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Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

## **Irish woman in \$135 million lotto win**

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**31 July, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Irish woman in \$135 million lotto win**

**BNE:** People often talk about “the luck of the Irish”, which refers to folks from the Emerald Isle being a tad luckier than ordinary souls. This proved true on July 30, when Dolores McNamara, from Limerick, scooped a mammoth \$135 million on the European Lottery in a winner-take-all jackpot. The mind-boggling bounty has left Ms. McNamara recovering from the shock of her sudden windfall and totally speechless. The jackpot had not been won since May and had been rolled over nine times, keeping hopeful ticket holders around Europe on tenterhooks. The winning amount is nearly double that of the previous record best.

Ms. McNamara had been enjoying a quiet drink in a bar when she checked her ticket. She had apparently just told a friend: “There’s little point in checking the ticket. I can’t even win an argument, let alone the lottery”. However, Lady Luck smiled on her seconds later and she went straight to the police, fearful that she might lose her newly landed fortune. A policeman told her he had no jurisdiction to look after the ticket and phoned her bank manager, who readily obliged by placing the ticket in a bank vault for safekeeping. Unfortunately, Monday is a national holiday in Ireland, so Dolores must wait until Tuesday before she can redeem the ticket and get her hands on her millions.

## **WARM-UPS**

**1. LUCK:** Are you a lucky or unlucky person? Write down three pieces of good luck and three pieces of bad luck that you have had in the past week or two. In pairs / groups, talk about what you wrote. Tell each other how good or bad you think the luck is. Repeat this activity by talking about how lucky you have been in your life.

**2. QUICK DEBATE:** Students A think everyone in life is born with equal amounts of luck. Students B think some people are naturally luckier than others. Change partners often.

**3. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Luck / Irish people / lotteries / windfalls / lottery numbers / being on tenterhooks / a quiet drink / winning arguments / banks / national holidays*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

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

**5. JACKPOT:** Do you buy lottery tickets? Have you ever hit the jackpot or won big? In pairs / groups, talk to each other about lotteries and winning. Do you indulge in any other forms of gambling?

**6. LIFE'S LOTTO:** People often say life is a lottery – you never know what's awaiting you, around the corner. In pairs / groups, talk speculate on the possible wonderful or terrible things that could suddenly happen to you (and change your life) in the following situations:

- a. Walking into a convenience store.
- b. Deciding to start studying English.
- c. Taking the airplane instead of the overnight train.
- d. Buying a new computer.
- e. Starting a new job.
- f. Taking the dog for a walk.
- g. Buying a lottery ticket.
- h. Telephoning your best friend.
- i. Checking the time.
- j. Other

Change partners and compare what you talked about.

## **BEFORE READING / LISTENING**

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. A lady from Ireland has scooped the jackpot in a lottery.      | T / F |
| b. Irish people are famous for having lots of luck.               | T / F |
| c. There were no other winning tickets for this prize.            | T / F |
| d. No one had won the jackpot for nineteen successive weeks.      | T / F |
| e. The winner is also famous for her ability to win arguments.    | T / F |
| f. The lady went to the police to ask them to protect the ticket. | T / F |
| g. Her bank manager vaulted the counter and fled with the ticket. | T / F |
| h. The lady must wait a month before she can redeem the ticket.   | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| a. folks          | supposedly       |
| b. tad            | won              |
| c. scooped        | cash in          |
| d. mind-boggling  | in suspense      |
| e. on tenterhooks | authority        |
| f. apparently     | people           |
| g. landed         | incomprehensible |
| h. jurisdiction   | safe             |
| i. vault          | won              |
| j. redeem         | little           |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                   |                              |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. folks from the Emerald         | mammoth \$135 million        |
| b. a tad                          | just told a friend           |
| c. scooped a                      | bounty                       |
| d. mind-boggling                  | around Europe on tenterhooks |
| e. keeping hopeful ticket holders | landed fortune               |
| f. She had apparently             | on her millions              |
| g. Lady Luck                      | Isle                         |
| h. she might lose her newly       | vault for safekeeping        |
| i. placing the ticket in a bank   | luckier than ordinary souls  |
| j. get her hands                  | smiled on her seconds later  |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words in the column on the right into the correct spaces.

### Irish woman in \$135 million lotto win

**BNE:** People often talk about “the luck of the Irish”, which \_\_\_\_\_ to folks from the Emerald Isle being a tad luckier than ordinary \_\_\_\_\_. This proved true on July 30, when Dolores McNamara, from Limerick, \_\_\_\_\_ a mammoth \$135 million on the European Lottery in a winner-take-all jackpot. The mind-boggling \_\_\_\_\_ has left Ms. McNamara recovering from the shock of her sudden \_\_\_\_\_ and totally speechless. The jackpot had not been won since May and had been \_\_\_\_\_ over nine times, keeping hopeful ticket holders around Europe on \_\_\_\_\_. The winning amount is nearly \_\_\_\_\_ that of the previous record best.

Ms. McNamara had been enjoying a \_\_\_\_\_ drink in a bar when she checked her ticket. She had apparently just told a friend: “There’s little \_\_\_\_\_ in checking the ticket. I can’t even win an argument, let \_\_\_\_\_ the lottery”. However, Lady Luck \_\_\_\_\_ on her seconds later and she went straight to the police, fearful that she might lose her newly \_\_\_\_\_ fortune. A policeman told her he had no jurisdiction to look after the ticket and phoned her bank manager, who readily \_\_\_\_\_ by placing the ticket in a bank vault for safekeeping. Unfortunately, Monday is a national holiday in Ireland, so Dolores must wait until Tuesday before she can \_\_\_\_\_ the ticket and get her \_\_\_\_\_ on her millions.

