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## Dog sucked into street cleaner's brushes

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# THE ARTICLE

A New York man watched in terror on Saturday as a street-sweeping truck sucked up and killed his pet dog. "It happened so fast," said owner Robert Machin, who was photographed holding nothing but the dog's lead. He was taking his pet terrier Ginger for a walk in his Bronx neighbourhood when the tragedy struck. The terrier was consumed by the bristles of the street cleaner's spinning brushes. Machin sobbed: "It spun me around, and as it spun me around, I caught a last glimpse of her." He added: "I was devastated...I was completely dumbfounded and shocked. I mean, I just witnessed my dog sucked up." Machin said the loss was like a family member dying. "My children are all grown up," he said. "The dogs are my babies... my family."

Witnesses of the accident said the Department of Sanitation vehicle was speeding. Machin himself said he had to chase the vehicle for a few blocks to get the driver to stop. When the truck came to a halt, it was obvious that there was no hope for Ginger. She had been crushed to death. Department of Sanitation officials called the death "a rare and unfortunate accident". They reminded all pet owners to take extra care of their pets. "[We] offer condolences to the family...It is important for all New Yorkers to remember to maintain the safety of their animals while walking city streets," the department said. Machin is not satisfied with the apology. He is planning to hire a lawyer and take the department to court to sue for damages. Machin's other terrier luckily escaped the same fate.

# WARM-UPS

**1. DOGS:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about dogs. 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.

*terror / pet dog / neighbourhood / tragedy strikes / being dumbfounded / babies / witnesses / speeding / no hope / crushed / accidents / condolences / sue for damages*

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

**3. RARE ACCIDENTS:** How often do you have an accident? With your partner(s), discuss on what possible accidents could happen in these situations. Write your ideas in the table. Change partners and share your ideas. Who had the craziest ideas?

| Situation            | Possible accidents |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Studying English     |                    |
| Cleaning your teeth  |                    |
| Watching a movie     |                    |
| Using a mobile phone |                    |
| Buying a pineapple   |                    |
| Thinking about life  |                    |
| Your situation _____ |                    |

**4. PETS** Rank these pets: 10 = perfect in every way; 1 = a total nightmare in every way. Share, explain and discuss your rankings with your class.

\_\_\_\_\_ dog  
\_\_\_\_\_ tarantula  
\_\_\_\_\_ hamster  
\_\_\_\_\_ goldfish

\_\_\_\_\_ tiger  
\_\_\_\_\_ tortoise  
\_\_\_\_\_ parrot  
\_\_\_\_\_ elephant

**5. HEADLINE PREDICTION:** With your partner(s), use the words in the "Chat" activity above to predict what the news article will be about. Once you have your story, change partners and share them. Who was closest to the real story?

**6. TRAGEDY:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'tragedy'. 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. A pet died a horrible death while being taken for a walk.              | T / F |
| b. The dog disappeared into a street-cleaning truck.                      | T / F |
| c. The dog's owner found that his dog was dumb.                           | T / F |
| d. The dog's owner has just had a baby.                                   | T / F |
| e. The street-cleaning truck was driving at a normal speed.               | T / F |
| f. The truck driver said there was a lot of hope that the dog would live. | T / F |
| g. The city street cleaning department offered the pet owner a new dog.   | T / F |
| h. The pet owner wants to sue the street-cleaning department.             | T / F |

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

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. terror      | a. sight      |
| 2. struck      | b. destiny    |
| 3. sobbed      | c. clear      |
| 4. glimpse     | d. happened   |
| 5. dumbfounded | e. sympathy   |
| 6. witnesses   | f. stop       |
| 7. halt        | g. horror     |
| 8. obvious     | h. speechless |
| 9. condolences | i. onlookers  |
| 10. fate       | j. cried      |

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

- |                           |                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. A New York man watched | a. the dog's lead |
| 2. It happened            | b. damages        |
| 3. holding nothing but    | c. in terror      |
| 4. It spun                | d. a few blocks   |
| 5. I caught a last        | e. so fast        |
| 6. chase the vehicle for  | f. accident       |
| 7. She had been crushed   | g. to the family  |
| 8. a rare and unfortunate | h. me around      |
| 9. offer condolences      | i. glimpse of her |
| 10. sue for               | j. to death       |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

A New York man watched in terror on Saturday as a street-sweeping truck \_\_\_\_\_ up and killed his pet dog. "It happened so fast," said owner Robert Machin, who was photographed holding \_\_\_\_\_ but the dog's lead. He was \_\_\_\_\_ his pet terrier Ginger for a walk in his Bronx neighbourhood when the tragedy \_\_\_\_\_. The terrier was \_\_\_\_\_ by the bristles of the street cleaner's spinning brushes. Machin sobbed: "It spun me around, and as it spun me around, I caught a last \_\_\_\_\_ of her." He added: "I was devastated...I was completely dumbfounded and \_\_\_\_\_. I mean, I just witnessed my dog sucked up." Machin said the loss was like a family member dying. "My children are all \_\_\_\_\_ up," he said. "The dogs are my babies... my family."

