

BBC Learning English

6 Minute English

Gold vending machine



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NB: This is not an accurate word-for-word transcript

Dima: Hello and welcome to this edition of 6 Minute English with me, Dima Kostenko

Kate: and me, Kate Colin.

Dima: Kate will be our language guide for today.
Today we'll hear a fascinating report about a new vending machine that's unlike any other. But first - Kate, how would you describe what a vending machine is?

Kate: *Responds + short dialogue to introduce synonyms (slot machine, dispenser)
-- soft drinks-snacks-newspapers-transport tickets-Mars bars...*

Dima: Well Kate, if you're only using vending machines to buy things like chocolate bars, you are in for a surprise! As Steve Rosenberg, the BBC's correspondent in Berlin has discovered, a German company is planning to install some very different dispensers at stations, airports and shopping centres. Would you like to hear more?

Kate: Well, hearing all these phrases from you - 'very different' and 'unlike any other' - I must say I'm a bit intrigued.

Dima: You won't be intrigued for too much longer because in a moment we'll hear from Steve Rosenberg to find out what those machine will be selling. I'll say just one thing: it's something really valuable.

Kate: OK, let's listen, and as you are listening, try to find out what it is. Also, listen out for these words and phrases. 'On the go goodies', meaning small things that we buy and consume without stopping - like chocolate bars, crisps and other snacks, for example. And - 'precious', which means very expensive and valuable.

Dima: Here's Steve Rosenberg:

Clip 1

I'm standing next to a vending machine at a Berlin railway station. It offers a typical selection of on the go goodies. There are fizzy drinks and crisps, chewing gum... But very soon machines like this one could be selling something far more precious than a packet of peanuts. As well as chocolate bars you'll be able to buy gold bars.

Dima: So Kate, what is it that the new vending machines will be selling?

Kate: Steve says it isn't going to be 'on the go goodies'. Not chewing gum, not packets of peanuts. It will be the precious metal gold! Well, sounds interesting, but I am not quite sure I understand... Why would anyone want to buy a gold bar from a slot machine?

Dima: Well apparently, with the global financial crisis more and more people decide that they can no longer rely upon stocks and shares the way they used to.

Kate: 'Stocks and shares' - that's a useful expression, often heard among business people. It means part of the ownership of a company which people can buy as an investment.

Dima: Indeed, they can. But in reality many start turning to other types of investment, which they consider safer - like buying precious metals. And with this new slot machine, buying gold simply can't be easier! The price will be adjusted daily,

and in the next part Steve Rosenberg quotes some prices at current rates. And here comes your challenge for this week: what currency unit is mentioned? Is it

- a) euro
- b) dollar, or
- c) pound?

Kate, which of these three currencies would *you* expect to hear in a report about gold, recorded in Germany by a reporter of a British broadcaster?

Kate: *Responds*

Dima: We'll check your guess later, but first, what's your language point for the second part of the report Kate?

Kate: It's the expression 'to keep a close eye on', meaning to watch closely. Steve says 'built-in video cameras will be keeping an especially close eye on all the customers', so his word of warning is, watch out how you behave when you use them:

Clip 2

The machine will dispense a gram of gold for about 40 dollars and a 10 gram bar - for just under 350 dollars. But one word of warning. If you put in your money and nothing comes out, don't start banging your fist on this treasure chest - built-in video cameras will be keeping an especially close eye on all the customers.

Dima: That was our correspondent Steve Rosenberg at a railway station in Berlin. Now, before we talk about the answer to this week's question, do you mind going through some of today's vocabulary again Kate?

Kate: *Responds.* We began by talking about **vending machines** - that is machines from which small items such as packaged food or drinks can be bought by inserting money. Because cash is inserted through a slot, they are also known colloquially as **slot machines**. And another synonym is **dispensers**. We then mentioned the phrase **on the go goodies** meaning small things that we buy and

consume without stopping - like chocolate bars, crisps and other snacks, for example. And then, the word **precious**, which means very expensive and valuable. We talked briefly about **stocks and shares**, which means part of the ownership of a company which people can buy as an investment. And finally, the expression **to keep a close eye on**, meaning to watch very closely.

Dima: Thanks Kate. Finally, back to our question. Which currency was used in the report to talk about the price of gold?

Kate: *Responds (the choice was euro, dollar and pound and I said... which was correct/wrong...)*

Dima: *Responds.* I'm afraid that's all we have time for today. Until next week.

Both: Goodbye!