

# English articles

It's useful to read articles in English, even if you don't understand every word - it will help you increase your vocabulary and keep up to date with things happening in English-speaking countries!

*This page will be updated on **Mondays**. The first article is aimed at a B1 and upwards level and the second article is aimed at a B2 and upwards level*

## Articles of the week



## Thieves hit the Louvre again. Here's a look at other famous heists in museums worldwide

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PARIS (AP) — Thieves reportedly stole nine pieces from the jewelry collection of Napoleon and the Empress in the Louvre, using a basket lift to reach the museum on Sunday morning.

The daring heist at the world's most visited museum occurred as tourists were inside the Galerie

d'Apollon, where part of the French Crown Jewels are displayed.

The museum closed for the day as police sealed gates and ushered visitors out.

Here's a look at some other famous heists worldwide:

### **The Louvre's missing Mona Lisa helped cement the portrait's fame**

The Louvre has a long history of thefts and attempted robberies. The most famous came in 1911, when the Mona Lisa vanished from its frame, stolen by Vincenzo Peruggia, a former worker who hid inside the museum and walked out with the painting under his coat.

It was recovered two years later in Florence — an episode that helped make Leonardo da Vinci's portrait the world's best-known artwork.

### **Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum heist remains unsolved**

It's been called the biggest art heist in U.S. history, but 35 years later, the theft of 13 works from Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum remains unsolved.

In the early hours of March 18, 1990, two men disguised as Boston police officers talked their way into the museum by saying they were responding to a call. They overpowered two security guards, bound them with duct tape and spent 81 minutes pilfering 13 works of art, including masterpieces by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Degas and Manet.

Authorities say the artwork is worth perhaps as much as a half-billion dollars. Museum officials say it's priceless because it cannot be replaced.

Some of the works, including Rembrandt's "Storm on the Sea of Galilee," were cut from their frames. Those frames hang empty in the museum to this day.

### **2 German museum burglaries netted a solid-gold coin and royal jewels**

In 2017, burglars at Berlin's Bode Museum stole a 100-kilogram (220-pound) Canadian solid-gold coin known as the "Big Maple Leaf."

The suspects are believed to have smashed a protective case and then managed to lift the coin out of a museum window before fleeing along a rail track with their haul in a wheelbarrow. After getting away with it, authorities believe they later cut up the coin, valued at about 3.75 million euros (\$4.33 million), and sold the pieces.

Three men, including a museum security guard, were later convicted.

Two years later, thieves smashed vitrines in Dresden's Green Vault, one of the world's oldest museums, and carried off diamond-studded royal jewels worth hundreds of millions of euros. Officials said they made off with three "priceless" sets of 18th century jewelry that would be impossible to sell on the open market.

Part of the haul was later recovered. Five men were convicted and a sixth was acquitted.

### **An English palace's golden toilet was pried off its plumbing**

A thief who swiped a golden toilet from an English palace was convicted earlier this year along with an accomplice who helped cash in on the spoils of the 18-carat work of art insured for nearly 5 million

pounds (more than \$6 million).

Michael Jones had used the fully functioning one-of-a-kind latrine as he did reconnaissance at Blenheim Palace — the country mansion where British wartime leader Winston Churchill was born — the day before the theft, prosecutors said. He described the experience as “splendid.”

He returned before dawn on Sept. 14, 2019, with at least two other men armed with sledgehammers and crowbars. They smashed a window and pried the toilet from its plumbing within five minutes, leaving a damaging flood in their wake as they escaped in stolen vehicles.

The satirical work, titled “America” by Italian conceptual artist Maurizio Cattelan, poked fun at excessive wealth. It weighed just over 215 pounds (98 kilograms). The value of the gold at the time was 2.8 million (\$3.6 million). The purloined potty has never been recovered but is believed to have been cut up and sold.

The piece had previously been on display at The Guggenheim Museum in New York. The museum had offered the work to U.S. President Donald Trump during his first term in office after he had asked to borrow a Van Gogh painting.

## Music could help ease pain from surgery or illness. Scientists are listening



By CHRISTINA LARSON AP Science Writer

Nurse Rod Salaysay works with all kinds of instruments in the hospital: a thermometer, a stethoscope and sometimes his guitar and ukulele.

