

ENGLISH LEARNING FOR CURIOUS MINDS



Episode #423
The Rothschilds | Power, Money & Family
28th Nov, 2023

Transcript	3
Key vocabulary	25
Language spotlight	31
Quiz	35
Listening Comprehension Multiple Choice Questions	35
True or False:	37
Fill-in-the-Blank:	37
Vocabulary Practice:	38
Answers	41

Transcript

[00:00:05] Hello, hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:00:11] The show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:20] I'm Alastair Budge, and today we are going to be talking about the Rothschilds.

[00:00:26] It's the story of how one family went from a [cramped](#)¹ bedroom in a Jewish [ghetto](#)² in Frankfurt to being one of the most powerful, and certainly the richest, families in Europe.

[00:00:38] It's a story of [perseverance](#)³, finance, [cunning](#)⁴, war, anti-Semitism, the power of information, secrecy and how to [accumulate](#)⁵ a simply vast amount of money.

¹ uncomfortably small or crowded

² separate area for a particular group, often with poor living conditions

³ the act of persisting or continuing despite difficulties

⁴ cleverness or slyness in achieving a goal

⁵ gather or collect over time

[00:00:52] OK then, let's not waste a minute, and get right into it.

[00:00:57] In 1846, a [pamphlet](#)⁶ was published in France. It was signed only "Satan", the name of its true author not revealed.

[00:01:09] And it made a [bold](#)⁷ claim about an event that had happened 31 years beforehand, at the Battle of Waterloo.

[00:01:19] According to this [pamphlet](#), a man called Nathan Rothschild was at The Battle of Waterloo.

[00:01:27] He was not a soldier, he wasn't [wielding](#)⁸ a sword or gun or even commanding a [regiment](#)⁹.

[00:01:34] Nathan Rothschild was a banker, the owner of the London branch of a large banking house called Rothschild, and the head of a pan-European banking [conglomerate](#)¹⁰.

⁶ small booklet or brochure

⁷ daring, brave

⁸ holding and using

⁹ military unit consisting of soldiers

¹⁰ a large organisation, involving different businesses

[00:01:47] Rothschild, according to the [pamphlet](#), was waiting [eagerly](#)¹¹ to see which direction the battle went.

[00:01:55] Would Napoleon's French army emerge victorious?

[00:01:59] Or would the British-led [coalition](#)¹² defeat the French?

[00:02:04] Rothschild wasn't there [merely](#)¹³ out of curiosity, as a spectator.

[00:02:09] The result of the battle would have a large knock-on effect on the future of France, Britain, and even Europe more widely.

[00:02:19] And it would also have a large effect on the price of British government bonds, British national debt.

[00:02:29] As you will know, wars are expensive, and the British government borrowed heavily to finance this extensive military campaign.

[00:02:39] If Napoleon won the battle, the price of British government debt would drop, as investors would become worried about the British government's continued ability to repay its [obligations](#)¹⁴, to continue to pay the people who had lent it money.

¹¹ with great interest and impatiently

¹² alliance or union

¹³ simply or only

¹⁴ duties or responsibilities that it was required to fulfil

[00:02:55] But if Napoleon lost, the opposite would happen. This debt would be considered less risky, investors would want to buy more of it, and the price of British government debt would rise.

[00:03:10] A lot was [riding on](#)¹⁵ the result.

[00:03:14] Nathan Rothschild, so the [pamphlet alleged](#)¹⁶, was watching the battle so that he would learn the result firsthand, rather than wait for it to be printed in the newspapers.

[00:03:27] As soon as it became clear that Napoleon had been defeated, Rothschild got on a fast horse, rushed to the Belgian coast with the aim of boarding the first ship to England.

[00:03:40] But [to his horror](#)¹⁷ he found that there had been a terrible storm and all ships had been ordered not to go out to sea.

¹⁵ depending on

¹⁶ claimed or stated without proof

¹⁷ to his great dismay or shock

[00:03:50] He [asked around](#)¹⁸, looking for anyone who would be able to transport him across the sea to England. [Money was no object](#)¹⁹, the banker added, no price was too high.

