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## **Barbie beats Bratz in U.S. court case**

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## THE ARTICLE

Mattel, the makers of the famous Barbie dolls, has won a \$100 million court case against the Bratz doll company MGA. A jury in America settled the long-running dispute over who owned the intellectual copyright of the Bratz brand. Mattel said the court decision was a big victory for the company. However, the amount awarded in damages was a lot less than the \$1.8 billion dollars Mattel's lawyers wanted. CEO Robert Eckert made a statement describing the importance of the jury's decision: "Mattel has pursued this case first and foremost as a matter of principle. We have an obligation to defend ourselves against competitors who choose to engage in fraudulent activities against us," he said. The courts still need to decide if MGA can continue making the Bratz dolls.

Jurors had to decide whether Mattel, the world's largest toymaker, or MGA owned the rights to the Bratz brand. Mattel argued that their former worker Carter Bryant designed the Bratz dolls while he was its employee. Mr. Bryant worked for Mattel on two occasions, between 1995 and 1998 and again from 1999 to 2000. Bryant claimed he came up with the Bratz name and concept in the time between his two periods of employment with Mattel. The Bratz dolls have become bestsellers since their launch in 2001. They have taken a large slice of the doll market. MGA has widened its brand to include more than 40 characters. Analysts say the Bratz dolls make MGA around \$500 million a year in profit. Barbie's sales have slid over 15 per cent since Bratz arrived on the scene.

# WARM-UPS

**1. TOYS:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about toys. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share your findings.

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

*Barbie doll / dispute / intellectual copyright / damages / juries / principles / fraudulent / toymakers / former workers / concepts / bestsellers / slice of the market / sales*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. COMPETITION:** Is it always easy to choose between two competitors? With your partner(s), decide which of the products below you think are best. Write your reasons why. Change partners and share your ideas.

Products	The best	Why?
Barbie or Bratz		
Google or Yahoo		
Coke or Pepsi		
Nokia or iPhone		
PS3 or Xbox		
Firefox or Explorer		

**4. DOLLS:** Students A strongly believe children should no longer play with dolls in today's technology-rich world; Students B strongly believe dolls are better than technology for children. Change partners again and talk about your roles and conversations.

**5. NEW DOLL ON THE BLOCK:** With your partner(s), create the concept for the next big thing in dolls. Change partners and share your ideas. Vote on the best dolls.

- Name
- Concept
- Look
- Technology
- Special features
- Selling points
- Appeal
- Edge over competitors

**6. COPYRIGHT:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'copyright'. 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 makers of the Barbie and Bratz dolls fought each other in court. T / F
- b. At question was who owned the copyright to the Barbie doll. T / F
- c. Barbie's makers won a record \$1.8 billion in damages. T / F
- d. The court decided the company MGA could continue making Bratz dolls. T / F
- e. The maker of the Bratz dolls is the world's largest toy company. T / F
- f. The creator of the Bratz dolls used to work for Mattel, Barbie's maker. T / F
- g. Bratz dolls were launched over 40 years ago. T / F
- h. The Bratz dolls have dented the sales of Barbie dolls. T / F

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

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. makers     | a. argument     |
| 2. settled    | b. gone down    |
| 3. dispute    | c. duty         |
| 4. damages    | d. sorted out   |
| 5. obligation | e. ex-          |
| 6. whether    | f. producers    |
| 7. former     | g. times        |
| 8. occasions  | h. share        |
| 9. slice      | i. compensation |
| 10. slid      | j. if           |

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

- |                                    |                             |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. A jury in America settled the   | a. up with the Bratz name   |
| 2. intellectual                    | b. in damages               |
| 3. the amount awarded              | c. ourselves                |
| 4. first and                       | d. on the scene             |
| 5. We have an obligation to defend | e. long-running dispute     |
| 6. owned the rights                | f. over 15 per cent         |
| 7. Bryant claimed he came          | g. slice of the doll market |
| 8. They have taken a large         | h. foremost                 |
| 9. Barbie's sales have slid        | i. copyright                |
| 10. since Bratz arrived            | j. to the Bratz brand       |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Mattel, the makers of the \_\_\_\_\_ Barbie dolls, has won a \$100 million court case against the Bratz doll company MGA. A \_\_\_\_\_ in America settled the long-running \_\_\_\_\_ over who owned the intellectual copyright of the Bratz brand. Mattel said the court decision was a big \_\_\_\_\_ for the company. However, the amount awarded in damages was a lot \_\_\_\_\_ than the \$1.8 billion dollars Mattel's lawyers wanted. CEO Robert Eckert made a statement describing the importance of the jury's \_\_\_\_\_: "Mattel has pursued this case first and foremost as a matter of principle. We have an obligation to defend \_\_\_\_\_ against competitors who choose to engage in fraudulent activities against us," he said. The courts still need to decide if MGA can continue \_\_\_\_\_ the Bratz dolls.