In the recovery unit of UC San Diego Health, Salaysay helps patients manage pain after surgery. Along with medications, he offers tunes on request and sometimes sings. His repertoire ranges from folk songs in English and Spanish to Minuet in G Major and movie favorites like “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.”

Patients often smile or nod along. Salaysay even sees changes in their vital signs like lower heart rate and blood pressure, and some may request fewer painkillers.

“There’s often a cycle of worry, pain, anxiety in a hospital,” he said, “but you can help break that cycle with music.” Salaysay is a one-man band, but he’s not alone. Over the past two decades, live

performances and recorded music have flowed into hospitals and doctors' offices as research grows on how songs can help ease pain.

## **Scientists explore how music affects pain perception**

The healing power of song may sound intuitive given music's deep roots in human culture. But the science of whether and how music dulls acute and chronic pain — technically called music-induced analgesia — is just catching up.

No one suggests that a catchy song can fully eliminate serious pain. But several recent studies, including in the journals *Pain* and *Scientific Reports*, have suggested that listening to music can either reduce the perception of pain or enhance a person's ability to tolerate it.

What seems to matter most is that patients — or their families — choose the music selections themselves and listen intently, not just as background noise.

## **How music can affect pain levels**

"Pain is a really complex experience," said Adam Hanley, a psychologist at Florida State University. "It's created by a physical sensation, and by our thoughts about that sensation and emotional reaction to it."

Two people with the same condition or injury may feel vastly different levels of acute or chronic pain. Or the same person might experience pain differently from one day to the next.

Acute pain is felt when pain receptors in a specific part of the body — like a hand touching a hot stove — send signals to the brain, which processes the short-term pain. Chronic pain usually involves long-term structural or other changes to the brain, which heighten overall sensitivity to pain signals. Researchers are still investigating how this occurs.

"Pain is interpreted and translated by the brain," which may ratchet the signal up or down, said Dr. Gilbert Chandler, a specialist in chronic spinal pain at the Tallahassee Orthopedic Clinic.

Researchers know music can draw attention away from pain, lessening the sensation. But studies also suggest that listening to preferred music helps dull pain more than listening to podcasts.

"Music is a distractor. It draws your focus away from the pain. But it's doing more than that," said Caroline Palmer, a psychologist at McGill University who studies music and pain.

Scientists are still tracing the various neural pathways at work, said Palmer.

"We know that almost all of the brain becomes active when we engage in music," said Kate Richards Geller, a registered music therapist in Los Angeles. "That changes the perception and experience of pain — and the isolation and anxiety of pain."

## **Music genres and active listening**

The idea of using recorded music to lessen pain associated with dental surgery began in the late 19th century before local anesthetics were available. Today researchers are studying what conditions make music most effective.

Researchers at Erasmus University Rotterdam in the Netherlands conducted a study on 548 participants to see how listening to five genres of music — classical, rock, pop, urban and electronic

— extended their ability to withstand acute pain, as measured by exposure to very cold temperatures.

### **All music helped, but there was no single winning genre.**

“The more people listened to a favorite genre, the more they could endure pain,” said co-author Dr. Emy van der Valk Bouman. “A lot of people thought that classical music would help them more. Actually, we are finding more evidence that what's best is just the music you like.”

The exact reasons are still unclear, but it may be because familiar songs activate more memories and emotions, she said. The simple act of choosing is itself powerful, said Claire Howlin, director of the Music and Health Psychology Lab at Trinity College Dublin, who co-authored a study that suggested allowing patients to select songs improved their pain tolerance.

“It's one thing that people can have control over if they have a chronic condition — it gives them agency,” she said. Active, focused listening also seems to matter.

Hanley, the Florida State psychologist, co-authored a preliminary study suggesting daily attentive listening might reduce chronic pain.

“Music has a way of lighting up different parts of the brain,” he said, “so you're giving people this positive emotional bump that takes their mind away from the pain.”

### **It's a simple prescription with no side effects, some doctors now say.**

Cecily Gardner, a jazz singer in Culver City, California, said she used music to help get through a serious illness and has sung to friends battling pain.

“Music reduces stress, fosters community,” she said, “and just transports you to a better place.” \_\_\_\_  
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