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The Beatles sue EMI for \$50 million

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17 December, 2005

THE ARTICLE

The Beatles sue EMI for \$50 million

Ex-Beatles Sir Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr and relatives of the late band members, John Lennon and George Harrison, are suing their former record company EMI. They say EMI owes them more than \$54 million in unpaid royalties. Lawyers for the Beatles' own company, Apple Corp, are preparing for legal action in London and New York. They claim EMI has been hiding money from Apple Corp for many years. Two-year talks between Apple Corp and EMI have failed to settle the issue. Apple won the last court battle between the two in 1991, when it stopped EMI from selling a Beatles CD box set.

Both Apple Corp and EMI say they will win the court case. Apple Corp boss Neil Aspinall said he has tried his best to reach an out-of-court settlement with EMI and that going to court was his last resort: "We have tried to reach a settlement through good faith negotiations and regret that our efforts have been in vain," he said. He added that EMI has continually ignored its duty to report its financial accounts fairly. EMI totally rejects Aspinall's claims. An EMI spokeswoman told the Reuters news agency: "Sometimes there are differences of opinion, especially when the contracts are large and complex."

WARM-UPS

1. BEATLES SEARCH: Talk to as many other students as you can to find out what they know about The Beatles. Sit down with your partner(s) and share your information. Tell each other what you thought was interesting or surprising. Do you like The Beatles? Do you have any Beatles albums / CDs / iTunes...?

2. MOST IMPORTANT: Do you think The Beatles is the most important band in rock history? Look at the bands below and talk about how important they are. Do you have any of their music? What three bands or artists would you add to this list?

- The Beatles
- The Rolling Stones
- Nirvana
- U2
- Pearl Jam
- Queen
- The Doors
- Radiohead
- The Jimi Hendrix Experience
- Guns 'n' Roses

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

Relatives / John Lennon / George Harrison / EMI / record companies / money / CDs / court cases / good faith / negotiations / contracts / duties / Reuters / opinions

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

4. I'M A BEATLE: You are now a member of The Beatles. It is 1969. Talk with the other "Beatles members" about life as a rock and pop star. (If you don't want to be a Beatles member, choose another rock / pop star.) What are the best and worst bits? What are your plans for the weekend? What do you think of Michael Jackson? Who are your favorite bands and singers performing today?

5. BEATLES OPINIONS: Discuss these opinions with your partner(s).

- a. The Beatles are the greatest band ever.
- b. The Beatles sang about drugs. That's wrong.
- c. Many other bands and artists are better than The Beatles.
- d. People will be singing The Beatles' songs hundreds of years from now.
- e. If The Beatles hadn't broken up, they would have produced even greater music.
- f. I would like to have been a member of The Beatles in the 1960s.
- g. The Beatles is the world's most over-rated rock band.
- h. The Beatles changed modern culture a lot.

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

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- a. The Beatles are suing their ex-record company for unpaid royalties. T / F
- b. Lawyers say EMI hid cash from The Beatles. T / F
- c. The Beatles have a commercial arm called Apple Corp. T / F
- d. Apple Corp won a court battle against EMI in 1991. T / F
- e. Apple Corp had no interest whatsoever in settling out of court. T / F
- f. The Apple Corp boss said he would negotiate at a resort. T / F
- g. The Apple Corp boss said EMI's workers are vain. T / F
- h. EMI's spokeswoman said large contracts lead to differences of opinion. T / F

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

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| a. relatives | ex |
| b. late | get |
| c. former | resolve |
| d. claim | difficult |
| e. settle | say |
| f. reach | useless |
| g. resort | family members |
| h. in vain | dismisses |
| i. rejects | deceased |
| j. complex | choice |

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

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. relatives of the late | \$54 million in unpaid royalties |
| b. suing their former | an out-of-court settlement |
| c. EMI owes them more than | the issue |
| d. preparing for | record company EMI |
| e. failed to settle | financial accounts fairly |
| f. tried his best to reach | in vain |
| g. going to court was his last | band members |
| h. our efforts have been | of opinion |
| i. ignored its duty to report its | resort |
| j. Sometimes there are differences | legal action in London and New York |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

The Beatles sue EMI for \$50 million

Ex-Beatles Sir Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr and _____ of the late band members, John Lennon and George Harrison, are _____ their former record company EMI. They say EMI _____ them more than \$54 million in unpaid royalties. Lawyers for the Beatles' own company, Apple Corp, are preparing for _____ action in London and New York. They _____ EMI has been hiding money from Apple Corp for many years. Two-year _____ between Apple Corp and EMI have failed to _____ the issue. Apple won the last court _____ between the two in 1991, when it stopped EMI from selling a Beatles CD box set.

settle

owes

claim

relatives

battle

suing

legal

talks

Both Apple Corp and EMI say they will _____ the court case. Apple Corp boss Neil Aspinall said he has tried his best to _____ an out-of-court settlement with EMI and that going to court was his last _____: "We have tried to reach a settlement through _____ faith negotiations and regret that our efforts have been in _____," he said. He added that EMI has continually ignored its _____ to report its financial accounts _____. EMI totally rejects Aspinall's claims. An EMI spokeswoman told the Reuters news agency: "Sometimes there are differences of _____, especially when the contracts are large and complex."

fairly

resort

vain

opinion

win

good

reach

duty

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

The Beatles sue EMI for \$50 million

Ex-Beatles Sir Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr and _____ of the late band members, John Lennon and George Harrison, are _____ their former record company EMI. They say EMI owes them more than \$54 million in _____ royalties. Lawyers for the Beatles' own company, Apple Corp, are preparing for legal action in London and New York. They _____ EMI has been hiding money from Apple Corp for many years. Two-year talks between Apple Corp and EMI have failed to _____ the issue. Apple won the last court battle between the two in 1991, when it stopped EMI from _____ a Beatles CD box set.

