

THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2105/210502-benin-bronzes.html>

Germany is to return precious artefacts that were plundered from Nigeria during the colonial era in the late-19th century. The world-famous Benin Bronzes are currently on display at a museum in Leipzig. The Bronzes comprise a collection of more than a thousand metal plaques, sculptures and statues. They were created by the Edo people in what used to be the Kingdom of Benin from the 13th century. They decorated the royal palace of the Kingdom of Benin, in what is now Nigeria. Most of the objects were looted by British forces in 1897. Two hundred pieces were taken to the British Museum in London, while others went to museums across Europe. Nigeria has tried for decades to get them repatriated.

Experts say the 16th-18th century returning pieces are among the most highly regarded works of African art. Many Nigerians are welcoming their return. Nigeria's Institute for Benin Studies said Germany is, "leading in the global restitution movement" of former colonial powers returning looted treasures. It said: "Other European nations should be willing and open to acknowledge that all objects looted in 1897 belong to the Benin people. Like Germany, they too should initiate or join the dialogue to discuss the future of these objects." However, some Nigerians believe the objects are safer in Europe. One man said: "With the insecurity now, the safety of those artefacts cannot be guaranteed."

Sources: <https://www.dw.com/en/nigeria-welcomes-germanys-decision-to-return-looted-benin-bronzes/a-57382591>
<https://www.thenationalnews.com/arts-culture/germany-to-return-looted-bronzes-to-nigeria-next-year-1.1213865>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benin_Bronzes

WARM-UPS

1. NIGERIA: Students walk around the class and talk to other students about Nigeria. 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?

precious / artefacts / colonial / world-famous / statues / the 13th century / decades / highly regarded / works of art / global / treasures / looted / dialogue / objects

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

3. RETURN: Students A **strongly** believe all looted artefacts should be returned to the countries they came from; Students B **strongly** believe otherwise. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

4. ART FORMS: How important are these art forms? What are your country's greatest examples of them? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	How Important	Your Country's Best
Painting		
Sculpture		
Architecture		
Poetry		
Music		
Literature		

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

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

- The Benin Bronzes
- The Mona Lisa
- The Great Wave off Kanazawa
- Rodin's Thinker
- The Terracotta Army
- Warhol's Soup Cans
- Frida Kahlo Self Portrait
- Aboriginal cave paintings

VOCABULARY MATCHING

Paragraph 1

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. precious | a. Put somewhere for other people to see. |
| 2. artefact | b. Sent someone or something back to their own country. |
| 3. colonial | c. Of an object, substance, or resource of great value. |
| 4. on display | d. Relating to or characteristic of a a country or area under the full or partial political control of another country. |
| 5. plaque | e. An object made by a human being, typically an item of cultural or historical interest. |
| 6. looted | f. An ornamental tablet, typically of metal, porcelain, or wood, that is fixed to a wall or other surface in commemoration of a person or event. |
| 7. repatriated | g. Stole goods, especially private property, from another country in a war or during colonization. |

Paragraph 2

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8. expert | h. Considered or thought of someone or something in a specified way. |
| 9. regarded | i. Having previously filled a particular role or been a particular thing. |
| 10. former | j. The state of being open to danger or threat. |
| 11. willing | k. A person who has a comprehensive and authoritative knowledge of or skill in a particular area. |
| 12. initiate | l. A formal promise or assurance that certain conditions will be fulfilled. |
| 13. insecurity | m. Cause a process or action to begin. |
| 14. guaranteed | n. Ready, eager, or prepared to do something. |

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2105/210502-benin-bronzes.html>

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

- a. The Benin Bronzes were taken from Africa in the early 19th century. **T / F**
- b. The Benin Bronzes are in a museum in Munich at the moment. **T / F**
- c. The Benin Bronzes were made by the Edo people from Benin. **T / F**
- d. The Benin Bronzes were taken by the British in 1897. **T / F**
- e. The article says the Benin Bronzes are the best African art. **T / F**
- f. The Institute for Benin Studies said Germany was a leader. **T / F**
- g. The Institute said other European nations should open discussions. **T / F**
- h. A Nigerian man said the Benin Bronzes were safer in Europe. **T / F**

2. SYNONYM MATCH:

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

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. precious | a. prepared |
| 2. currently | b. adorned |
| 3. decorated | c. thought of |
| 4. looted | d. assured |
| 5. repatriated | e. presently |
| 6. regarded | f. begin |
| 7. restitution | g. returned |
| 8. willing | h. valuable |
| 9. initiate | i. compensation |
| 10. guaranteed | j. plundered |

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

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Germany is to return precious | a. by British forces |
| 2. during the colonial era | b. to get them repatriated |
| 3. metal plaques, sculptures | c. be guaranteed |
| 4. the objects were looted | d. of African art |
| 5. Nigeria has tried for decades | e. artefacts that were plundered |
| 6. the most highly regarded works | f. willing and open |
| 7. former colonial | g. to the Benin people |
| 8. European nations should be | h. in the late-19th century |
| 9. all objects looted in 1897 belong | i. powers |
| 10. the safety of those artefacts cannot | j. and statues |

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2105/210502-benin-bronzes.html>

1. When were the artefacts Germany is returning taken from Nigeria?
2. Where are the Benin Bronzes at the moment?
3. What is the name of the people who made the Benin Bronzes?
4. When did these people start creating their art?
5. Who took the objects in 1897?
6. Who is welcoming the return of the art?
7. Who should be willing to accept the objects belong to the Benin people?
8. What should other nations join?
9. Where did a Nigerian man say the art was safer?
10. What did a Nigerian man say could not be guaranteed?

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2105/210502-benin-bronzes.html>

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

art	statue
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- 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">• precious• display• collection• royal• others• decades	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• among• leading• former• belong• discuss• safety
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ART 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 'statue'?
3. What do you know about the Benin Bronzes?
4. What do you think of the Benin Bronzes being returned?
5. What do you know about the colonial era?
6. What damage has colonialism done?
7. Should all looted artefacts be returned to their original countries?
8. What do you want to know about the Kingdom of Benin?
9. What do you want to know about the Edo people?
10. Should we boycott museums that house looted artefacts?

Germany to return Benin Bronzes to Nigeria – 2nd May, 2021
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ART 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 'art'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. What do you know about African art?
15. How does African art compare with art from other continents?
16. Does colonialism exist today?
17. What do you think of the art of your country?
18. How important is art?
19. Are the objects safer in Germany?
20. What questions would you like to ask descendants of the artists?