



# Verdicts

Real Court Cases  
to Argue and Resolve

Four Sample Cases  
with the Verdicts

and the vocabulary worksheets for these cases,  
the answers to the four vocabulary worksheets,  
and a one-page sample of the vocabulary list

## 4 ❁ The Flying Flower Pot

*Vocabulary*

to attend    convention    half-hearted    mangement    persistent  
 damage    after all    to challenge    to argue    off the hook

*Match*

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 _____ She has a persistent         | a. but we won after all.               |
| 2 _____ The total cost of the damage | b. cough; it won't stop.               |
| 3 _____ Their lawyer argued          | c. is to be not liable or responsible. |
| 4 _____ We were challenged           | d. attended the concert.               |
| 5 _____ Her half-hearted attempt     | e. was two thousand dollars.           |
| 6 _____ I got some new ideas         | f. that the management was liable.     |
| 7 _____ To be "off the hook"         | g. resulted in a big loss.             |
| 8 _____ A lot of people              | h. at the convention.                  |

*Fill In*

1. She would not stop asking that question; she was \_\_\_\_\_.
2. He made a very weak attempt; it was \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ included broken furniture and a broken window.
4. People from everywhere came to see and hear about the new products at the \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ was over ten thousand.
5. Another way of expressing the idiom " \_\_\_\_\_ " is "anyway."
6. Our lawyer is going to \_\_\_\_\_ that the \_\_\_\_\_ was responsible.
7. She accepted his \_\_\_\_\_, and finally defeated him.
8. The judge will not hear the case; we're \_\_\_\_\_!

*Answers on page 102*

## 4 ❁ The Flying Flower Pot (Minnesota)



Once in a while, a convention can get wild. People attending may feel free to drink a lot and do things that they would not do at home. This happened for three or four days at a hotel in Minneapolis, and since the convention was a big one, there was big trouble.

For example, someone brought a mule into the hotel lobby one day. Someone fired a gun into the ceiling. Someone took an alligator to the fourth floor. Property was damaged on the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, eighth, tenth, and eleventh floors. The hotel management tried to control people's behavior, but they did not try hard enough. After all, they wanted to make money and keep all of those paying guests. The staff made half-hearted efforts to control the guests, but there was a persistent pattern of bad behavior that was not challenged.

One day during the convention week, Marilyn Conlon was walking on the sidewalk in front of the hotel. She was not part of the convention. She was just on her way to work. Suddenly a flower pot came flying out of a high window of the hotel, and when Marilyn looked up, it struck her in the eye. The manager of the hotel rushed out to help her, but she later learned that she had lost sight in one eye.

Of course, Marilyn sued the hotel for damages, but the hotel argued that it was not responsible for the guests and their actions. However, no one knew who threw the pot. There were hundreds of possibilities.

Was the hotel off the hook?

*Verdict on page 93*

## 7 ❁ The Severed Foot

*Vocabulary*

mechanism    dangerous    to get into    trespassing    to sever  
to endanger    barrier    to sue    damages    to prevent

*Match*

- |                                    |                                |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 ____ A machine can be called     | a. is a barrier.               |
| 2 ____ "No trespassing" means      | b. in a dangerous situation.   |
| 3 ____ A fence                     | c. are endangered species.     |
| 4 ____ "To prevent" means          | d. do not enter this property. |
| 5 ____ A person could be hurt      | e. a mechanism.                |
| 6 ____ "To sever"                  | f. to not allow or to stop.    |
| 7 ____ The family sued the company | g. to get into the property.   |
| 8 ____ It was very easy            | h. is to cut off.              |
| 9 ____ Some wild animals           | i. for damages.                |

*Fill In*

- Nothing will \_\_\_\_\_ this from happening.
- A \_\_\_\_\_ can slow or stop something.
- They knew how to \_\_\_\_\_ the property.
- To \_\_\_\_\_ is to put someone in a dangerous situation.
- The suit asked for over a million dollars in \_\_\_\_\_ .
- The \_\_\_\_\_ should not have been on the property.
- The turntable was a dangerous \_\_\_\_\_ .
- He \_\_\_\_\_ his ties with his family, and they never saw him again.

*Answers on page 102*

## 7 ❁ The Severed Foot

(Nebraska)



The Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad had a turntable in the little town of Palmer, Nebraska. A turntable was a huge machine used to turn the train's engine around, so it would point in the correct direction to go back to where it came from. The mechanism that operated the turntable was powerful and was operated only by trained employees.

Four-year-old Jimmy Crane lived in the neighborhood of the turntable. He and other kids would often go there to play after the place was closed. The company knew that kids played there on its property, so it put up "No Trespassing" signs. But it did not put up a fence or other barriers to prevent kids from getting near the dangerous machinery.