Both Apple Corp and EMI say they will win the court _____. Apple Corp boss Neil Aspinall said he has tried his best to _____ an out-of-court settlement with EMI and that going to court was his last _____. "We have tried to reach a settlement through good _____ negotiations and regret that our efforts have been in _____," he said. He added that EMI has continually ignored its duty to report its financial accounts _____. EMI totally rejects Aspinall's claims. An EMI spokeswoman told the Reuters news agency: "Sometimes there are differences of opinion, especially when the contracts are large and _____."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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. STUDENT "BEATLES" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about The Beatles, the music industry and record companies.

- 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:

- | | |
|-------------|-----------|
| • late | • win |
| • owes | • resort |
| • preparing | • vain |
| • hiding | • duty |
| • failed | • totally |
| • battle | • complex |

DISCUSSION

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

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think of The Beatles?
- c. Why do you think the band is so famous?
- d. A famous London orchestra said The Beatles' music is as good as Beethoven's or Mozart's. What do you think about this?
- e. Do you have a favorite member of The Beatles?
- f. Who do you think is better, John Lennon or George W. Bush?
- g. Have you ever wanted to sue someone?
- h. Have you ever been in a court case?
- i. What things have you done in your life as a last resort?
- j. Have you ever put a lot of effort into doing something and then found it was all in vain?

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

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Do you think The Beatles will win its court battle against EMI?
- d. Why do you think Apple Corp is suing EMI in two different countries?
- e. What happens if EMI wins in New York but loses in London?
- f. How is it possible that two large companies could not settle this issue out of court?
- g. Who do you want to win the court cases and why?
- h. Do you think record companies always treat their artists fairly?
- i. Do you ever ignore your duties?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

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

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

MY TOP FIVE: In the table below, write the names of your top five all-time favorite bands or artists. State why you like them. How do they change your life? How have they contributed to the music industry? What is your favorite song from each artist and why?

FAVE BAND / ARTIST	WHY	MY LIFE	MUSIC INDUSTRY	FAVE SONG / TUNE

Tell your partner(s) about the information you put in the table. Comment on each other's choices.

Change partners and talk about what you heard from your earlier partners.

Was there an artist / band that was a class favorite?

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 Beatles. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. BEATLES SONG: Choose a Beatles song* and write an essay about it. Explain what you like about it. Write about the meaning of the lyrics. Show your essay to your classmates in the next lesson. Did anyone choose the same song?

4. THE GREATEST: Write an article for an international music magazine about who you think are the five most important bands / recording artists of all time. You can focus on international artists or those famous only in your own country. Give reasons for your choices. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Does everyone agree with your top five?

*Your favorite song from another artist / band is OK if you don't like The Beatles.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. relatives	family members
b. late	deceased
c. former	ex
d. claim	say
e. settle	resolve
f. reach	get
g. resort	choice
h. in vain	useless
i. rejects	dismisses
j. complex	difficult

PHRASE MATCH:

a. relatives of the late	band members
b. suing their former	record company EMI
c. EMI owes them more than	\$54 million in unpaid royalties
d. preparing for	legal action in London and New York
e. failed to settle	the issue
f. tried his best to reach	an out-of-court settlement
g. going to court was his last	resort
h. our efforts have been	in vain
i. ignored its duty to report its	financial accounts fairly
j. Sometimes there are differences	of opinion

GAP FILL:

The Beatles sue EMI for \$50 million

Ex-Beatles Sir Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr and **relatives** of the late band members, John Lennon and George Harrison, are **suing** their former record company EMI. They say EMI **owes** them more than \$54 million in unpaid royalties. Lawyers for the Beatles' own company, Apple Corp, are preparing for **legal** action in London and New York. They **claim** EMI has been hiding money from Apple Corp for many years. Two-year **talks** between Apple Corp and EMI have failed to **settle** the issue. Apple won the last court **battle** between the two in 1991, when it stopped EMI from selling a Beatles CD box set.

Both Apple Corp and EMI say they will **win** the court case. Apple Corp boss Neil Aspinall said he has tried his best to **reach** an out-of-court settlement with EMI and that going to court was his last **resort**: "We have tried to reach a settlement through **good** faith negotiations and regret that our efforts have been in **vain**," he said. He added that EMI has continually ignored its **duty** to report its financial accounts **fairly**. EMI totally rejects Aspinall's claims. An EMI spokeswoman told the Reuters news agency: "Sometimes there are differences of **opinion**, especially when the contracts are large and complex."