[00:04:04] Eventually he found a fisherman who was willing to do it. He paid him [handsomely](#)²⁰, and the pair set off across the stormy sea for the coast of England.

[00:04:16] Rothschild arrived in London before any news of the result of the battle had reached the city.

[00:04:23] The reason he was in such a hurry was not because he wanted to be the first person to break the good news to the king or to the Prime Minister; it was because he sensed a once-in-a-lifetime money-making opportunity.

[00:04:38] He went straight to the stock market, the [pamphlet](#) alleged, and bought up as much government debt as he could [get his hands on](#)²¹. When the news of Napoleon's defeat finally reached the capital, a full 24 hours after Rothschild had

¹⁸ inquired or questioned different people

¹⁹ no price was too high

²⁰ in a generous or substantial manner

²¹ obtain or acquire

arrived, the price of British debt [soared](#)²² and Rothschild made 20 million francs, a [gargantuan](#)²³, vast amount of money.

[00:05:07] The story in the [pamphlet](#) went the 19th century equivalent of viral, and was translated into a bunch of different languages.

[00:05:16] And the legend of what happened even got adapted over the years.

[00:05:21] In one version Rothschild actually started selling debt to make people think that Britain had lost, and because he was such a well-respected financier people saw what he was doing and thought “Rothschild must know something”, so they started selling their debt too, and the price continued to fall.

[00:05:40] And at the last minute, just before the news of Napoleon's defeat broke, Rothschild [swooped in](#)²⁴ and bought it all up, making himself an even bigger fortune in the process

[00:05:52] It is a great story, but the problem is that the story in the [pamphlet](#) simply isn't true, at least in its original format.

[00:06:03] Nathan Rothschild wasn't at the Battle of Waterloo, he didn't rush back to England, there's no evidence that he bought lots of debt, and by the time the [pamphlet](#)

²² rose quickly or increased dramatically

²³ extremely large or vast

²⁴ acted fast or decisively to gain an advantage

was published, Rothschild had died, so there was no possible way to conclusively [refute](#)²⁵ the story.

[00:06:21] It turned out that the author of the [pamphlet](#), so-called “Satan” was an anti-Semitic and anti-capitalist left wing journalist called Georges Dairnvall and the entire story had been invented to [stir up](#)²⁶ discontent and increase [animosity](#)²⁷ towards Jews, especially wealthy Jews such as Nathan Rothschild.

[00:06:44] Now, you may accuse me of doing the same thing by repeating the story here, but the reason to start with the story told in this [pamphlet](#) is because it touches on some of the key themes of the Rothschild family: the value of information, the link between war and money, the invention of government debt, and the [prejudice](#)²⁸ that the family faced as Jews.

[00:07:11] And to tell the story of the Rothschild family, we must in fact start in a Jewish [ghetto](#), the [ghetto](#) of Frankfurt.

²⁵ disprove or prove it to be false

²⁶ provoke or cause

²⁷ hostility or hatred

²⁸ judgement in advance, negative bias

[00:07:21] It was here that the father of the Rothschild [dynasty](#)²⁹, Mayer Amschel Rothschild, was born in 1744.

[00:07:30] Mayer Rothschild was initially a coin dealer, buying and selling coins, but he [got his big break](#)³⁰ managing the financial affairs of William IX of Hesse, who was a wealthy German ruler.

[00:07:45] As you may know, throughout much of European history, Jews faced multiple restrictions on what they could and couldn't do.

[00:07:55] Now, this varied by country and by ruler, but Jews were often not allowed to own land or become tradespeople like carpenters or blacksmiths, or to hold public office or to practise medicine.

[00:08:10] Jewish people weren't allowed to do an awful lot, but the one thing that they were allowed to do was to lend money with interest.

[00:08:20] The Catholic Church [forbade](#)³¹ Christians from doing this, saying that it was [usury](#)³², and it wasn't allowed by the Bible.

[00:08:29] But Jewish people were not bound by the same restrictions.

²⁹ a succession of important people from the same family or group

³⁰ experienced a significant success

³¹ prohibited or didn't allow

³² the practice of making unethical or immoral loans

[00:08:35] As a result, with few other options to participate in medieval society and with a clear need that could be filled, many Jewish people found opportunity in the money lending industry, lending out money to people and charging interest.

