lawyers. She said that commenting on a man's baldness is the same as a man making comments about parts of a woman's body. The lead judge said the word bald was related to gender. He said this was because more men than women are bald.

Sources: bbc.co.uk / thesun.co.uk / mirror.co.uk

Writing

Having no hair is easier than having hair. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

court / bald / sexist / equality / laws / gender / boss / argument / sexual harassment / decide / insult / lawyers / bald women / disagree / comments / gender / bald men

True / False

- 1) A court in the U.K. said bald men are sexist. T / F
- 2) A judge in a court said the word 'bald' could break equality laws. T / F
- 3) A company boss called a worker bald and fired him. T / F
- 4) The worker lost a court case against the company that fired him. T / F
- 5) A court decided the word bald was an insult, not harassment. T / F
- 6) The company said bald isn't a sexist word because women can be bald. T / F
- 7) A court judge disagreed with the company's lawyers. T / F
- 8) A judge said the word bald was related to gender. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. bald | a. prejudice |
| 2. laws | b. the sexes |
| 3. gender | c. speaking about |
| 4. discrimination | d. damaging |
| 5. harmful | e. claimed |
| 6. simply | f. hairless |
| 7. argued | g. connected |
| 8. related | h. top |
| 9. commenting on | i. regulations |
| 10. lead | j. just |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) How important is hair?
- c) Is the word 'bald' an insult?
- d) How hurt do you think a man would be by the word bald?
- e) What are the advantages of being bald?
- f) How much money do you spend on your hair?
- g) Is it worse for a man or woman to be bald?
- h) What questions would you like to ask a bald man?

Phrase Match

- using the word could break
- the word bald is inherently related
- most people who are bald
- The worker said he had an argument
- The worker won a case of unfair dismissal
- The court had to decide if the word bald
- it could not
- A court judge disagreed
- commenting on a man's
- making comments about parts
- with his boss
- baldness is the same
- in the court
- was simply an insult
- to gender
- with the boss' lawyers
- are men
- of a woman's body
- equality laws
- be harassment

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of baldness?
- Is it better to be bald or to have hair?
- Is calling a man 'bald' sexist?
- Is calling a woman 'bald' sexist?
- What do you think of your hair?
- Have you ever had an argument with a boss?
- Does the word 'bald' in your country have a negative meaning?
- What hairstyle would you really like to have?

Spelling

- The deugj in the court
- using the word could break yqteuial laws
- related to degnre
- This sex isitoamrcinidn case
- he had an eutamgrn with his boss
- The worker won a case of unfair similssda
- the word bald was simply an nituls
- or ehhertw it was harassment
- In court, they geruad that
- In order to be tedrael to sex
- to the consilxeu of the other sex
- ieasrdegd with the boss' lawyers

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. b	4. a	5. d
6. j	7. e	8. g	9. c	10. h

Role Play

Role A – Bald

You think being bald is the best hairstyle. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their hairstyle. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): ponytail, mohawk or dreadlocks.

Role B – Ponytail

You think a ponytail is the best hairstyle. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their hairstyle. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): being bald, mohawk or dreadlocks.

Role C – Mohawk

You think a mohawk is the best hairstyle. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their hairstyle. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): ponytail, being bald or dreadlocks.

Role D – Dreadlocks

You think dreadlocks are the best hairstyle. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their hairstyle. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): ponytail, mohawk or being bald.

Speaking – Hairstyles

Rank these with your partner. Put the best hairstyles at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Mohawk
- Afro
- Beehive
- Dreadlocks
- Bald
- Ponytail
- Buzz cut
- Comb over

Answers – True False

1	F	2	T	3	T	4	F	5	F	6	T	7	T	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.