France displays the Grand Condé diamond

LEVEL B2


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I. WARM-UP

1. What famous museum or castle would you like to visit?
2. Have you ever seen a gemstone or jewel on display?
3. Why do some objects need strong security in museums?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

heist
a planned theft, usually of valuable objects

exhibition
a public show of objects in a museum or gallery

inventory
a written list of items owned by a person or place

bequeath
to leave something to someone in a will

recover
to get back something that was lost or stolen

conceal
to hide something so people cannot see it

identifiable
possible to recognise as a specific, unique object

insure
to protect something with insurance in case it is lost or damaged

III. READING

A rare pink diamond known as the Grand Condé is being shown in France for the first time since it was stolen in 1926. The nine-carat, pear-shaped gem was taken in an overnight heist at the Château de Chantilly and later concealed in a hollowed-out apple. It was recovered weeks later when a hotel maid bit the fruit.

The diamond, one of the few royal jewels to survive the French Revolution, is on exhibition at the Condé Museum at Chantilly until 3 January. Museum director Mathieu Deldicque said the apple story sounded unlikely but was widely reported in newspapers at the time.

He declined to say how much the gem is insured for, but noted that study has made the stone uniquely identifiable. The show also includes archive material about its history and theft. The gem's exact origin is unknown.

It appeared in a 1740 inventory of Louis Henri de Bourbon, Prince of Condé, later passed to Queen Marie-Amélie, and was bequeathed by Prince Henri of Orléans to the Institut de France, which owns the château 50km north of Paris. Naturally occurring pink diamonds have fetched up to $71.2m at auction.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **BBC News***: "Rare pink diamond goes on display in France 100...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where is the Grand Condé currently on exhibition?
2. How was the diamond hidden after the 1926 heist?
3. Who is the museum director mentioned in the story?
4. What makes the diamond uniquely identifiable, according to the museum?
5. Who bequeathed the diamond to the Institut de France?

V. DISCUSSION

1. What security steps should museums take for rare jewels?
2. Does a dramatic backstory make an exhibition more attractive? Why?
3. Should museums reveal insurance values for famous objects?
4. Which detail of this story will visitors remember most, and why?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Future perfect continuous

We use will have been + verb-ing to show an action in progress up to a specific future point. Signals: by + future time; for + a period; since + a starting point.

"By 3 January, visitors **will have been lining up** *for weeks."*

"By 3 January, the museum **will have been showing** *the gem for weeks."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete with the future perfect continuous form of the verb.

1. By the final day, tourists (come) ___ to Chantilly for weeks. _____
2. By the closing day, staff (monitor) ___ the gem for weeks. _____
3. By the show's end, curators (explain) ___ its history for weeks. _____
4. By 3 January, security (check) ___ bags since opening day. _____
5. By 3 January, guides (tell) ___ the apple story for weeks. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 10 minutes vocabulary, 12–15 minutes reading and comprehension, 8–10 minutes grammar, 12–15 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach place names (Chantilly, Paris) and titles (Prince, Queen), and check students understand carats and auction.
- Reading: Set a first skim for who, where, when; then scan for how it was hidden and how it was recovered. Discussion: remind students to refer to specific facts from the text.
- Differentiation: stronger students summarise the timeline in three sentences; others match events to dates before answering questions.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Elicit concrete steps first, then compare which protect people vs objects.
2. Ask for examples of famous items with stories, and press for reasons.
3. Poll the room, pair up opponents to exchange arguments with evidence.
4. Have students quote one fact from the text to support their choice.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Writing: Write a 90-word museum label for the Grand Condé that visitors will read at the case.

Presentation: In pairs, present a 1-minute plan for securing a jewel display at a historic château.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Future perfect continuous

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where is the Grand Condé currently on exhibition?
   At the Condé Museum at the Château de Chantilly.
2. How was the diamond hidden after the 1926 heist?
   In a hollowed-out apple.
3. Who is the museum director mentioned in the story?
   Mathieu Deldicque.
4. What makes the diamond uniquely identifiable, according to the museum?
   Study of the stone's properties has made it uniquely identifiable.
5. Who bequeathed the diamond to the Institut de France?
   Prince Henri of Orléans.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: We use will have been + verb-ing to show an action in progress up to a specific future point. Signals: by + future time; for + a period; since + a starting point. (Examples constructed.)

"By 3 January, visitors **will have been lining up** *for weeks."*

"By 3 January, the museum **will have been showing** *the gem for weeks."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete with the future perfect continuous form of the verb.

1. By the final day, tourists ___ to Chantilly for weeks.
   will have been coming
2. By the closing day, staff ___ the gem for weeks.
   will have been monitoring
3. By the show's end, curators ___ its history for weeks. **will have been explaining**
4. By 3 January, security ___ bags since opening day.
   will have been checking
5. By 3 January, guides ___ the apple story for weeks.
   will have been telling