

THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2103/210319-romance-fraud.html>

Authorities are urging those looking for love on the Internet to be cautious. There was a 20 per cent spike in online romance fraud last year. The organisation UK Finance reported that cyber fraud increased considerably and coincided with a rise in the number of people looking for a partner online. This has been exacerbated by feelings of loneliness and isolation during the coronavirus pandemic. There was a sharp rise in the number of scams related to dating sites and around Valentine's Day. UK Finance said: "Romance scams can leave customers out of love and out of pocket." It warned: "Romance scammers can be very convincing by forming an emotional attachment with their victims."

The Online Dating Association in the UK reported that around 2.3 million British citizens used dating apps during lockdown. Cyber criminals have taken advantage of this to scam people. A total of \$26 million is believed to have been lost in bank transfer fraud. The average loss per victim is around \$11,000. According to data from a UK bank, people aged 55 to 64 are the most vulnerable to romance fraud. Pauline Smith, a fraud expert, said: "Any online platform that allows you to connect with and talk to other people could be targeted by romance fraudsters, so it's important to remain vigilant." She urged extreme caution if an online love interest requests money for things like medical care.

Sources: <https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252496156/Dating-app-users-warned-to-watch-out-for-scammers>
<https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-55997611>
<https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/romance-fraud-lockdown-online/>

WARM-UPS

1. ROMANCE: Students walk around the class and talk to other students about romance. 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?

authorities / Internet / cautious / cyber fraud / partner / online / pandemic / love dating / lockdown / criminals / bank transfer / data / romance / expert / vigilant

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

3. IN PERSON: Students A **strongly** believe all dating should be done in-person and not online; Students B **strongly** believe otherwise. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

4. ROMANTIC THINGS: How romantic are these things? Why? How do you feel about them? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	How Romantic?	Why?	Your Feelings
Roses			
Chocolates			
Love songs			
Italian restaurants			
Poetry			
Moonlit walks			

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

6. ROMANTIC DATES: Rank these with your partner. Put the most romantic dates at the top at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Italian restaurant
- Online
- Beach
- Amusement park
- Museum
- Cinema
- Along a river
- Shopping mall

VOCABULARY MATCHING

Paragraph 1

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1. urging | a. By a large extent. |
| 2. cautious | b. Happened at or during the same time. |
| 3. spike | c. Trying to get someone to do something. |
| 4. considerably | d. Having lost money in a financial transaction. |
| 5. coincided | e. Careful to avoid potential problems or dangers. |
| 6. exacerbated | f. A sharp increase in the level or amount of something. |
| 7. out of pocket | g. Made a problem, bad situation, or negative feeling worse. |

Paragraph 2

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 8. scam | h. Reaching a high or the highest degree; very great. |
| 9. victim | i. A dishonest scheme; a fraud. |
| 10. vulnerable | j. A person harmed, injured, or killed as a result of a crime, accident, or other event or action. |
| 11. expert | k. Hardware of a computer system that determines what kinds of software it can run; a social media website. |
| 12. platform | l. A person who has a comprehensive and authoritative knowledge of or skill in a particular area |
| 13. vigilant | m. Easy to be subject to physical or emotional attack or harm. |
| 14. extreme | n. Keeping careful watch for possible danger or difficulties. |

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2103/210319-romance-fraud.html>

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

- a. The article says people looking for love need to be caustic. **T / F**
- b. Cases of online romance fraud increased by 20% last year. **T / F**
- c. Coronavirus led to a drop in people dating online. **T / F**
- d. The article said scams can leave victims out of pocket. **T / F**
- e. Around 2.3 million people worldwide used dating apps during lockdown. **T / F**
- f. The average loss from romance fraud is around \$11,000 per victim. **T / F**
- g. A fraud expert urged people to be valiant when they are online. **T / F**
- h. The fraud expert said people who lose money should seek medical care. **T / F**

2. SYNONYM MATCH:

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

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1. authorities | a. increase |
| 2. spike | b. target |
| 3. considerably | c. help |
| 4. scam | d. officials |
| 5. attachment | e. greatly |
| 6. during | f. specialist |
| 7. victim | g. bond |
| 8. expert | h. watchful |
| 9. vigilant | i. fraud |
| 10. care | j. throughout |

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

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. There was a 20 per cent spike | a. by feelings of loneliness |
| 2. This has been exacerbated | b. fraudsters |
| 3. out of | c. with their victims |
| 4. Romance scammers can be very | d. advantage of this |
| 5. forming an emotional attachment | e. vigilant |
| 6. British citizens used dating | f. in online romance fraud |
| 7. criminals have taken | g. apps during lockdown |
| 8. The average loss per | h. convincing |
| 9. targeted by romance | i. victim is around \$11,000 |
| 10. it's important to remain | j. pocket |

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2103/210319-romance-fraud.html>

1. What are authorities urging those looking for love to be?
2. What percentage increase in Internet fraud was there last year?
3. What feelings does the article say people experienced during lockdown?
4. What can romance fraud leave victims besides being out of love?
5. What did an organisation say romance scammers can be?
6. How many British people used dating apps during lockdown?
7. What did the average romance fraud victim lose?
8. Who is most vulnerable to romance fraud?
9. What does a fraud expert say it is important for people to be?
10. Who did the expert urge people to be careful of?

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2103/210319-romance-fraud.html>

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

romance	fraud

- 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">• urging• coincided• isolation• sharp• related• forming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2.3• advantage• 26• 11,000• 64• care
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ROMANCE 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 'romance'?
3. How romantic are you?
4. What is the most romantic thing you have ever done?
5. What do you think of online dating?
6. How worried are you about online fraud?
7. What are the signs that a mail or site might be a scam?
8. How have you felt during the coronavirus pandemic?
9. Has romance ever left you out of pocket?
10. How important is romance to you?

Online romance fraud is on the increase – 19th March, 2021
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ROMANCE 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 'fraud'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. What do you think of dating apps?
15. What do you think of scammers?
16. What do you do to keep safe online?
17. What do you think of online romance?
18. How vigilant are you online?
19. What is the best romantic movie you have seen?
20. What questions would you like to ask the fraud expert?