

I've Been Scammed!



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Introduction

What is a scam?

Do you know of any scams in your country?

How to avoid scams?

Reading

Derek is talking about his visit to a very famous city in Asia.

“I can’t say where it is in case I get into some trouble,” he says.

“But it was in this city that I encountered the worst scam of my life.”

What on earth happened?

Derek looks a little sheepish and shakes his head.

“It’s so embarrassing,” he says. “But I suppose I should tell you to warn others.”

He takes a deep breath and begins.

“I was walking along the main shopping street of the city. It is very well-known and there are literally hundreds of people on the street. It’s a very interesting place actually.”

And then?

“So I was walking along the street and there were all these people selling things,” he says. “They have small toys and souvenirs in their hands and they come up to you offering them for sale.

I wasn’t interested in any of their things. It all looked like cheap rubbish to me.”

The scam, Derek, get to the point.

“Yeah, so I was walking along and then I was approached by these two very beautiful girls. They asked me where I was from and what my name was. They were really friendly.

I am not used to such attention so I continued talking to them.

Then one of them asked if I wanted to join them for coffee. They both seemed so nice. Plus, they were both very pretty, so I said yes.”

Derek runs a hand through his hair.

“I should have known something was wrong when we went to the coffee shop,” he says. “It wasn’t a very nice place. Kind of dirty and cheap-looking.

But we sat down and this guy brought over three cups of coffee. It was terrible coffee too!

We drank the coffee, talked for a while then the girls said they had to go. They got up and left. I went to the counter and asked for the check. It was very expensive! In American money over \$200!”

That is crazy. What did you do?

“I argued with the guy and he just shook his head. So I went to leave. Then this other guy appeared out of nowhere. He could

speak English and kept on saying 'police, police'. I didn't want any trouble, so I paid by credit card. Each cup of coffee cost nearly \$70!"

What did you do?

"I left the shop. And then I called my friend. He told me I had just been scammed. He said it is a very popular trick on this street. I felt so stupid."

Did you call the police?

"My friend said it would be a waste of time," says Derek. "It happens so often that the police can't do anything about it. Or won't."

So a valuable lesson learned then, Derek?

"Oh for sure," he says. "But I actually count myself lucky. I heard about one guy who fell for the same trick and was cheated out of five grand! Can you imagine paying that for a cup of joe?"

Reading Comprehension Questions

Where does Derek's story take place?

Why is he reluctant to say the name of the city?

How does Derek feel as he begins to tell the story?

What kind of people did Derek meet on the famous shopping street?

Who are the two people that start talking to Derek? Why does he like talking to them?

Where did one of them invite Derek?

Describe the coffee shop.

What did Derek think of the coffee?

What did the two girls do after they drank the coffee?

What happened when Derek asked for the check? How much was it?

How did Derek react?

What did he do in the end?

What did Derek's friend say about it?

Why does Derek say he feels lucky at the end of the story?

Essential Vocabulary

Asia	encountered
scam	what on earth happened?
sheepish	shakes his head
embarrassing	to warn others
takes a deep breath	very well-known
literally	actually
souvenirs	cheap rubbish
get to the point	approached
I am not used to	attention
cheap-looking	counter
argued	appeared out of nowhere
credit card	trick
a waste of time	a valuable lesson
count myself lucky	grand
cup of joe	

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Notebook—*a small book with pages of blank paper that students use to make notes when studying.*

“I left my notebook at home so I was unable to make any notes in my English class.”

The Perfect Trick

Get into small groups of three or four students.

You are going to devise the perfect scam as a team. Every one of your group will play a part and trick a person into handing over a large amount of money.

Create a plan and write down each step.

Then make a presentation in front of the class.

Discussion Questions

What do you think of Derek's story?

Why doesn't Derek say the name of the city do you think? What is he concerned about?

Why is Derek so embarrassed?

Do you think Derek is stupid?

Derek talks about calling the police. Why does he use the phrase 'Or won't'? What does he mean by this do you think?

Are the police involved in some popular scams do you think?

Do you know of any scams in your city? Talk about it in the class.

Do you know of any online scams? What are they?

What is an email scam? How does it work?

Who falls for scams more often — men or women? Why do you think this?

What kind of people think of these scams? Why do they do it?

What kind of people fall for these scams? Why do they fall for it?

Writing

Imagine you are Derek in the article.

You want to write a warning on Trip Advisor. This is a very popular website to help people choose good hotels and give recommendations.

But people can also give warnings about tricks and scams.

As Derek, write a warning message to outline clearly the coffee shop scam.

Credits

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