

## What is it worth?

Items from the Titanic have been sold at auction in the US. They fetched much more than originally expected.

- 1 Have you ever sold or bought anything on 'eBay', or at an auction? If so, tell your partner about your experience.
- 2 Complete each sentence by guessing the figures. Check your answers by scanning paragraphs 1 and 2 of the article.
  - 1 A gold pocket watch found on the *Titanic*, owned by an Irish immigrant, was sold at auction for:
    - (a) \$8,000
    - (b) \$24,000
    - (c) \$44,000
  - 2 The blue and white dress worn by Judy Garland in the film *The Wizard of Oz* was sold for:
    - (a) \$66,000
    - (b) \$166,000
    - (c) \$266,000
  - 3 The original print of the famous photograph of two lovers kissing in Paris, by Robert Doisneau, was sold for:
    - (a) €1,550
    - (b) €15,000
    - (c) €155,000

## Going....going.....gone!

How much would you pay for a watch? A dress? A photograph? The answer is: "it depends ....". If the watch was found on the Titanic ...., if the dress was worn by Judy Garland ...., or if the photograph is world famous. A gold pocket watch, owned by an Irish immigrant, was sold for over \$24,000 at a US auction last month. This was three times its estimated value. The watch stopped on the day the owner was rescued. A menu postcard from the famous ship, which sunk in 1912, was sold for over \$44,000.

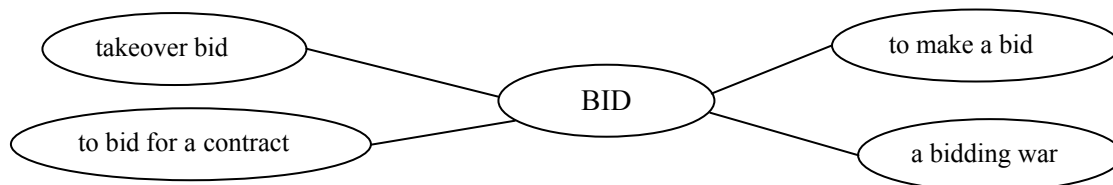
The dress, made famous by Judy Garland in the film 'The Wizard of Oz', was sold for \$266,000 at an auction in London. It was expected to sell for \$66,000. The photograph 'Kiss by the Hotel de Ville' by Robert Doisneau became a poster icon around the world. The woman in the photograph sold her original print for more than 10 times the expected value - 155,000 Euros.

Of course, items do not always sell for more than their estimated value. Singer George Michael bought his Range Rover in 1991 for £50,000 and has just sold it for £11,600 at a charity auction. Nowadays, you do not have to go to an auctioneers like Christie's in London to sell your treasures. Internet auction site 'eBay' has just announced a rise in profits of 28%. Their growth has been helped by the success of their online payment service, PayPal, and the company is keen to expand into new markets like China.

If you are a film or music collector, watch out for forthcoming auctions of items from Marilyn Monroe and Marlon Brando ... or a rare letter from 1969, significant in the break up of the Beatles. However, before you start bidding, you may wish to check that your bank balance is healthy! Going.... going..... gone!

3 Read the whole article. Are you surprised at the final sale prices of the items mentioned?

4 Check that you understand the following expressions. Make sentences with some of them.



5 Play the 'Auction game'. Work in groups. Each group has \$100,000. Decide on the maximum amount you will bid for the following items. The teacher will auction each item in turn. All bidding starts at \$10,000. Good luck!

Marilyn Monroe's personal phone book

Marlon Brando's outfit from the film 'Superman'

A letter signed by three of the Beatles from 1969

One of Elton John's hats (charity auction)