*decision*

*jury*

*less*

*victory*

*ourselves*

*famous*

*making*

*dispute*

Jurors had to decide \_\_\_\_\_ Mattel, the world's largest toymaker, or MGA owned the \_\_\_\_\_ to the Bratz brand. Mattel argued that their \_\_\_\_\_ worker Carter Bryant designed the Bratz dolls while he was its employee. Mr. Bryant worked for Mattel on two \_\_\_\_\_, between 1995 and 1998 and again from 1999 to 2000. Bryant claimed he \_\_\_\_\_ up with the Bratz name and concept in the time between his two periods of employment with Mattel. The Bratz dolls have become bestsellers since their \_\_\_\_\_ in 2001. They have taken a large \_\_\_\_\_ of the doll market. MGA has widened its brand to include more than 40 characters. Analysts say the Bratz dolls make MGA around \$500 million a year in profit. Barbie's sales have \_\_\_\_\_ over 15 per cent since Bratz arrived on the scene.

*came*

*slid*

*rights*

*occasions*

*launch*

*whether*

*slice*

*former*

## **LISTENING:** Listen and fill in the spaces.

Mattel, the \_\_\_\_\_ Barbie dolls, has won a \$100 million court case against the Bratz doll company MGA. A jury in America settled the long-running \_\_\_\_\_ owned the intellectual copyright of the Bratz brand. Mattel said the court decision \_\_\_\_\_ for the company. However, the amount awarded in damages \_\_\_\_\_ the \$1.8 billion dollars Mattel's lawyers wanted. CEO Robert Eckert made a statement describing the importance of the jury's decision: "Mattel has pursued this case first and foremost as \_\_\_\_\_. We have an obligation \_\_\_\_\_ against competitors who choose to engage in fraudulent activities against us," he said. The courts \_\_\_\_\_ if MGA can continue making the Bratz dolls.

Jurors \_\_\_\_\_ Mattel, the world's largest toymaker, or MGA owned the rights to the Bratz brand. Mattel \_\_\_\_\_ former worker Carter Bryant designed the Bratz dolls while he was its employee. Mr. Bryant worked for Mattel \_\_\_\_\_, between 1995 and 1998 and again from 1999 to 2000. Bryant claimed he came up with the Bratz name and \_\_\_\_\_ between his two periods of employment with Mattel. The Bratz dolls have become bestsellers since their launch in 2001. They have taken \_\_\_\_\_ the doll market. MGA has widened its brand to include more than 40 characters. Analysts say the Bratz dolls make MGA around \$500 million \_\_\_\_\_. Barbie's sales have slid over 15 per cent since Bratz arrived \_\_\_\_\_.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

<b>court</b>	<b>decision</b>
--------------	-----------------

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• makers</li><li>• owned</li><li>• damages</li><li>• first</li><li>• engage</li><li>• decide</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• largest</li><li>• former</li><li>• occasions</li><li>• launch</li><li>• analysts</li><li>• scene</li></ul>
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# STUDENT DOLL SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about dolls in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



## **DOLLS DISCUSSION**

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

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'doll'?
- c) Do you think dolls are big business?
- d) Can any doll ever dislodge Barbie from the number one position?
- e) Do too many dolls have white skin and blonde hair?
- f) Why has Barbie led the market for so long?
- g) What dolls and other children's toys most popular in your country?
- h) Would you prefer your children to play with toys other than dolls?
- i) Do you think working on the Barbie or Bratz products would be interesting?
- j) Do you think MGA should be allowed to continue making Bratz dolls?

*Barbie beats Bratz in U.S. court case - 28th August, 2008*  
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## **DOLLS DISCUSSION**

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Why do you think dolls are so popular with children?
- c) Can boys play with dolls?
- d) What do toymakers need to consider when marketing their dolls?
- e) What do you know about Barbie and Bratz?
- f) Should the Jury automatically believe Carter Bryant and award the rights of Bratz to MGA?
- g) How have dolls changed over the years?
- h) Do you think there needs to be controls over the marketing and advertising of dolls to children?
- i) What new concept doll would you create for today's kids?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Mattel CEO Robert Eckert about Barbie?

*Barbie beats Bratz in U.S. court case - 28th August, 2008*  
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# LANGUAGE

Mattel, the makers of the famous Barbie dolls, has won a \$100 million court (1) \_\_\_\_ against the Bratz doll company MGA. A jury in America settled the long-running dispute (2) \_\_\_\_ who owned the intellectual copyright of the Bratz brand. Mattel said the court decision was a big victory for the company. However, the amount awarded (3) \_\_\_\_ damages was a lot less than the \$1.8 billion dollars Mattel's lawyers wanted. CEO Robert Eckert made a statement describing the importance of the jury's (4) \_\_\_\_: "Mattel has pursued this case first and foremost as a matter of principle. We have an obligation to (5) \_\_\_\_ ourselves against competitors who choose to engage (6) \_\_\_\_ fraudulent activities against us," he said. The courts still need to decide if MGA can continue making the Bratz dolls.