[00:08:52] It turned out that the Jewish community was well-placed to do this; Jewish people were spread throughout Europe, there were high levels of trust and pre-existing trade links between Jews in different cities and countries, so there was a lot of existing [infrastructure](#)³³, we could say, that already existed within the Jewish community.

[00:09:15] And by the time of Mayer Rothschild in the 18th century, the finance industry was well-developed within the Jewish community.

[00:09:24] But this was [a double-edged sword](#)³⁴.

[00:09:28] On the one hand, Jews were providing a valuable service, lending money to people who needed it, and being paid interest or commissions in return.

[00:09:39] As is still the case today, the finance industry can be lucrative, you can make a lot of money dealing with money, but [on the flip side](#)³⁵, this led to jealousy, suspicion and antisemitism, [prejudice](#) towards Jews who were perceived as having some kind of suspicious talent for making money and growing rich.

³³ basic systems or organisation

³⁴ something that had both positive and negative consequences

³⁵ on the other hand or as a contrasting point

[00:10:02] Now, that's some very brief background, but that is the backdrop for everything that's about to happen.

[00:10:10] To bring it back to the Rothschilds, Mayer Rothschild, the head of the family, became the choice financier for this man called William IX, who had made his fortune essentially hiring out his citizens as [mercenaries](#)³⁶, as soldiers for hire.

[00:10:29] Rothschild managed his patron's wealth, doing everything from making sure that Napoleon didn't get his hands on it through to investing it and growing his fortune.

[00:10:39] Mayer Rothschild himself grew very wealthy, but this was only [sowing the seeds](#)³⁷ for what was to come.

[00:10:48] Mayer Amschel Rothschild's most important legacy, his most profitable investment you might even say, was his family.

[00:10:57] He had 11 children, six daughters and five sons.

[00:11:03] Unfortunately the daughters don't have much of a role to play in this story, but the five sons do.

[00:11:11] Mayer Rothschild decided to go from private banker of a wealthy German to the head of what would become the most successful banking partnership in Europe, and to do this he needed the help of his children.

³⁶ soldiers for hire

³⁷ planting the beginnings or foundations

[00:11:26] He sent each of his five sons to a centre of European finance, instructing them to go there and set up operations.

[00:11:36] The oldest, Amschel Mayer Rothschild, stayed in Frankfurt.

[00:11:40] The second, Salomon, went to Vienna.

[00:11:43] The third, Nathan, to England.

[00:11:46] The fourth, Carl, to Naples.

[00:11:48] And the fifth, James, went to Paris.

[00:11:52] There, they were instructed to set up business under the Rothschild name, Rothschild banks, essentially. Each bank would offer financial services to the people and rulers of the kingdom.

[00:12:07] But, of course, we aren't talking about a baker or a [blacksmith](#)³⁸ keeping a few hundred Francs with the Rothschilds. We are talking about high finance, raising capital for companies, and most importantly, raising money for countries.

[00:12:22] This all happened at the start of the 19th century, in the middle of the Napoleonic Wars.

³⁸ a person who made and repaired iron objects and horseshoes

[00:12:29] Wars are expensive, soldiers need to be paid, guns and [ammunition](#)³⁹ bought.

[00:12:35] Historically, wars were typically paid for by raising taxes or simply forcing [peasants](#)⁴⁰ to become soldiers and join the army.

[00:12:44] Clearly, both of those options are unpopular, as nobody likes taxes going up or being forced to risk their life on the battlefield.

[00:12:54] Another option was selling off pieces of land, but that wasn't something a ruler typically wanted to do.

[00:13:02] But, when it came to the 19th century and with the pan-European banking network that the Rothschild sons had built up, there was an alternative.

[00:13:12] The Rothschilds, with their base in five different European countries and their extensive network of wealthy individuals, could offer governments loans, essentially, to fight wars.

[00:13:25] A government could go to one of the Rothschild brothers and say, hey, we need a load of money to fight this war, can you get it for us? And the Rothschilds would say, "sure", they would go to wealthy individuals all over Europe and say "we have this

³⁹ projectiles or materials used in weapons

⁴⁰ simple farmers

great investment opportunity”, and investors would loan the government money, all enabled through the Rothschild banking network.

