

Before Wonka: the original rip-off events that left children in tears

Level 3: Advanced – Teacher’s notes

Article summary: The article talks about the recent Wonka scam in Scotland and highlights other past ones.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Verb tense review

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to get students thinking and talking about situations where people get tricked out of money. Ask students if they're familiar with the words *con* and *con artist*. Have students discuss cons they have heard of or fallen victim to. If students are comfortable, encourage them to share what happened, how they felt and how they protected themselves against future cons. They can also talk about things they have heard from others or in the news.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do the exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. You may wish to mention that *adjacent* literally means *next to* but recently it has become popular as a way to say *almost*, for example *wellness-adjacent snacks* or *Beverly Hills-adjacent properties*. When used this way, it is placed after the noun with a hyphen. You may also wish to mention that the word *merchandise* is often shortened into *merch*, especially on the internet. As an extension activity, ask students to highlight the key words in the article.

Key:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. <i>go viral</i> | 6. <i>warehouse</i> |
| 2. <i>scam</i> | 7. <i>sullen</i> |
| 3. <i>virtuoso</i> | 8. <i>hideous</i> |
| 4. <i>pioneer</i> | 9. <i>rip-off</i> |
| 5. <i>sparsely</i> | 10. <i>immersive</i> |

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 11. <i>ratty</i> | 14. <i>merchandise</i> |
| 12. <i>adjacent</i> | 15. <i>crappiness</i> |
| 13. <i>sheer</i> | |

- b. Before reading the article carefully, students use some of the key words to fill the gaps in the sentences to ensure that they understand and know how the words are used in other contexts.

Key:

1. *pioneers*
2. *rip-off*
3. *merchandise*
4. *warehouse*
5. *immersive*
6. *went/has gone/will go viral*
7. *sheer*
8. *scam*
9. *sullen*
10. *virtuoso*
11. *sparsely*
12. *ratty*

3. Comprehension check

- a. Students answer the questions based on the information in the article. They may do this in different ways, e.g., in item 1, they may say “It was held in Glasgow, Scotland”, or similar.

Key (suggested answers):

1. *Glasgow*
2. *House of Illuminati*
3. *force people to spend more money than they'd like on things they'll never need*
4. *a mobility scooter*
5. *£15; a shop mannequin in a Santa outfit*
6. *at the Rialto Theater in Montreal*
7. *The promise was for costumes, snacks, CBD, up to 20 go-kart laps, a DJ, after party, games room and more. In reality, there were dirty costumes, one cupcake per person and two Nintendo Wiis.*
8. *10,000*
9. *It was closed, and the makers of Fortnite brought a lawsuit against the organizers.*
10. *set an incredible new level of crappiness*

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4. Key language

- a. This activity allows the students to practise reported speech with and without tense change. Students should write a reporting sentence using *said* or *told* and making the necessary changes to tenses and parts of speech. Check answers as a class and correct any accuracy errors.

Key:

1. *The author said (that) he'd be surprised if we got to the end of 2024 with a better news story than Willy's Chocolate Experience.*
2. *A guest at the Winter Village said (told the author) that the Santa had been so poorly dressed that his 6-year-old began questioning if he was Santa.*
3. *A guest at an event in East Lothian said his daughter had gone on the bungee ropes and the staff member in charge of the area had disappeared and been gone for 10 minutes.*
4. *Ticketholders at Santa's Winter Village said they had been led to an abandoned industrial unit.*
5. *The author said Willy's Chocolate Experience had set a new level of crappiness.*

- b. Allow students to work in pairs and share their experiences. They can take notes of details that may help them report in task C.
- c. Have students work with different partners either in pairs or small groups. They should re-tell their classmates' stories using reported speech. Monitor and help with accuracy when needed.

5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the statements related to the article and give their reasons and justifications for each answer, referring to their own experiences wherever possible.

6. In your own words

- a. Ask students to research more about scams and rip-offs.
- b. Students then present their reports to the class. Encourage students to share the information they've gathered and their opinions about the issue. Encourage students to use some of the given phrases in their presentations when stating facts and their opinions.