

# THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2106/210603-naomi-osaka.html>

Tennis superstar Naomi Osaka has withdrawn from the French Tennis Open citing stress from having to address the world's media. Japan's world number two Osaka, 23, announced she did not want to do interviews after her matches to "protect her mental health". The Women's Tennis Association said this was in breach of her obligations as a professional player. It initially threatened to expel her from the tournament if she did not talk to the media. It has since backtracked and said it wants to "create meaningful improvements" in supporting players with mental health problems. It added: "We commend Naomi for sharing in her own words the pressures and anxieties she is feeling."

Naomi Osaka is a four-time Grand Slam singles champion and is the reigning champion at the US Open and the Australian Open. She has had problems coping with the stress of being in the spotlight as one of tennis' biggest stars. She said: "The truth is that I have suffered long bouts of depression since the US Open in 2018." Organisers of the four Opens have faced criticism for the way they have handled Ms Osaka's mental health concerns. However, it recently stated: "We empathise with the unique pressures tennis players may face." Many top players have said they are fully behind Ms Osaka. Serena Williams offered her support, saying: "I feel for Naomi....I wish I could give her a hug."

Sources: <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20210601/p2g/00m/0sp/002000c>  
<https://www.bbc.com/sport/tennis/57311128>  
[https://www.espn.com/tennis/story/\\_/id/31543237/naomi-osaka-withdraws-french-open-one-day-fine-threat-harsher-sanctions-skipping-media-obligations](https://www.espn.com/tennis/story/_/id/31543237/naomi-osaka-withdraws-french-open-one-day-fine-threat-harsher-sanctions-skipping-media-obligations)."

# VOCABULARY MATCHING

## Paragraph 1

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 1. superstar   | a. Mentioning as an example.   |
| 2. citing      | b. Reversed one's previous action or opinion.  |
| 3. breach      | c. An act or course of action to which a person is morally or legally bound.   |
| 4. obligation  | d. An act of breaking or failing to observe a law, agreement, or code of conduct.  |
| 5. backtracked | e. A high-profile and extremely successful performer or athlete.   |
| 6. commend     | f. A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an upcoming event or something with an uncertain outcome. |
| 7. anxiety     | g. Praise formally or officially.  |

## Paragraph 2

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 8. reigning   | h. Being the only one of its kind; unlike anything else.  |
| 9. coping     | i. Currently holding a particular title in sports.  |
| 10. bout      | j. Understand and share the feelings of another person.   |
| 11. criticism | k. Squeeze (someone) tightly in one's arms, typically to express affection.                     |
| 12. empathise | l. An attack of illness or strong emotion of a specified kind.                                  |
| 13. unique    | m. The expression of disapproval of someone or something based on perceived faults or mistakes. |
| 14. hug       | n. Dealing effectively with something difficult.  |

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2106/210603-naomi-osaka.html>

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

1. Naomi Osaka pulled out of a tennis tournament because of anxiety. **T / F**
2. Naomi Osaka is currently the world number one in the women's game. **T / F**
3. The Women's Tennis Association said it would expel Ms Osaka. **T / F**
4. The Women's Tennis Association praised Ms Osaka for speaking out. **T / F**
5. Ms Osaka is the current US Open and Australian Open champion. **T / F**
6. Ms Osaka said she has battled depression for over a decade. **T / F**
7. Very few tennis players have supported Naomi Osaka's actions. **T / F**
8. Serena Williams said she wanted to hug Ms Osaka. **T / F**

## 2. SYNONYM MATCH: (The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. <b>withdrawn</b>   | a. current            |
| 2. <b>address</b>     | b. changed one's mind |
| 3. <b>breach</b>      | c. periods            |
| 4. <b>backtracked</b> | d. dealing            |
| 5. <b>commend</b>     | e. talk to            |
| 6. <b>reigning</b>    | f. cuddle             |
| 7. <b>coping</b>      | g. pulled out         |
| 8. <b>bouts</b>       | h. specific           |
| 9. <b>unique</b>      | i. violation          |
| 10. <b>hug</b>        | j. praise             |

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

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. stress from having to address        | a. her a hug           |
| 2. this was in breach                   | b. and anxieties       |
| 3. It initially threatened to expel her | c. singles champion    |
| 4. It has since                         | d. behind Ms Osaka     |
| 5. the pressures                        | e. of her obligations  |
| 6. a four-time Grand Slam               | f. bouts of depression |
| 7. the stress of being                  | g. the world's media   |
| 8. I have suffered long                 | h. in the spotlight    |
| 9. top players have said they are fully | i. from the tournament |
| 10. I wish I could give                 | j. backtracked         |

# COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2106/210603-naomi-osaka.html>

1. Who did Naomi Osaka not want to address?
2. Where is Naomi Osaka on the world tennis rankings?
3. What did the Women's Tennis Association say Ms Osaka breached?
4. What did the Women's Tennis Association threaten to do to Ms Osaka?
5. What was Naomi Osaka commended for?
6. How many Grand Slams has Naomi Osaka won?
7. What has Ms Osaka suffered long bouts of?
8. What faced criticism for the way it handled Ms Osaka's concerns?
9. Who is fully behind Ms Osaka?
10. Who wants to give Naomi Osaka a hug?



# TENNIS 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 'tennis'?
3. What do you know about Naomi Osaka?
4. What do you think of Naomi withdrawing from the French Open?
5. Should the organisers have shown more support for Naomi?
6. What is more important, watching a tennis player play or talk?
7. How stressful do you think being in the media spotlight is?
8. Will Naomi's actions create a better understanding of mental health?
9. What should sports bodies do about the mental health of its stars?
10. What advice do you have for Naomi Osaka?

*Naomi Osaka withdraws from French Tennis Open – 3rd June, 2021*  
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# TENNIS 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 'mental health'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. What do you think of tennis?
15. How big a loss is Naomi Osaka's withdrawal from the tournament?
16. How can sports stars better cope with depression?
17. How easy is it for people to speak about mental health in your country?
18. What pressures do sports stars face?
19. Are the pressures for players greater today than ever before?
20. What questions would you like to ask Naomi Osaka?