

## The London riots

**London** – *Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> August - lunchtime* - The capital was overnight once again under attack from a mob of rioters. Parliament has been recalled by the Prime Minister David Cameron, who himself cut short his holiday to fly home to deal with the situation. British newspapers today reported the police last night lost control of London's streets, as lawlessness spread to all parts of the capital. Huge swathes of London and three other major British cities woke up to the charred debris after the third night of rioting. The Metropolitan Police have promised 16,000 officers, an unprecedented amount, with all able-bodied officers on the streets of London tonight as they try to quell the unrest. So far more than 450 people have been arrested and 69 people have been charged. Tomorrow night's England football game at Wembley against Holland has this morning been called off.

The violence originally started in Tottenham following the police shooting dead Mark Duggan, a drug dealer. It quickly spread to other London suburbs including Hackney, Peckham, Bethnal Green, Woolwich, Ealing, Deptford, Camden, Kensington and Lewisham in London where serious amounts of violence occurred. The looters have coordinated their raids using their Blackberries and Twitter as the rage spread like wildfire. Yesterday's violence ignited in Hackney around 4pm when a mob of hooded youths began hurling missiles at police and setting fire to bins and cars. Masked rioters on BMX bicycles armed with batons also attacked a crowded London bus during the evening rush hour, chasing terrified commuters as they tried to escape. There were 20,800 emergency 999 calls made in one day, up 400%. London Fire Brigade had one of their busiest nights in history. Metropolitan police used armoured vehicles to push back the rioters in Lavender Hill and Clapham. In Croydon a woman leapt to safety from a building set alight. Parts of London have resembled the Blitz such as been the destruction of many buildings.

Businesses and livelihoods have gone up in flames, many shops ransacked by rioters. In Dalston and Hackney shopkeepers and their families fought back against looting thieves, forcing the youths to retreat. Other British cities saw riots also, including Birmingham, Liverpool, Nottingham and Bristol. The question is - why is all this happening?

**Category: London / Riots / Lawlessness**

**Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate**

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## EXERCISES

**1. The London riots:** Briefly, what three things do you know about the recent London riots? Go round the room swapping details.

**2. Dictation:** The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

**3. Reading:** The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

**4. Vocabulary:** Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

**5. The article:** Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?
- c) **What is the latest on this story?**

**6. The London riots:** Name five things you have learned from the article about the London riots. Then add five other things *you know* about the London riots. Write them below. Explain to your partner why you chose these. What is your conclusion?

Five things from the article	Five other things about the riots
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

**7. Let's think!** In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with **The London Riots**. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

**8. Let's roleplay 1: Radio London:** In pairs/groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *Radio London* studio. Today's interview is about: *The London Riots*.

1	A journalist	3	A local London businessman
2	A police officer	4	The British Prime Minister

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

The London Riots – 10<sup>th</sup> August 2011

**9. Let's roleplay 2:** *In pairs.* You are in a pub in London. Both of you meet at the bar, having ordered a drink. You are both on holiday, staying in different suburbs of London. Both of you witnessed the London riots in different parts of London. Get talking about what you saw. *5 minutes.*

**10. Let's do 'The Article Quiz':** Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

**Student A**

- 1) Name the British Prime Minister.
- 2) Name three London suburbs that were under attack.
- 3) How many people were arrested?
- 4) Where did the violence originally start?
- 5) How did the looters coordinate their attacks?

**Student B**

- 1) What is a 999 call?
- 2) How many emergency calls were received?
- 3) What other British cities saw rioting?
- 4) What was the Blitz?
- 5) Why did the violence originally start?

**11. Let's think!** Think of five reasons for the riots. Then add five possible solutions. Write them below. Explain to your partner why you chose these. What is your conclusion?

Five reasons for the riots	Five solutions
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

**12. The London riots:** In pairs, discuss the following about the London riots and their aftermath etc...

1	The locations of the riots	6	The rioters/looters/arsonists
2	The police response	7	Being safe in London now
3	The economic impact	8	The loss of tourists
4	Living in London	9	The Olympics 2012 - safety
5	The damage to businesses	10	The British government's response

**The teacher** will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

**13. Let's write an e-mail:** Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **The London riots.** Your e-mail can be read out in class.

