

## Brave pensioner Foils Raid on Jewellery Store

Tell learners that this lesson is based on a true story which was reported in several British newspapers in October 2008. The first stage (steps 1 to 3) involves encouraging learners to speculate on the story on the basis of a few clues. At the next stage (steps 4 and 5) they make up their own stories to fit the clues. At step 4 learners should ideally work in pairs or groups, but if they are not used to this they could work first as individuals, perhaps making up their story for homework, and then get together in groups to share ideas.

1 Write up on the board:

The setting:

The street outside a Richmond jewellery shop.

The characters:

Two young men with sledge hammers.

A pensioner, believed to be 83.

50 onlookers.

Gabrielle Henry, a shop manager.

George Wilson.

Some phrases from the story:

“I’ve got your DNA.”

Rolex watches.

Snatched the balaclava from one of the criminals.

Last seen getting on a number 17 bus.

Without him they would have got clean away.

2 Explain some of the words and phrases which might cause difficulties. A *sledge hammer* is a very big heavy hammer. A *balaclava* is like a ski mask. It covers someone’s face so only their eyes can be seen. *DNA* stands for deoxyribonucleic acid. This is genetic material which is specific to each individual. People can be identified from a sample of their DNA.

3 Ask one or two questions to encourage students to think about the story. For example:

Why might someone say *I’ve got your DNA*?

Who do you think got on a number 17 bus?

4 Ask learners what they think happened in the story, but do not tell them if their guesses are right or wrong.

5 Ask them to try to guess what happened in the story. Tell them to use as many of the ideas on the board as they can. The best thing is for them to work in pairs or groups and discuss their ideas. This will give them a lot of speaking practice.

6 Tell them you are going to ask some of them to tell their stories to the class. Give them some time to prepare their stories. Go round and listen as they work.

7 Ask one of them to tell the story.

OR

Ask each group to send a member as ambassador to another group to tell their story. They can then compare stories. Ambassadors can return to their own groups, perhaps with some new ideas. You can then ask them to work on their story again before telling it to the class.

8 After a group spokesman has told a story ask the other groups if their stories are the same or different. Choose someone who has a different story and ask them to tell it.

9 Engage the class in a discussion as to whose story is the most likely.

10 Hand out the story for them to read. Or, if you want them to have some listening practice you can read the story out before they read it.

## **PENSIONER FOILS ROBBERY**

Two young men got a nasty shock when they tried to rob Ernest Jones, a Richmond jewellery shop. The men, wearing balaclavas, used sledgehammers to smash the windows of the shop. There were fifty people looking on without daring to interfere. Then a pensioner, believed to be 83, stepped forward and snatched the balaclava from one of the criminals and shouted "I've got your DNA."

The two robbers were taken completely by surprise. Throwing down their hammers they ran away as fast as they could. The pensioner, still carrying the balaclava, walked away, and was last seen getting on a number 17 bus.

"I saw this<sup>1</sup> old guy go past and push one of them over. He grabbed his balaclava and shouted 'I've got your DNA.' The other guy stopped hitting the window and they ran off," said Gabrielle Henry, who manages WT Spa, another shop in the street.

Another onlooker, George Wilson, said: "I thought it was great. He was an old man, but he was really brave. There were about fifty people watching, but he was the only one brave enough to do anything. Without him they would have got clean away."

Police believe that the thieves were after Rolex watches in the shop, which has been robbed at least three times in the past year. They have asked the pensioner to come forward, They are sure that, with his help, they will be able to catch the criminals.

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<sup>1</sup> The demonstrative adjective *this* is often used instead of the indefinite article, *a/an*, in informal spoken English:

*I met this strange woman yesterday.*

*I had this dreadful headache last night.*

## 11 Language work.

### 11.1 Identification:

Ask learners underline all the phrases with verbs ending in *-ing*.

*Wearing balaclavas; There were fifty people **looking on**; **throwing** down their hammers; still **carrying** the balaclava; last seen **getting** on a number 7 bus; stopped **hitting** the window.*

### 11.2 Explanation:

Verbs with *-ing* are used:

- a. to describe people and things: *a man wearing a balaclava*. We often see this after *There is/are/was/were* : *There were fifty people **looking on***.
- b. after verbs like *see* and *hear*: *last seen **getting** on a bus; I saw him **getting** on a bus*.
- c. after time words like *still, after, before*: *still **carrying** the balaclava; after **smashing** the windows they were going to steal the jewellery*.
- d. to describe an action that happened immediately before another or at the same time as another: ***throwing down** their hammers, they ran away as fast as they could*.
- e. After the verbs like *stop* and *start*.

Which group do these belong to, *a, b, c, d* or *e*.

*I heard someone trying to get into the house.  
There were lots of people waiting for the bus.  
I have to get changed before going out.  
Snatching off the man's balaclava he shouted 'I've got your DNA'.  
She could smell something burning.  
They began shouting.*

### 11.3 Practice.

You can play a memory game to practice *-ing* forms. Start off by saying *On my way to school today I saw a man waiting for a bus*. Put a matchstick drawing on the board of a man standing by a bus stop and say *I saw a man waiting for a bus and ...?* Add another matchstick drawing of two boys playing football to elicit *On my way to school today I saw a man waiting for a bus and two boys playing football*. Add other drawings, for example two women talking, a dog eating a bone, a cat chasing a mouse and so on.

Ask learners one after another to recite the list : ... *a man waiting for a bus, two women talking, a dog eating a bone and a cat chasing a mouse*.

Then begin to rub pictures off the board, putting just a number in their place, so that learners have to remember what they have seen. At the same time you can continue to add pictures until the learners have to remember six or seven items.

You can vary this by asking the learners to contribute drawings.

## 12 Useful phrases:

Ask learners to choose three phrases which they think will be useful to them in the future. Lead a class discussion to collect a list of phrases.

## 13 Recall exercise:

Here is a possible recall exercise. It focuses mainly on elements of the text which provide cohesion.

Ask learners to read paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 very carefully. Explain that they will be asked to recall the wording of the text.

\*\*\* two robbers were taken completely by surprise. \*\*\*\*\* down their hammers \*\*\*\* ran away as fast as \*\*\*\* could. \*\*\* pensioner, still \*\*\*\*\* the balaclava, walked away, \*\*\* \*\*\* last seen \*\*\*\*\* on a number 17 bus.

"I saw \*\*\*\* old guy go past and push \*\*\* \*\* \*\*\*\*\* over. He grabbed his balaclava and shouted 'I've got your DNA.' \*\*\* \*\*\*\*\* guy stopped hitting the window and they ran off," said Gabrielle Henry, \*\*\* \*\*\*\*\* WT Spa, another shop in the street.

\*\*\*\*\* onlooker, George Wilson, said: "I thought it was great. \*\* was an old man, but \*\* was really brave. \*\*\*\*\* were about fifty people watching, \*\*\* he was the only one brave enough to do anything. \*\*\*\*\* \*\*\* they would have got clean away."

## 14 Round-up:

Ask learners to read the story for homework and be ready to tell the story next lesson. It is useful to build up a repertoire of stories so that in future lessons you can ask learners *Who can remember the story about ...* and ask them to tell one of the stories that they have studied. This is a good way of getting them to remember the useful language they have encountered.