*consumed*

*nothing*

*grown*

*struck*

*sucked*

*shocked*

*glimpse*

*taking*

Witnesses of the \_\_\_\_\_ said the Department of Sanitation vehicle was speeding. Machin himself said he had to \_\_\_\_\_ the vehicle for a few blocks to get the driver to stop. When the truck came to a halt, it was \_\_\_\_\_ that there was no hope for Ginger. She had been crushed to death. Department of Sanitation officials called the death "a \_\_\_\_\_ and unfortunate accident". They reminded all pet owners to take \_\_\_\_\_ care of their pets. "[We] offer \_\_\_\_\_ to the family...It is important for all New Yorkers to remember to maintain the safety of their animals while walking city streets," the department said. Machin is not satisfied with the \_\_\_\_\_. He is planning to hire a lawyer and take the department to court to sue for \_\_\_\_\_. Machin's other terrier luckily escaped the same fate.

*obvious*

*damages*

*condolences*

*chase*

*extra*

*accident*

*apology*

*rare*

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

A New York man \_\_\_\_\_ on Saturday as a street-sweeping truck sucked up and killed his pet dog. "It \_\_\_\_\_," said owner Robert Machin, who was photographed \_\_\_\_\_ the dog's lead. He was taking his pet terrier Ginger for a walk in his Bronx neighbourhood when the \_\_\_\_\_. The terrier was \_\_\_\_\_ the bristles of the street cleaner's spinning brushes. Machin sobbed: "It spun me around, and as it spun me around, I caught \_\_\_\_\_ her." He added: "I was devastated...I was completely dumbfounded and shocked. I mean, I just witnessed my dog \_\_\_\_\_. " Machin said the loss was like a family member dying. "My children \_\_\_\_\_," he said. "The dogs are my babies... my family."

Witnesses \_\_\_\_\_ said the Department of Sanitation vehicle was speeding. Machin himself said \_\_\_\_\_ the vehicle for a few blocks to get the driver to stop. When the truck \_\_\_\_\_, it was obvious that there \_\_\_\_\_ Ginger. She had been crushed to death. Department of Sanitation officials called the death "a rare and unfortunate accident". They reminded all pet owners to \_\_\_\_\_ of their pets. "[We] offer condolences to the family...It is important for all New Yorkers to remember \_\_\_\_\_ safety of their animals while walking city streets," the department said. Machin is not satisfied with the apology. He is planning to \_\_\_\_\_ and take the department to court to \_\_\_\_\_. Machin's other terrier luckily escaped the same fate.

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

| pet | dog |
|-----|-----|
|     |     |

- 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>• watched</li><li>• fast</li><li>• nothing</li><li>• consumed</li><li>• glimpse</li><li>• loss</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• speeding</li><li>• hope</li><li>• rare</li><li>• offer</li><li>• satisfied</li><li>• sue</li></ul> |
|--|--|

# STUDENT PET SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about pets 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<br>_____ | STUDENT 2<br>_____ | STUDENT 3<br>_____ |
|------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 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.



# 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 term 'terror'?
- c) What are your feelings after you read this story?
- d) Have you ever witnessed such a tragedy?
- e) Do you think anyone was at fault for this accident?
- f) Have you ever been devastated and dumbfounded?
- g) Do you think city streets should be more dog friendly?
- h) What would you do to make Robert Machin feel better?
- i) Do you think dogs should be allowed on city streets?
- j) What three adjectives would you use to describe this article?

*Dog sucked into street cleaner's brushes - 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2008*  
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# DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think the driver should be punished for speeding?
- c) What do you think Robert Machin said to the truck driver?
- d) Have you ever had a rare and unfortunate accident?
- e) Do you think Robert Machin should take the sanitation department to court?
- f) How would you decide this case in court if you were the judge?
- g) Do you think dog owners take enough care of their pets in the streets and in parks?
- h) When was the last time you were not satisfied with an apology?
- i) What questions would you like to ask Robert Machin?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

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# LANGUAGE

A New York man watched in (1) \_\_\_\_\_ on Saturday as a street-sweeping truck sucked up and killed his pet dog. "It happened (2) \_\_\_\_\_ fast," said owner Robert Machin, who was photographed holding nothing but the dog's lead. He was taking his pet terrier Ginger (3) \_\_\_\_\_ a walk in his Bronx neighbourhood when the tragedy struck. The terrier was consumed by the bristles of the street cleaner's (4) \_\_\_\_\_ brushes. Machin sobbed: "It spun me around, and as it spun me around, I caught a last (5) \_\_\_\_\_ of her." He added: "I was devastated...I was completely dumbfounded and shocked. I mean, I just witnessed my dog sucked up." Machin said the loss was like a family member (6) \_\_\_\_\_. "My children are all grown up," he said. "The dogs are my babies... my family."