One evening when the company was closed, two of Jimmy's friends were able to start the turntable moving. Jimmy jumped on at the same time, but he slipped. His foot got caught in the turntable and the mechanism severed the foot at the ankle. Jimmy lived, but now he had just one foot.

Jimmy's family sued the railroad company. They said that C, B, & Q should have used high fences and even a guard to prevent children from getting into the property and endangering themselves.

The company said that it did not owe anything to people who were trespassing. Furthermore, they said, the turntable was an essential part of the railroad service, a public good. Their business was not just frivolous; it was serving the public and was essential to the economy of the area.

Did the railroad have to pay damages, even though Jimmy was trespassing?

*Verdict on page 94*

*The verdicts are given after these four sample cases..*

## 13 \* The Unlucky Poodle

*Vocabulary*

fond of      devotion      severely      heartbroken      to suffer  
 distress      to witness      endangered      to threaten      disturbing

*Match*

- |          |                                     |  |
|----------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1 _____  | Devotion is the act of              | a. and was very upset.                         |
| 2 _____  | She felt threatened                 | b. suffering, he died.                         |
| 3 _____  | The heartbroken woman               | c. endangered species like the rhinoceros.     |
| 4 _____  | We hear a lot these days about      | d. cried for days.                             |
| 5 _____  | S.O.S. is a                         | e. the witness suffered great mental distress. |
| 6 _____  | Witness can refer to                | f. loving very deeply.                         |
| 7 _____  | After several days of painful       | g. can be dangerous.                           |
| 8 _____  | A severe storm                      | h. a person or the act of seeing something.    |
| 9 _____  | The incident was so disturbing that | i. signal of distress.                         |
| 10 _____ | To be fond of something             | j. is to like it a lot.                        |

*Fill In*

- The robber \_\_\_\_\_ to kill her.
- Because of the \_\_\_\_\_ pain he could not sleep, and the savage attack \_\_\_\_\_ for weeks.
- My grandmother is extremely \_\_\_\_\_ her cats.
- She felt \_\_\_\_\_ because the animal was huge.
- Her \_\_\_\_\_ to her dear friend was endless.
- The whole experience was very \_\_\_\_\_ – even painful.
- Several people \_\_\_\_\_ the attack.
- The poor animal did not \_\_\_\_\_ very long; it died in minutes. The loss of her pet left her \_\_\_\_\_.

*Answers on page 103*

## 13 ❁ The Unlucky Poodle

(Arizona)



Marjorie was taking her poodle for its daily walk around the neighborhood near her home. She was very fond of her dog and cared for it with devotion, taking it out every day for exercise and just for fun.

But this day was different—in a bad way. A large St. Bernard attacked her little dog, severely injuring him. In fact, the St. Bernard bit off one of the poodle's legs, and Marjorie's dog died just two days later. The vet could not save it. Marjorie, of course, was heartbroken.

She sued the owner of the St. Bernard for damages. She was suffering, she said, from great emotional shock and distress from witnessing the scary incident. This emotional suffering had caused her to seek medical help. Furthermore, she had felt endangered herself from the St. Bernard, although the dog did not harm her or even threaten her during the incident.

Did Marjorie get damages for her emotional distress during and after this disturbing event? Was she awarded anything for the loss of her beloved pet?

*Verdict on page 95*

*The verdicts are given after these four sample cases..*

## 34 ❁ The Dangerous Marshmallows

### Vocabulary

out of reach    (not) up    to consent    to gasp    to breathe  
alarmed    to cough up    to choke    to alert    permanent disability

### Match

- |          |                               |   |
|----------|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 _____  | When she coughed up blood     | a. when she heard the news.               |
| 2 _____  | She gasped out loud           | b. he would live in a wheelchair.         |
| 3 _____  | She consented to have         | c. we were quite alarmed. What was wrong? |
| 4 _____  | Don't eat so fast –           | d. it was obvious; she was not well.      |
| 5 _____  | When he finished the race     | e. an x-ray.                              |
| 6 _____  | When he fell down again,      | f. even though it was out of reach.       |
| 7 _____  | Somehow the child got it,     | g. the sun was not up.                    |
| 8 _____  | It was still dark;            | h. a warning.                             |
| 9 _____  | Another word for an alert is  | i. you could choke.                       |
| 10 _____ | His disability was permanent; | j. he wasn't breathing hard at all.       |

### Fill In

- After they lost the game, the playoffs were definitely \_\_\_\_\_ .
- The parents were \_\_\_\_\_ when the child \_\_\_\_\_ blood.
- Be careful you don't \_\_\_\_\_ on the fish bones.
- The buzzer \_\_\_\_\_ the nurse that the patient was not \_\_\_\_\_ .
- When I heard the news, I \_\_\_\_\_ in disbelief.
- Your child's trip to the city requires parental \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Jimmy is \_\_\_\_\_ yet. It's only nine o'clock.