**14. Sentence starters:** Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

a) The London riots \_\_\_\_\_

b) The rioters \_\_\_\_\_

## DISCUSSION

### Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) What has gone wrong in Britain to create this situation?
- 3) Will local businesses damaged by the rioters be compensated? How?
- 4) Will attitudes in Britain now rapidly change?
- 5) What needs to happen next in Britain?
- 6) Do local communities need more protection?
- 7) Should tougher techniques be used by the police?
- 8) Are these reactions a legacy of 12 years of Labour rule?
- 9) Are the poor rising up against the rich?
- 10) Will these criminals be charged and punished?

### Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you read?
- 2) Do the riots put you off visiting London?
- 3) How do you think young poor people in London feel about the riots?
- 4) London is a multicultural city. Can it survive the riots?
- 5) What three bits of advice would you give the British Prime Minister?
- 6) What three bits of advice would you give a rioter/looter/arsonist?
- 7) What three bits of advice would you give a local shopkeeper whose shop was razed to the ground?
- 8) Are the riots a reaction to life today in Britain?
- 9) Why did the riots happen? Explain.
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

## SPEAKING

Let's discuss! The London riots

*Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1*

Consider the following points to discuss:

<b>20 things about the London riots.</b>
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The teacher can moderate the session.

## GAP FILL: READING:

*Put the words into the gaps in the text.*

### The London riots

**London** – Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> August - lunchtime - The capital was overnight once again under attack from a (1)\_\_\_ of (2)\_\_\_\_. Parliament has been recalled by the Prime Minister David Cameron, who himself cut short his holiday to fly home to deal with the situation. British newspapers today reported the police last night lost control of London’s streets, as (3)\_\_\_\_\_ spread to all parts of the capital. Huge (4)\_\_\_\_\_ of London and three other major British cities woke up to the (5)\_\_\_\_\_ (6)\_\_\_\_\_ after the third night of rioting. The Metropolitan Police have promised 16,000 officers, an unprecedented amount, with all able-bodied officers on the streets of London tonight as they try to (7)\_\_\_\_\_ the (8)\_\_\_\_\_. So far more that 450 people have been arrested and 69 people have been charged. Tomorrow night’s England football game at Wembley against Holland has this morning been called off.

*quell*

*swathes*

*unrest*

*rioters*

*debris*

*lawlessness*

*charred*

*mob*

The violence originally started in Tottenham following the police shooting dead Mark Duggan, a drug dealer. It quickly spread to other London suburbs including Hackney, Peckham, Bethnal Green, Woolwich, Ealing, Deptford, Camden, Kensington and Lewisham in London where serious amounts of (1)\_\_\_\_\_ occurred. The looters have coordinated their raids using their Blackberries and Twitter as the rage spread like (2)\_\_\_\_\_. Yesterday’s violence ignited in Hackney around 4pm when a mob of (3)\_\_\_\_\_ youths began hurling (4)\_\_\_\_\_ at police and setting fire to bins and cars. (5)\_\_\_\_\_ rioters on BMX bicycles armed with (6)\_\_\_\_\_ also attacked a crowded London bus during the evening rush hour, chasing (7)\_\_\_\_\_ commuters as they tried to escape. There were 20,800 emergency 999 calls made in one day, up 400%. London Fire Brigade had one of their busiest nights in history. Metropolitan police used armoured vehicles to push back the rioters in Lavender Hill and Clapham. In Croydon a woman leapt to safety from a building set alight. Parts of London have resembled the (8)\_\_\_\_\_ such as been the destruction of many buildings.

*missiles*

*wildfire*

*masked*

*hooded*

*batons*

*terrified*

*Blitz*

*violence*

## GAP FILL: LISTENING

*Listen and fill in the spaces.*

### The London riots

**London** – Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> August - lunchtime - The capital was overnight once again under attack from \_\_\_\_\_. Parliament has been recalled by the Prime Minister David Cameron, who himself \_\_\_\_\_ to fly home to deal with the situation. British newspapers today reported the police last night lost control of London's streets, as lawlessness spread to all parts of the capital. Huge swathes of London and three major \_\_\_\_\_ woke up to the charred debris after the \_\_\_\_\_. The Metropolitan Police have promised 16,000 officers, an \_\_\_\_\_ of police, with all able-bodied officers on the streets of London tonight as \_\_\_\_\_ unrest. So far more than 450 people have been arrested and 69 people have been charged. Tomorrow night's England football game at Wembley against Holland has this morning been called off.