Witnesses (7) \_\_\_\_\_ the accident said the Department of Sanitation vehicle was speeding. Machin himself said he had to chase the vehicle for a few blocks to get the driver to stop. When the truck came (8) \_\_\_\_\_ a halt, it was obvious that there was no hope for Ginger. She had been crushed to death. Department of Sanitation officials called the death "a rare and unfortunate accident". They (9) \_\_\_\_\_ all pet owners to take extra care of their pets. "[We] (10) \_\_\_\_\_ condolences to the family...It is important for all New Yorkers to remember to maintain the safety of their animals while (11) \_\_\_\_\_ city streets," the department said. Machin is not satisfied with the apology. He is planning to hire a lawyer and take the department to court to (12) \_\_\_\_\_ for damages. Machin's other terrier luckily escaped the same fate.

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

- |     |                |               |              |               |
|-----|----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1.  | (a) terrorist  | (b) terrorism | (c) terrors  | (d) terror    |
| 2.  | (a) to         | (b) so        | (c) for      | (d) such      |
| 3.  | (a) for        | (b) by        | (c) with     | (d) in        |
| 4.  | (a) spins      | (b) spin      | (c) spinning | (d) spun      |
| 5.  | (a) glimpsed   | (b) glimpses  | (c) glimpse  | (d) glimpsing |
| 6.  | (a) death      | (b) dying     | (c) dead     | (d) die       |
| 7.  | (a) of         | (b) for       | (c) by       | (d) with      |
| 8.  | (a) by         | (b) on        | (c) in       | (d) to        |
| 9.  | (a) remembered | (b) reminded  | (c) remanded | (d) remade    |
| 10. | (a) buy        | (b) take      | (c) request  | (d) offer     |
| 11. | (a) walk       | (b) walks     | (c) walking  | (d) walked    |
| 12. | (a) sue        | (b) rue       | (c) due      | (d) cue       |

## WRITING:

Write about pets for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

[illegible]

# 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 different the rules for walking dogs in different countries. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. DOGS:** Make a poster about different kinds of dogs and how they can help their owners. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. COURT CASE:** Write a magazine article about the court case between Robert Machin and the New York Sanitation Department. Include imaginary interviews with Mr Machin and city officials. Include the judge's decision and the reasons (s)he gave for it.

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 the New York Sanitation Department. Ask them three questions about the death of Robert Machin's dog. Give them three pieces of advice on what they should do to help him get over his loss. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

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

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. terror      | a. horror     |
| 2. struck      | b. happened   |
| 3. sobbed      | c. cried      |
| 4. glimpse     | d. sight      |
| 5. dumbfounded | e. speechless |
| 6. witnesses   | f. onlookers  |
| 7. halt        | g. stop       |
| 8. obvious     | h. clear      |
| 9. condolences | i. sympathy   |
| 10. fate       | j. destiny    |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                           |                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. A New York man watched | a. in terror      |
| 2. It happened            | b. so fast        |
| 3. holding nothing but    | c. the dog's lead |
| 4. It spun                | d. me around      |
| 5. I caught a last        | e. glimpse of her |
| 6. chase the vehicle for  | f. a few blocks   |
| 7. She had been crushed   | g. to death       |
| 8. a rare and unfortunate | h. accident       |
| 9. offer condolences      | i. to the family  |
| 10. sue for               | j. damages        |

## GAP FILL:

### Dog sucked into street cleaner's brushes

A New York man watched in terror on Saturday as a street-sweeping truck **sucked** up and killed his pet dog. "It happened so fast," said owner Robert Machin, who was photographed holding **nothing** but the dog's lead. He was **taking** his pet terrier Ginger for a walk in his Bronx neighbourhood when the tragedy **struck**. The terrier was **consumed** by the bristles of the street cleaner's spinning brushes. Machin sobbed: "It spun me around, and as it spun me around, I caught a last **glimpse** of her." He added: "I was devastated...I was completely dumbfounded and **shocked**. I mean, I just witnessed my dog sucked up." Machin said the loss was like a family member dying. "My children are all **grown** up," he said. "The dogs are my babies... my family."

Witnesses of the **accident** said the Department of Sanitation vehicle was speeding. Machin himself said he had to **chase** the vehicle for a few blocks to get the driver to stop. When the truck came to a halt, it was **obvious** that there was no hope for Ginger. She had been crushed to death. Department of Sanitation officials called the death "a **rare** and unfortunate accident". They reminded all pet owners to take **extra** care of their pets. "[We] offer **condolences** to the family...It is important for all New Yorkers to remember to maintain the safety of their animals while walking city streets," the department said. Machin is not satisfied with the **apology**. He is planning to hire a lawyer and take the department to court to sue for **damages**. Machin's other terrier luckily escaped the same fate.

## LANGUAGE WORK

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