

NEWS LESSON

A Dinosaur Sold for $47 Million

BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Have you ever been to a museum with dinosaur skeletons?
2. Who should own something very old that is found in the ground?
3. Would you pay a lot of money for something nobody else has?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**skeleton**	☐	A	all the people in a town or country
2	**competed**	☐	B	a feeling of fear that something bad may happen
3	**related**	☐	C	the person something belongs to
4	**private**	☐	D	all the bones of a body together
5	**owner**	☐	E	tried to win something against other people
6	**separate**	☐	F	connected in the same family or group
7	**worry**	☐	G	different and not the same
8	**public**	☐	H	belonging to one person, not to everyone

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

A rare skeleton called Jodi was sold at auction in New York. Scientists are worried about who bought it.

1 In 2019, a woman called Jodi Pierson was looking at the ground on her own land in Montana, in the United States, when she found some bones. They turned out to belong to a dinosaur that died about 67 million years ago.

2 Last week, that skeleton was sold at an auction house in New York. It is named "Jodi", after the person who found it. Six people competed for it, by phone and online, for twelve minutes. The final price was $47.3 million. The auction house had expected somewhere between $6 million and $9 million.

3 Jodi is a Nanotyrannus, a meat-eating dinosaur related to Tyrannosaurus rex but much smaller. The skeleton is about six metres long and has roughly 191 pieces of fossil bone. For a long time some scientists thought animals like this were young T. rex. The auction house says Nanotyrannus is now accepted as a separate kind of dinosaur, with more than 150 differences in its bones. Only three good Nanotyrannus skeletons are known to science.

4 The land was Pierson's own, which is why she was allowed to sell what she found. In the United States, fossils discovered on private land belong to the owner of that land. She will not receive the full $47.3 million, because fees and costs are taken out of an auction price before the seller is paid.

5 So why are scientists unhappy? Nobody knows who bought it. The buyer has not been named.

6 Thomas Holtz, a dinosaur specialist at the University of Maryland, pointed out that some American museums are closing because they cannot afford to stay open, and that the money they need is a tenth of what Jodi cost. He also said that digging up, cleaning and building a skeleton like this probably costs about a million dollars at most.

7 His bigger worry is access. If the new owner gives Jodi to a museum, the public can see it and scientists can study it for generations. If it stands in a rich person's house, nobody else can measure the bones or scan them. In that case, he said, it is almost as though the skeleton had been left in the ground.

8 Linda Ivany, a professor at Syracuse University, made a simpler point. These fossils, she said, should stay somewhere that children can be amazed by them.

Sources: The Guardian, Rare Nanotyrannus skeleton sells for $47.3m at New York auction. Picture: .

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. Jodi Pierson found the bones on land she owned. T F NG
2. The skeleton sold for about the price the auction house expected. T F NG
3. The name of the buyer has not been made public. T F NG
4. The buyer intends to lend the skeleton to a museum. T F NG
5. Jodi Pierson received the full $47.3 million. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

accepted	afford	discovered	donation	fees	generations	scan

1. Many families cannot _____ to buy a dinosaur skeleton.
2. Most scientists have now _____ the new idea as true.
3. The seller does not get the whole price, because _____ and costs are taken out first.
4. A museum can let scientists study a skeleton for many _____ .
5. A farmer _____ some old bones while she was digging in her field.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. They _____ out to belong to a dinosaur that died about 67 million years ago. (TURN)
2. Last week, that skeleton _____ at an auction house in New York. (SELL)
3. The auction house _____ somewhere between $6 million and $9 million. (EXPECT)
4. For a long time some scientists _____ animals like this were young T. rex. (THINK)
5. Thomas Holtz _____ that digging up a skeleton like this costs about a million dollars at most. (SAY)

7 Language focus: prepositions

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Many verbs and adjectives need one small word after them. Learn the pair together, for example related to.

about after against by for into to

1. Six people competed _____ the skeleton for twelve minutes.
2. Nanotyrannus is related _____ Tyrannosaurus rex but is much smaller.
3. The skeleton is named _____ the woman who found it.
4. Nobody knows anything _____ the buyer.
5. Children can be amazed _____ fossils in a museum.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Is it right that the person who finds a fossil can sell it?
2. Should museums be given rare objects instead of rich buyers?
3. What would you do with Jodi if you had bought it?

9 Role-play: a skeleton for the museum

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the museum director

Your museum is short of money. You want the new owner to lend the skeleton to the museum for a few years. Explain why the public and scientists need to see it. Ask for a promise.

Student B · the buyer

You've just bought the skeleton for $47 million. You'd like to keep it at home, but you might lend it. Ask what the museum can offer you. You can say yes, no, or yes with a condition.

Useful phrases

We'd love to show it to the public.

I paid a lot of money for it, and it's mine.

Scientists can't study it if it's in your house.

What would the museum offer me?

I'd lend it for two years, but only if you put my name on it.

Let's agree on a deal we're both happy with.

Afterwards, tell the class: did the buyer agree to lend the skeleton, and was that fair?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 D · 2 E · 3 F · 4 H · 5 C · 6 G · 7 B · 8 A

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 T · 4 NG · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 afford · 2 accepted · 3 fees · 4 generations · 5 discovered

6 Verb forms

1 turned · 2 was sold · 3 had expected · 4 thought · 5 said

7 Language focus

1 for · 2 to · 3 after · 4 about · 5 by

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