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## **Level 5**

# **Rare stamp sells for \$9.5 million**

**30th June, 2014**

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1406/140630-stamps.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/1406/140630-stamps.html>



There is a new world record for the sale of a postage stamp. It is for the one-of-a-kind, 1856 British Guiana One-Cent Magenta. The auction house Sotheby's sold it in New York for \$9.48 million. It is the fourth time the stamp has broken the record. Sotheby's said the record would not be broken again, unless the same stamp came up for auction. A spokesman said: "That price will be hard to beat, and likely won't be exceeded unless the British Guiana itself comes up for sale again in the future." A former curator of stamps at the British Library said the sale was like buying the 'Mona Lisa'.

An anonymous buyer bought the stamp. It was last owned by an heir to the du Pont chemical fortune. He\* is currently in prison for killing an Olympic champion wrestler. A 12-year-old stamp collector first found the stamp in 1873. He sold it a few years later for about \$50 in today's money – a lot back then. It has since had a dozen owners, including the French government. The Sotheby's spokesman was amazed at the stamp's popularity. He said: "This is the most valuable item in the world by weight. It's just a tiny piece of paper." He was happy a collector bought it and not an investor.

\* Correction - Mr Du Pont died in 2010 - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_E.\\_du\\_Pont](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_E._du_Pont)

Sources: <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/rare-stamp-set-record-nyc-auction-24169833>  
<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2014/06/18/one-cent-magenta-stamp-sold-millions/10729109/>  
<http://money.cnn.com/2014/06/18/luxury/stamp-auction/>

# MATCHING

From <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1406/140630-stamps.html>

## PARAGRAPH ONE:

- |                               |                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. a new world record for the | a. kind                    |
| 2. one-of-a-                  | b. be exceeded             |
| 3. auction                    | c. fourth time             |
| 4. It is the                  | d. at the British Library  |
| 5. That price will be         | e. house                   |
| 6. ... and likely won't       | f. sale again              |
| 7. comes up for               | g. hard to beat            |
| 8. A former curator of stamps | h. sale of a postage stamp |

## PARAGRAPH TWO:

- |                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. An anonymous           | a. collector                |
| 2. an heir to the         | b. piece of paper           |
| 3. currently in           | c. du Pont chemical fortune |
| 4. stamp                  | d. back then                |
| 5. about \$50 in          | e. buyer                    |
| 6. a lot                  | f. in the world by weight   |
| 7. the most valuable item | g. today's money            |
| 8. It's just a tiny       | h. prison                   |

# LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1406/140630-stamps.html>

There is a new world record (1) \_\_\_\_\_ postage stamp. It is for (2) \_\_\_\_\_, 1856 British Guiana One-Cent Magenta. The auction house Sotheby's sold it in New York for \$9.48 million. It is the fourth time the stamp has (3) \_\_\_\_\_. Sotheby's said the record would not be broken again, unless the same stamp (4) \_\_\_\_\_. A spokesman said: "That price will be hard to beat, and likely won't be exceeded unless the British Guiana itself comes up for sale (5) \_\_\_\_\_." A former curator of stamps at the British Library said the sale (6) \_\_\_\_\_ 'Mona Lisa'.

An (7) \_\_\_\_\_ bought the stamp. It was last owned by an heir to the du Pont chemical fortune. He (8) \_\_\_\_\_ for killing an Olympic champion wrestler. A 12-year-old stamp collector first found the stamp in 1873. He sold it (9) \_\_\_\_\_ about \$50 in today's money – a lot back then. It (10) \_\_\_\_\_ dozen owners, including the French government. The Sotheby's spokesman was amazed at (11) \_\_\_\_\_. He said: "This is the most valuable item in the world by weight. It's (12) \_\_\_\_\_ paper." He was happy a collector bought it and not an investor.

# STAMPS SURVEY

From <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1406/140630-stamps.html>

Write five GOOD questions about stamps 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) \_\_\_\_\_

*Rare stamp sells for \$9.5 million – 30th June, 2014*  
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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) \_\_\_\_\_