Jurors had to decide (7) \_\_\_\_ Mattel, the world's largest toymaker, or MGA owned the rights to the Bratz brand. Mattel argued that their former worker Carter Bryant designed the Bratz dolls while he was (8) \_\_\_\_ employee. Mr. Bryant worked for Mattel on two occasions, between 1995 and 1998 and again from 1999 to 2000. Bryant claimed he came (9) \_\_\_\_ with the Bratz name and concept in the time between his two periods of employment with Mattel. The Bratz dolls have become bestsellers since their launch in 2001. They have taken a large (10) \_\_\_\_ of the doll market. MGA has widened its brand to include more than 40 characters. (11) \_\_\_\_ say the Bratz dolls make MGA around \$500 million a year in profit. Barbie's sales have slid over 15 per cent since Bratz arrived on the (12) \_\_\_\_.

**Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.**

- |     |              |               |              |               |
|-----|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1.  | (a) case     | (b) casing    | (c) cased    | (d) cases     |
| 2.  | (a) with     | (b) on        | (c) over     | (d) by        |
| 3.  | (a) on       | (b) in        | (c) by       | (d) of        |
| 4.  | (a) decide   | (b) decided   | (c) deciding | (d) decision  |
| 5.  | (a) defence  | (b) defensive | (c) defend   | (d) defending |
| 6.  | (a) in       | (b) up        | (c) of       | (d) down      |
| 7.  | (a) wetter   | (b) weather   | (c) whither  | (d) whether   |
| 8.  | (a) in       | (b) its       | (c) for      | (d) his       |
| 9.  | (a) on       | (b) over      | (c) up       | (d) to        |
| 10. | (a) slice    | (b) carve     | (c) chop     | (d) cut up    |
| 11. | (a) Analyzer | (b) Analysts  | (c) Analysis | (d) Analyzes  |
| 12. | (a) scenery  | (b) screen    | (c) seen     | (d) scene     |



# 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 out more about dolls around the world. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. NEW DOLL:** Make a poster about a new doll that will be more successful than Barbie and Bratz. What are the key features and selling points? Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. BARBIE VERSUS BRATZ:** Write a magazine article about the rivalry between Barbie and Bratz. Include imaginary interviews with both dolls.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to Mattel CEO Robert Eckert. Ask him three questions about Barbie. Make three suggestions on what he should do to make Barbie an even bigger success. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

**6. DIARY / JOURNAL:** You are Barbie (or Ken). Write about one day in your life. How do your human owners treat you? Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

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

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. makers     | a. producers    |
| 2. settled    | b. sorted out   |
| 3. dispute    | c. argument     |
| 4. damages    | d. compensation |
| 5. obligation | e. duty         |
| 6. whether    | f. if           |
| 7. former     | g. ex-          |
| 8. occasions  | h. times        |
| 9. slice      | i. share        |
| 10. slid      | j. gone down    |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                    |                             |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. A jury in America settled the   | a. long-running dispute     |
| 2. intellectual                    | b. copyright                |
| 3. the amount awarded              | c. in damages               |
| 4. first and                       | d. foremost                 |
| 5. We have an obligation to defend | e. ourselves                |
| 6. owned the rights                | f. to the Bratz brand       |
| 7. Bryant claimed he came          | g. up with the Bratz name   |
| 8. They have taken a large         | h. slice of the doll market |
| 9. Barbie's sales have slid        | i. over 15 per cent         |
| 10. since Bratz arrived            | j. on the scene             |

## GAP FILL:

### Barbie beats Bratz in U.S. court case

Mattel, the makers of the **famous** Barbie dolls, has won a \$100 million court case against the Bratz doll company MGA. A **jury** in America settled the long-running **dispute** over who owned the intellectual copyright of the Bratz brand. Mattel said the court decision was a big **victory** for the company. However, the amount awarded in damages was a lot **less** than the \$1.8 billion dollars Mattel's lawyers wanted. CEO Robert Eckert made a statement describing the importance of the jury's **decision**: "Mattel has pursued this case first and foremost as a matter of principle. We have an obligation to defend **ourselves** against competitors who choose to engage in fraudulent activities against us," he said. The courts still need to decide if MGA can continue **making** the Bratz dolls.

Jurors had to decide **whether** Mattel, the world's largest toymaker, or MGA owned the **rights** to the Bratz brand. Mattel argued that their **former** worker Carter Bryant designed the Bratz dolls while he was its employee. Mr. Bryant worked for Mattel on two **occasions**, between 1995 and 1998 and again from 1999 to 2000. Bryant claimed he **came** up with the Bratz name and concept in the time between his two periods of employment with Mattel. The Bratz dolls have become bestsellers since their **launch** in 2001. They have taken a large **slice** of the doll market. MGA has widened its brand to include more than 40 characters. Analysts say the Bratz dolls make MGA around \$500 million a year in profit. Barbie's sales have **slid** over 15 per cent since Bratz arrived on the scene.

## LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - a    2 - c    3 - b    4 - d    5 - c    6 - a    7 - d    8 - b    9 - c    10 - a    11 - b    12 - d