The violence \_\_\_\_\_ in Tottenham following the police shooting dead Mark Duggan, a drug dealer. It quickly spread to other London suburbs including Hackney, Peckham, Bethnal Green, Woolwich, Ealing, Deptford, Camden, Kensington and Lewisham in London where serious amounts of violence occurred. The looters have \_\_\_\_\_ using their Blackberries and Twitter as the rage spread like wildfire. Yesterday's violence ignited in Hackney around 4pm when a mob of hooded youths began hurling missiles at police and \_\_\_\_\_ and cars. Masked rioters on BMX bicycles armed with batons also attacked \_\_\_\_\_ during the evening rush hour, chasing terrified commuters as they tried to escape. There were 20,800 emergency 999 calls made in one day, up 400%. London Fire Brigade had one of their busiest nights in history. Metropolitan police used \_\_\_\_\_ push back the rioters in Lavender Hill and Clapham. In Croydon a woman leapt to safety from a building set alight. Parts of London have resembled the Blitz such as been \_\_\_\_\_ of many buildings.

## GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

### The London riots

**London** – Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> August - lunchtime - The capital was overnight once again under attack from (1)\_\_\_ mob of rioters. Parliament has been recalled by the Prime Minister David Cameron, (2)\_\_\_ himself cut short (3)\_\_\_ holiday to fly home to deal with the situation. British newspapers today reported (4)\_\_\_ police last night lost control of London's streets, as lawlessness spread to all parts of the capital. Huge swathes of London and three other major British cities woke up to the charred debris after the third night of rioting. The Metropolitan Police have promised 16,000 officers, an unprecedented amount (5)\_\_\_ police, with all able-bodied officers on the streets of London tonight (6)\_\_\_ they try to quell the unrest. (7)\_\_\_ far more than 450 people have been arrested (8)\_\_\_ 69 people have been charged. Tomorrow night's England football game at Wembley against Holland has this morning been called off.

**of**  
**the**  
**his**  
**who**  
**and**  
**so**  
**as**  
**a**

The violence originally started in Tottenham following the police shooting dead Mark Duggan, a drug dealer. It quickly spread to other London suburbs including Hackney, Peckham, Bethnal Green, Woolwich, Ealing, Deptford, Camden, Kensington and Lewisham in London (1)\_\_\_ serious amounts of violence occurred. The looters have coordinated their raids using (2)\_\_\_ Blackberries and Twitter as the rage spread like wildfire. Yesterday's violence ignited in Hackney around 4pm (3)\_\_\_ a mob of hooded youths began hurling missiles at police and setting fire to bins and cars. Masked rioters on BMX bicycles armed (4)\_\_\_ batons also attacked a crowded London bus during the evening rush hour, chasing terrified commuters as (5)\_\_\_ tried to escape. There were 20,800 emergency 999 calls made in one day, up 400%. London Fire Brigade had one of their busiest nights in history. Metropolitan police used armoured vehicles to push back the rioters in Lavender Hill and Clapham. In Croydon a woman leapt to safety (6)\_\_\_ a building set alight. Parts of London have resembled the Blitz (7)\_\_\_ has been the destruction of (8)\_\_\_ buildings.

**when**  
**from**  
**where**  
**with**  
**they**  
**their**  
**many**  
**such**

## SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	lawlessness	11	coordinated
2	rioters	12	serious
3	wildfire	13	violence
4	missiles	14	situation
5	bicycles	15	unprecedented
6	vehicles	16	mob
7	livelihoods	17	originally
8	debris	18	suburbs
9	swathes	19	London
10	recalled	20	quickly

### LINKS

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-14460554>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-14449675>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-14436499>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-14459127>

<http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/europe/08/09/uk.riots/index.html>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2023874/LONDON-RIOTS-David-Cameron-returns-home-police-face-gangs-petrol-bombs.html>

### ANSWERS

GAP FILL: The London riots: **London** – Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> August - lunchtime - The capital was overnight once again under attack from a **mob** of **rioters**. Parliament has been recalled by the Prime Minister David Cameron, who himself cut short his holiday to fly home to deal with the situation. British newspapers today reported the police last night lost control of London's streets, as **lawlessness** spread to all parts of the capital. Huge **swathes** of London and three other major British cities woke up to the **charred debris** after the third night of rioting. The Metropolitan Police have promised 16,000 officers, an unprecedented amount, with all able-bodied officers on the streets of London tonight as they try to **quell** the **unrest**. So far more than 450 people have been arrested and 69 people have been charged. Tomorrow night's England football game at Wembley against Holland has this morning been called off.

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