*bounty*  
*double*  
*scooped*  
*rolled*  
*refers*  
*tenterhooks*  
*windfall*  
*souls*  
*obliged*  
*alone*  
*smiled*  
*hands*  
*quiet*  
*redeem*  
*point*  
*landed*

## **AFTER READING / LISTENING**

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'bank'** and **'vault'**.

- 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 gap fill. 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. STUDENT "LOTTERY" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about lotteries and winning money.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| • refers      | • quiet        |
| • tad         | • alone        |
| • scooped     | • smiled       |
| • speechless  | • jurisdiction |
| • rolled      | • obliged      |
| • tenterhooks | • hands        |

## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What adjectives describe your feelings as you read the story?
- d. Do you think some people are luckier than others?
- e. How would you react in the seconds or minutes following news that you had won such a large amount of money?
- f. Have you ever received any kind of windfall?
- g. Have you ever been kept on tenterhooks about anything?
- h. How mind-boggling do you think having \$135 million would be?
- i. Have you ever been left totally speechless?
- j. Who's the luckiest person you know?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. Do you buy lottery tickets?
- d. Are you a gambler?
- e. Do you ever feel that life is a lottery?
- f. Are you good at winning arguments?
- g. What would you do if you got your hands on \$135 million?
- h. What do you think of lotteries?
- i. Will you go and buy a lottery ticket after this lesson?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

## **SPEAKING**

**GAMBLING:** Talk to your partner(s) about the following forms of gambling. Which do you think are dangerous? What are the dangers? Which have you tried? What was the attraction?

After you have finished, rank the forms with the most dangerous at the top.

FORMS	DANGERS	ATTRACTIONS
Lottery tickets		
Horse racing		
Bingo		
Pachinko		
Fruit / Slot machines		
Casinos		
Poker / Cards with friends		
Russian Roulette		

Change partners and explain what you discussed with your previous partner(s).



## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **Irish woman in \$135 million lotto win**

**BNE:** People often talk about “the luck of the Irish”, which \_\_\_\_\_ to folks from the Emerald Isle being a tad luckier than ordinary \_\_\_\_\_. This proved true on July 30, when Dolores McNamara, from Limerick, \_\_\_\_\_ a mammoth \$135 million on the European Lottery in a winner-take-all jackpot. The mind-boggling \_\_\_\_\_ has left Ms. McNamara recovering from the shock of her sudden \_\_\_\_\_ and totally \_\_\_\_\_. The jackpot had not been won since May and had been rolled over nine times, keeping hopeful ticket holders around Europe on \_\_\_\_\_. The winning amount is nearly double that of the previous record best.

Ms. McNamara had been enjoying a \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ in a bar when she checked her ticket. She had apparently just told a friend: “There’s little \_\_\_\_\_ in checking the ticket. I can’t even win an argument, let \_\_\_\_\_ the lottery”. However, \_\_\_\_\_ Luck smiled on her seconds later and she went straight to the police, fearful that she might lose her newly \_\_\_\_\_ fortune. A policeman told her he had no jurisdiction to look after the ticket and phoned her bank manager, who readily \_\_\_\_\_ by placing the ticket in a bank \_\_\_\_\_ for safekeeping. Unfortunately, Monday is a national holiday in Ireland, so Dolores must wait until Tuesday before she can \_\_\_\_\_ the ticket and get her hands on her \_\_\_\_\_.

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on the European Lottery. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. LOTTERY PROJECT:** Write a plan for a lottery project – a cause that you feel should benefit from the lottery millions. You have \$10 million to spend. How do you spend it? Describe your project to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

**4. DIARY / JOURNAL:** Imagine you have won \$135 million. Write the entry in your journal / diary about the day after your win. Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

a. T      b. T      c. T      d. F      e. F      f. T      g. F      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

a. folks	people
b. tad	little
c. scooped	won
d. mind-boggling	incomprehensible
e. on tenterhooks	in suspense
f. apparently	supposedly
g. landed	won
h. jurisdiction	authority
i. vault	safe
j. redeem	cash in

### PHRASE MATCH:

a. folks from the Emerald	Isle
b. a tad	luckier than ordinary souls
c. scooped a	mammoth \$135 million
d. mind-boggling	bounty
e. keeping hopeful ticket holders	around Europe on tenterhooks
f. She had apparently	just told a friend
g. Lady Luck	smiled on her seconds later
h. she might lose her newly	landed fortune
i. placing the ticket in a bank	vault for safekeeping
j. get her hands	on her millions

### GAP FILL:

#### Irish woman in \$135 million lotto win

**BNE:** People often talk about “the luck of the Irish”, which **refers** to folks from the Emerald Isle being a tad luckier than ordinary **souls**. This proved true on July 30, when Dolores McNamara, from Limerick, **scooped** a mammoth \$135 million on the European Lottery in a winner-take-all jackpot. The mind-boggling **bounty** has left Ms. McNamara recovering from the shock of her sudden **windfall** and totally speechless. The jackpot had not been won since May and had been **rolled** over nine times, keeping hopeful ticket holders around Europe on **tenterhooks**. The winning amount is nearly **double** that of the previous record best.

Ms. McNamara had been enjoying a **quiet** drink in a bar when she checked her ticket. She had apparently just told a friend: “There’s little **point** in checking the ticket. I can’t even win an argument, let **alone** the lottery”. However, Lady Luck **smiled** on her seconds later and she went straight to the police, fearful that she might lose her newly **landed** fortune. A policeman told her he had no jurisdiction to look after the ticket and phoned her bank manager, who readily **obliged** by placing the ticket in a bank vault for safekeeping. Unfortunately, Monday is a national holiday in Ireland, so Dolores must wait until Tuesday before she can **redeem** the ticket and get her **hands** on her millions.