Answers on page 106



## 34 ❁ The Dangerous Marshmallows (Montana)



As she was driving home with her two little sons, ages seven and two, Liz Charles stopped at a grocery store. At her children's request, she bought a bag of large marshmallows. When the family got home, she put the package on the top shelf in the kitchen. It was out of reach of the children, and she promised them they could have some the next day.

The next morning, a friend, Karen, stopped over early. Liz was not up yet. But the children were. They asked Karen if they could have some marshmallows. She consented, and both boys began to eat a few. The two-year-old loved the marshmallows and put two big ones in his mouth.

Soon he was gasping. He could not breathe. Alarmed, Karen performed the Heimlich Maneuver on the boy. He coughed up pieces of marshmallow but continued to choke. Liz awoke and ran to the kitchen. She and Karen then rushed the boy to the hospital.

He lived, but he had severe brain damage from the lack of oxygen while the marshmallows were caught in his throat.

Many weeks later, Liz sued the manufacturer of the marshmallows. She argued that the marshmallows were dangerous to small children, and that the product package contained no warning to parents. Such a warning could have alerted her and saved her child from a permanent disability.

Did she win damages from the marshmallow manufacturer?

*Verdict on page 100*

# The Verdicts

## 4 ❁ **The Flying Flower Pot** *(Pages 18-19)*

The hotel had to pay damages, even though the actual guilty person was unknown. The court said that since the hotel was making money from the rowdy guests, and since the hotel sold liquor to the guests, it had the responsibility for the guests' behavior while they were on hotel property. Where there is profit, there is also risk. The business that is making money must also accept the risk.

## 7 ❁ **The Severed Foot** *(Pages 24-25)*

The railroad was negligent and did not take reasonable precaution, the court said. The company should have done more, since it was located near the homes of children. Also, it knew that kids were there often and that they were not always supervised. The circumstances led to the conclusion of negligence. Society demands that dangerous machinery be locked up and not endanger the public, including children who may lack the practical experience of adults.

## 13 ❁ **The Unlucky Poodle** *(Pages 36-37)*

The court did not give the poodle owner any damages. She lost the case. The court said that a dog is personal property, not in the same category as a relative or close friend. Witnessing injury to property is not a valid reason for an award of emotional distress. A dog is not the same as a person.

## 34 ❁ **The Dangerous Marshmallows** *(Pages 78-79)*

Liz Charles won damages. The court said that marshmallows can be very hazardous to children. Kids love sweet things, and marshmallows are really sweet. Marshmallows seem harmless and aren't apparently risky. But they are soft and dry, and it's easy to get them caught in the throat. Furthermore, once in the throat, they can expand and can be very hard to dislodge. Packages of marshmallows should include a warning to parents of small children.

**4 ❁ The Flying Flower Pot** (Page 18)**MATCH:** 1-b 2-e 3-f 4-a 5-g 6-h 7-c 8-d**FILL-IN:** 1- persistent 2- half-hearted 3- damage 4- convention, attendance  
5- after all 6- argue, management 7- challenge 8- off the hook**7 ❁ The Severed Foot** (Page 24)**MATCH:** 1-e 2-d 3-a 4-f 5-b 6-h 7-i 8-g 9-c**FILL-IN:** 1- prevent 2- barrier 3- get into 4- endanger 5- damages 6- trespasser  
7- mechanism 8- severed**13 ❁ The Unlucky Poodle** (Page 36)**MATCH:** 1-f 2-a 3-d 4-c 5-i 6-h 7-b 8-g 9-e 10-j**FILL-IN:** 1- threatened 2- severe, distressful 3- fond of 4- endangered 5- devotion  
6- disturbing/distressing 7- witnessed 8- suffer, heartbroken**34 ❁ The Dangerous Marshmallows** (Page 78)**MATCH:** 1-d 2-a 3-e 4-i 5-j 6-c 7-f 8-g 9-h 10-b**FILL-IN:** 1- out of reach 2- alarmed, coughed up 3- choke 4- alerted, breathing  
5- gasped 6- consent 7- not up

- abandoned 10, 15  
 accidentally 3, 6  
 accusation 31  
 to act as 39  
 activist 37  
 to address 38  
 to admit 19  
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 aggressive 35  
 to aim 18  
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 to amputate 12, 29  
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 to break in 10  
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 bouncer 31  
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 to capture 16  
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 to choke 34  
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 emergency 25  
 to encourage 22  
 to endanger, 7, 13  
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 to ensue 31  
 to ensure 14  
 entire 14  
 epicenter 28  
 epilepsy 26  
 essential 3  
 exception 20  
 excessive 33  
 explicit, 5, 9  
 to explode 30  
 extraordinary 33  
 faithfully 26  
 to fall apart 33