



Scam baiting

Lesson code: KQSQ-XPNB-9491-6

ADVANCED

1 Key vocabulary

What do you think the underlined words and phrases mean? In pairs, match them to their correct meaning below:

1. He managed to intrigue me with his offer, so I decided to ask for more details.
2. My family owns the company, so I get a cut of the profits.
3. He concocted a plan in order to fool the victim.
4. Joe called his business associate to check if the deal was still on.
5. He promised to help me, but now he's starting to backpedal.
6. Andrew is very vulnerable to scammers because of his old age.
7. Karen's email was hysterical. We just couldn't stop laughing.
8. Peter read the letter twice before its real meaning began to sink in.

- a. a share (of money)
- b. be fully understood or realized
- c. do something different from what you had said you would do
- d. easy to hurt or deceive
- e. extremely funny
- f. happening as planned
- g. interest somebody very much
- h. invented (in order to deceive someone)

2 Before you watch

You are going to watch James Veitch talk about what happened when he replied to an email scam. First, discuss the questions below.

1. What kind of 'proposals' from strangers do you receive in your inbox?
2. Have you ever replied to these scams?
3. What do you think would happen if you replied to a typical email scam and pretended to show interest?

Now, watch the video and compare your ideas to James' experience.



3 Checking understanding

What do you remember? Put the events below in the correct order.

- He proposed to use a code during their correspondence. ____
- James decided to bait the scammer by expressing interest. ____
- James had so much fun that he decided to carry on replying to scam emails for the next three years. ____
- James proposed a much larger amount. ____
- James received an email proposal from a scammer a few years ago. 1
- James told the scammer he was going to spend his cut on hummus. ____
- The scammer agreed and James got him to reply with a coded message. ____
- The scammer proposed to ship 25kg of gold. ____
- The scammer was happy and told James he was going to spend his cut on real estate. ____

4 Idioms in the video

Look at the sentences below. They all contain idioms used in the talk. Match each idiom to its correct definition.

1. I'm going to send you an image file. Please hold tight.
 2. I had one of my assistants run the numbers.
 3. There's always a moment where the scammer tries to tug your heartstrings.
 4. It was getting a bit out of hand. Friends were inviting me for a drink, but I kept refusing in order to check my emails.
 5. After a few weeks of baiting the scammer, I decided to knock it on the head.
 6. When I didn't hear back from the scammer, I thought, I've gone too far.
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- a. prevent something from happening, or to finally finish something (British English)
 - b. do the calculations
 - c. exceeded the acceptable limit
 - d. make you feel strong sympathy for somebody
 - e. out of control
 - f. wait



Now describe each situation below with one of the idioms.

1. Some people believe that humans are not responsible for climate change. But last year, people finally stopped holding this opinion.
2. Jan did lots of calculations and came to the conclusion that it was not worth paying in installments.
3. Nana always likes to cause trouble but this time was different — she threw a brick through her neighbour's window.
4. At first the demonstration was calm and quiet. But suddenly the protestors started throwing bottles at the police and the officers retaliated by beating them up.
5. I told Simon to just wait and do nothing while I order the meal.
6. The woman told me about her illness and the loss of her children. But I had a feeling that her stories weren't true.

5 Talking point

Discuss any of the questions below.

1. Would you ever consider replying to a scam email? Why/why not?
2. Do scammers deserve to have their time wasted?
3. What kind of people do you think fall for email scams?



1 Key vocabulary

Students can work individually and check in pairs.

1. g 2. a 3. h 4. f 5. c 6. d 7. e 8. b

2 Before you watch

Students discuss the issues to set the context for the watching/listening activity. Check understanding of the term 'scam' (an illegal plan for making money) and 'scam baiting' (exposing a scammer by pretending to be a potential victim). Present any vocabulary that may be useful. To access the transcript, go to <http://www.ted.com>, search for 'James Veitch' and select the video 'James Veitch: This is what happens when you reply to spam email'. Scroll down to the button 'Interactive transcript'. You may want to pre-teach some extra vocabulary, e.g. 'the game was afoot', 'bullion' (blocks of gold or silver).

3 Checking understanding

1. James received an email proposal from a scammer a few years ago.
2. James decided to bait the scammer by expressing interest.
3. The scammer proposed to ship 25kg of gold.
4. James proposed a much larger amount.
5. The scammer was happy and told James he was going to spend his cut on real estate.
6. James told the scammer he was going to spend his cut on hummus.
7. He proposed to use a code during their correspondence.
8. The scammer agreed and James got him to reply with a coded message.
9. James had so much fun that he decided to carry on replying to scam emails for the next three years.

4 Idioms in the video

1. f 2. b 3. d 4. e 5. a 6. c

For the second part, do the first situation as an example. Possible answers:

1. The belief that humans aren't responsible for climate change was knocked on the head last year.
2. Jan ran the numbers and concluded that it was not worth paying in installments.
3. Nana went too far this time.
4. The demonstration got completely out of hand.
5. I told Simon to hold tight while I order the meal.
6. The woman tried to tug at my heartstrings. But I had a feeling that the stories weren't true.

5 Talking point

Students discuss the questions in pairs or groups. Check understanding of the phrasal verb 'fall for' (= be deceived by).

