

“It’s cooler to hang Lennon’s guitar than a Picasso”: pop culture wins out at auctions

Level 1: Elementary / Pre-Intermediate – Teacher’s notes

Article summary: The article describes how items belonging to pop stars are becoming popular at auctions.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Vocabulary

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

Key:

1. *auction*
2. *item*
3. *cardigan*
4. *cooler*
5. *belongings*
6. *celebrity*
7. *persuade*
8. *outfit*
9. *estimate*
10. *Grammy*
11. *lyrics*
12. *legacy*

1. Warmer

- a. The purpose of this activity is to introduce the concept of auctions and the kind of items that are sold at them. It also focuses on the types of things that people are willing to spend large amounts of money on. Ask students to match the items with the amounts of money that people paid for them. When you check the answers, ask if they are surprised by any of the amounts (e.g. the amount paid for a small piece of paper, the postage stamp).

Key:

1. *c*
2. *d*
3. *a*
4. *e*
5. *b*

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do the exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. Point out that a celebrity is normally someone in entertainment or sport, not a public figure such as a politician. The word ‘cool’ can also be used to mean ‘good’ and some people also use it to mean ‘OK’, if they agree to something. In the text, it means ‘fashionable’ or ‘trendy’.

3. Comprehension check

- a. The corrections given are only suggested answers and students may correctly answer the questions in different ways, e.g. number 5, could be “His guitar was more expensive than his cardigan.”

Key:

1. *2003*
2. *\$4.8 million*
3. *President John F. Kennedy*
4. *over \$6 million*
5. *his guitar*
6. *nearly 15 years ago*
7. *because she is a very private person*
8. *in 2020*
9. *\$162,500*
10. *\$2,000*

4. Key language

- a. Students could be asked to do this exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs. If necessary, they can also check their answers by looking in the text.

Key:

1. *f*
2. *c*
3. *d*
4. *e*
5. *a*
6. *b*

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5. Discussion

- a. Allow students time to note down their ideas about each statement and encourage them to say why they agree or disagree with each one.

6. In your own words

- a. Point out that students could include the answers to the questions in their piece of writing and they can also include other information. For example, they could describe the item they bought rather than simply saying what it was.