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Level 5

U.S. city of Detroit goes bankrupt

21st July, 2013

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1307/130721-bankruptcy-5.html>

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Please try Level 4 (easier) and the 26-page Level 6 (harder).

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THE READING

From <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1307/130721-bankruptcy-5.html>

Detroit used to be a powerhouse of American industry. Yesterday, it went bust and filed for bankruptcy – the biggest U.S. city to do so. Its emergency financial manager said the city could no longer pay its bills, and was a huge \$20 billion in debt. He asked the court to help restructure city finances so it could continue to function. He named over 100,000 creditors, including major pension funds and 10,000 public workers. Detroit's pension system is underfunded by over \$3.5 billion. Many present and past police officers, firefighters and public service workers are now questioning their future.

Half a century ago, Detroit was a shining example of American business success. Its huge car industry gave it the nickname "Motor City". However, this former middle-class city has declined into uncared-for suburbs full of empty houses and high unemployment. The factories that generated its success have almost disappeared. The city said key services would continue, but street lights had been cut off. The city mayor said Detroit was not on a sustainable path. He said the city borrowed too much money and did not pay into pension funds or pay its bills. This led to its financial collapse.

Sources: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/07/19/detroit-files-thousands-pages-bankruptcy/2568393/>
<http://www.voanews.com/content/how-detroit-fell-into-bankruptcy/1705123.html>
<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/19/us/detroit-files-for-bankruptcy.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>

MATCHING

From <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1307/130721-bankruptcy-5.html>

PARAGRAPH ONE:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. a powerhouse of | a. funds |
| 2. filed for | b. city finances |
| 3. no longer pay | c. bankruptcy |
| 4. help restructure | d. questioning their future |
| 5. continue | e. its bills |
| 6. major pension | f. American industry |
| 7. underfunded | g. to function |
| 8. workers are now | h. by over \$3.5 billion |

PARAGRAPH TWO:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. a shining example of | a. generated its success |
| 2. the nickname | b. sustainable path |
| 3. uncared-for | c. had been cut off |
| 4. factories that | d. financial collapse |
| 5. key | e. American business success |
| 6. street lights | f. suburbs |
| 7. not on a | g. "Motor City" |
| 8. This led to its | h. services would continue |

LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1307/130721-bankruptcy-5.html>

Detroit used to (1) _____ American industry. Yesterday, it went (2) _____ bankruptcy – the biggest U.S. city to do so. Its emergency financial manager said the (3) _____ pay its bills, and was a huge \$20 billion in debt. He asked the court to help (4) _____ so it could continue to function. He named over 100,000 creditors, including major pension funds and 10,000 public workers. Detroit's pension system is (5) _____ \$3.5 billion. Many present and past police officers, firefighters and public service workers are now (6) _____.

Half a century ago, Detroit was (7) _____ American business success. Its huge car industry gave it the nickname "Motor City". However, this former middle-class city has (8) _____ suburbs full of empty houses and (9) _____. The factories that generated its success have almost disappeared. The city said key services would continue, but street (10) _____. The city mayor said Detroit was not on (11) _____. He said the city borrowed too much money and did not pay into pension funds or pay its bills. This led (12) _____.

BANKRUPTCY SURVEY

From <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1307/130721-bankruptcy-5.html>

Write five GOOD questions about bankruptcy 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.

WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student A: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

f)

g)

h)

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WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student B: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

f)

g)

h)

