

Dog theft on the rise worldwide

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A disturbing new crime is emerging worldwide that should be of concern to dog owners. Criminal gangs are engaged in wide-scale dog theft. In the UK it has turned into a lucrative but illicit industry. A theft in the USA last week

became global news as the dog walker of pop singer Lady Gaga was shot in the chest as thieves stole her two pet bulldogs. The UK is experiencing a sharp rise in dog theft. Lockdowns due to coronavirus have led to a boom in pet sales as many people look for solace and companionship in animals. Sales of what are being dubbed "pandemic puppies" have skyrocketed. Unscrupulous criminals are now stealing dogs, often attacking their owners, and selling the canines for up to \$9,000.

The police warned dog owners to take extreme care online and in parks. People have been advised not to post pictures of their pets on social media. Police have also recommended people take their dogs for a walk with a friend and not leave dogs unattended in cars. The organisation DogLost said many people are buying dogs online without asking diligent background questions. A Change.org petition said the punishment for dog theft is the same as for a stolen smartphone. It said: "Dognapping has almost the same effect on a family as kidnapping, as pets are seen as family members. It is time the law reflected this in the sentencing of offenders."

Sources: [the guardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com) / [standard.com](https://www.standard.com) / [change.org](https://www.change.org)

Writing

People who steal dogs should spend a long time in prison. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

disturbing / concern / dog owners / lucrative / illicit / thieves / coronavirus / puppies / care / social media / walk / diligent / punishment / dognapping / family / offenders

True / False

- a) The article says dogs worldwide are becoming disturbed. T / F
- b) The article says dog theft is an illicit and lucrative business. T / F
- c) There has been a very big increase in dog theft in the UK. T / F
- d) People bought dogs during lockdown that were called pandemic puppies. T / F
- e) The police told dog owners not to take their dogs to the park. T / F
- f) The police told people to walk their dogs with a friend. T / F
- g) A petition said dognapping is a more serious crime than phone theft. T / F
- h) The petition wants punishments for dognapping to be changed. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| 1. disturbing | a. great |
| 2. lucrative | b. nicknamed |
| 3. solace | c. dogs |
| 4. dubbed | d. wrongdoers |
| 5. canines | e. profitable |
| 6. extreme | f. thorough |
| 7. post | g. worrying |
| 8. diligent | h. penalty |
| 9. punishment | i. comfort |
| 10. offenders | j. upload |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) How can people take greater care when walking their dogs?
- c) What do you think of dog pictures on social media?
- d) What background questions should you ask before buying a dog?
- e) What do you think of dognapping?
- f) How can owners get their dogs back?
- g) What advice do you have for dog owners?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the police?

Phrase Match

1. A disturbing new crime is
 2. Criminal gangs are engaged in
 3. a lucrative but
 4. people look for solace
 5. Sales of what are being dubbed
 6. The police warned dog owners to take
 7. leave dogs unattended
 8. background
 9. the punishment
 10. the sentencing
- a. "pandemic puppies"
 - b. illicit industry
 - c. of offenders
 - d. extreme care online
 - e. wide-scale dog theft
 - f. questions
 - g. emerging worldwide
 - h. for dog theft
 - i. and companionship
 - j. in cars

Discussion – Student B

- a) What do you think of dogs?
- b) How good are dogs as pets?
- c) What do you think of dog theft?
- d) What is your favourite dog?
- e) What are the good and bad things about dogs as pets?
- f) What do you think of the term 'pandemic puppies'?
- g) What can police do to catch the dog thieves?
- h) What do you know about the Lady Gaga story?

Spelling

1. A sntriduiqb new crime is emerging
2. rctiveaul but illicit
3. people look for alcsoe and companionship
4. being udbedb "pandemic puppies"
5. uusnsoprucul criminals
6. selling the cinsnea for up to \$9,000
7. take rxeeemte care
8. leave dogs ttednaneud
9. asking tniedgli background questions
10. A Change.org oeitptin
11. It is time the law leterfecd this
12. the sentencing of ofedrnfes

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. e	3. i	4. b	5. c
6. a	7. j	8. f	9. h	10. d

Role Play

Role A – Dogs

You think dogs are the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): fish, parrots or tortoises.

Role B – Fish

You think fish are the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): dogs, parrots or tortoises.

Role C – Parrots

You think parrots are the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): fish, dogs or tortoises.

Role D – Tortoises

You think tortoises are the best pets. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their pets. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): fish, parrots or dogs.

Speaking – Pets

Rank these with your partner. Put the best pets at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Dog
- Cat
- Rabbit
- Tortoise
- Fish
- Snake
- Parrot
- Iguana

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.