

THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2103/210303-dog-theft.html>

A disturbing new crime is emerging worldwide that should be of concern to dog owners. Criminal gangs are engaged in wide-scale dog theft. In the UK it has turned into a lucrative but illicit industry. A theft in the USA last week became global news as the dog walker of pop singer Lady Gaga was shot in the chest as thieves stole her two pet bulldogs. The UK is experiencing a sharp rise in dog theft. Lockdowns due to coronavirus have led to a boom in pet sales as many people look for solace and companionship in animals. Sales of what are being dubbed "pandemic puppies" have skyrocketed. Unscrupulous criminals are now stealing dogs, often attacking their owners, and selling the canines for up to \$9,000.

The police warned dog owners to take extreme care online and in parks. People have been advised not to post pictures of their pets on social media. Police have also recommended people take their dogs for a walk with a friend and not leave dogs unattended in cars. The organisation DogLost said many people are buying dogs online without asking diligent background questions. A Change.org petition said the punishment for dog theft is the same as for a stolen smartphone. It said: "Dognapping has almost the same effect on a family as kidnapping, as pets are seen as family members. It is time the law reflected this in the sentencing of offenders."

Sources: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/26/beware-social-media-warning-uk-dog-owners-thefts-rise>
<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/priti-patel-pet-thieves-dog-theft-pledge-b919636.html>
<https://www.change.org/p/make-pet-theft-a-specific-crime-in-uk-law>

WARM-UPS

1. DOG THEFT: Students walk around the class and talk to other students about dog theft. Change partners often and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, talk about these topics or words from the article. What will the article say about them? What can you say about these words and your life?

disturbing / concern / dog owners / lucrative / illicit / thieves / coronavirus / puppies / care / social media / walk / diligent / punishment / dognapping / family / offenders

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. PRISON: Students A **strongly** believe dog thieves should get a long prison sentence; Students B **strongly** believe otherwise. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

4. PROS AND CONS: What are the pros and cons of these animals as pets? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	Pros	Cons
Dogs		
Goldfish		
Cats		
Hamsters		
Tortoises		
A tarantula		

5. GANG: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "gang". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. PETS: Rank these with your partner. Put the best pets at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Dog
- Cat
- Rabbit
- Tortoise
- Fish
- Snake
- Parrot
- Iguana

VOCABULARY MATCHING

Paragraph 1

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. disturbing | a. Of facts or circumstances becoming known. |
| 2. emerging | b. A great rise in the demand for something. |
| 3. lucrative | c. Forbidden by law; illegal. |
| 4. illicit | d. Producing a great deal of profit. |
| 5. boom | e. Causing anxiety or worry. |
| 6. solace | f. Having or showing no moral principles; not honest or fair. |
| 7. unscrupulous | g. Comfort or consolation in a time of distress or sadness. |

Paragraph 2

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 8. extreme | h. Taking someone away illegally by force, usually to get a ransom. |
| 9. unattended | i. Not usual; exceptional. |
| 10. diligent | j. A penalty for an offense or crime. |
| 11. petition | k. A person who commits an illegal act. |
| 12. punishment | l. Having or showing care and conscientiousness in one's work or duties. |
| 13. kidnapping | m. A formal written request, typically one signed by many people, appealing to authority bring about change. |
| 14. offender | n. Not supervised or looked after. |

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2103/210303-dog-theft.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. The article says dogs worldwide are becoming disturbed. **T / F**
- b. The article says dog theft is an illicit and lucrative business. **T / F**
- c. There has been a very big increase in dog theft in the UK. **T / F**
- d. People bought dogs during lockdown that were called pandemic puppies. **T / F**
- e. The police told dog owners not to take their dogs to the park. **T / F**
- f. The police told people to walk their dogs with a friend. **T / F**
- g. A petition said dognapping is a more serious crime than phone theft. **T / F**
- h. The petition wants punishments for dognapping to be changed. **T / F**

2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms. The words in **bold** are from the news article.

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| 1. disturbing | a. great |
| 2. lucrative | b. nicknamed |
| 3. solace | c. dogs |
| 4. dubbed | d. wrongdoers |
| 5. canines | e. profitable |
| 6. extreme | f. thorough |
| 7. post | g. worrying |
| 8. diligent | h. penalty |
| 9. punishment | i. comfort |
| 10. offenders | j. upload |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. A disturbing new crime is | a. "pandemic puppies" |
| 2. Criminal gangs are engaged in | b. illicit industry |
| 3. a lucrative but | c. of offenders |
| 4. people look for solace | d. extreme care online |
| 5. Sales of what are being dubbed | e. wide-scale dog theft |
| 6. The police warned dog owners to take | f. questions |
| 7. leave dogs unattended | g. emerging worldwide |
| 8. background | h. for dog theft |
| 9. the punishment | i. and companionship |
| 10. the sentencing | j. in cars |

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2103/210303-dog-theft.html>

1. Who does the article say should be concerned?
2. What does the article say dog theft is besides lucrative?
3. What country is experiencing a sharp rise in dog theft?
4. What are people looking for in animals besides companionship?
5. How much are criminals selling dogs for?
6. Where must dog owners be careful besides online?
7. Who did the police say dog owners should walk their dogs with?
8. What did an organisation say people do not ask when buying dogs?
9. What has the same punishment as dognapping?
10. What did a petition say dogs are seen as?

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2103/210303-dog-theft.html>

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'dog' and 'theft'.

dog	theft

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• crime• scale• shot• boom• dubbed• canines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• extreme• post• walk• diligent• almost• law
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DOG THEFT DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'dog'?
3. What do you think of dogs?
4. How good are dogs as pets?
5. What do you think of dog theft?
6. What is your favourite dog?
7. What are the good and bad things about dogs as pets?
8. What do you think of the term 'pandemic puppies'?
9. What can police do to catch the dog thieves?
10. What do you know about the Lady Gaga story?

Dog theft on the rise worldwide – 3rd March, 2021
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DOG THEFT DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'theft'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. How can people take greater care when walking their dogs?
15. What do you think of dog pictures on social media?
16. What background questions should you ask before buying a dog?
17. What do you think of dognapping?
18. How can owners get their dogs back?
19. What advice do you have for dog owners?
20. What questions would you like to ask the police?