[00:13:50] The government would pay interest, the investors would be happy, and the Rothschilds would make a fee for [facilitating](#)⁴¹ the service.

[00:13:58] What’s more, the Rothschilds allowed investors to buy and sell their debt through their banks, making it a much more attractive investment because it was more easily tradable than ever before.

[00:14:11] And it was considered relatively low risk, because you were dealing with the government after all.

[00:14:18] It might sound like a basic thing to say, given that the global bond market is now worth literally hundreds of trillions of dollars, but it’s hard to overstate how important this innovation was, not just for governments but for the economy overall.

[00:14:35] Before this, there were very limited opportunities for people with money to invest it and make more money. There was, in some countries, some form of stock market, but these were [characterised](#)⁴² by [booms and busts](#)⁴³, and the idea of a

⁴¹ making something easier or more accessible

⁴² described or defined

⁴³ periods of fast economic growth followed by periods of failure

publicly-listed company, an Amazon or Apple, that people could invest in, this was undeveloped.

[00:15:00] For most wealthy people, most potential investors, the only place to invest money was in land, and that had limited opportunity for a return.

[00:15:13] Through government bonds, investors could invest in the government, essentially, guaranteeing themselves a secure annual return, so long as the government didn't [go bust](#)⁴⁴ that was.

[00:15:25] And this brings us on to another very important element of the Rothschilds' success: information.

[00:15:33] You heard in the story at the start of the episode about the [allegation](#)⁴⁵ that Nathan had profited from learning the outcome of the Battle of Waterloo before anyone else.

[00:15:44] That is now believed to be completely false, but what is certainly true is that the Rothchild family had an extensive information network, with their own system of

⁴⁴ go bankrupt or financially fail

⁴⁵ statement or claim without proof

[couriers](#)⁴⁶, and even [allegedly](#)⁴⁷ a system of [homing pigeons](#)⁴⁸, which [ensured](#)⁴⁹ that it was always up to date with anything that might affect the price of its investments.

[00:16:06] If there was a result of a battle or a death of a monarch, or an invasion of a new territory, anything that might affect the [creditworthiness](#)⁵⁰ of a government's debt, and therefore its price, the Rothschilds had a [sophisticated](#)⁵¹ network that meant that it would know about it before anyone else, so that it could either make money or avoid losing money.

[00:16:29] What's more, the Rothschild banking network became a hugely valuable partner to European governments, especially the British government, because of its ability to transfer money.

[00:16:43] In the modern era of being able to pick up your smartphone and send money anywhere in the world, it's perhaps hard to imagine quite how important this was, but imagine you were the British government at the start of the 19th century.

⁴⁶ messengers who transported information

⁴⁷ supposedly or according to what was claimed

⁴⁸ pigeons trained to return to a specific location, often used to carry messages

⁴⁹ made it certain or guaranteed

⁵⁰ the likelihood that it would be able to be repaid

⁵¹ advanced or complex in terms of design or operation

[00:16:58] You have tens of thousands of soldiers fighting in France and Spain.

[00:17:03] They need to be paid.

[00:17:06] How do you do it? How does the money go from the British government in London through to a soldier in some field in Spain?

[00:17:16] This is where the Rothschilds came in.

[00:17:19] With their extensive network of banks in five different countries, and their access to different currencies as well as gold, they could [facilitate](#)⁵² all of this.

[00:17:30] The British government might pay the London branch of Rothschild in British pounds, the London branch would then arrange for this to be exchanged to gold bullion, transported via ship to Spain, exchanged with a local partner into currency that the soldiers could use, so that the soldiers could be paid.

[00:17:50] Now, you might have noticed that I said “might pay”, not “paid”, as how the Rothschilds managed to do this is still a little bit of a mystery, it’s a closed book.

[00:18:04] Even the biographers and historians of the Rothschild family don’t have access to the details of exactly how the family did it, but they soon became the [go-to](#)⁵³ financial partner for European powers needing to move large amounts of money around.

⁵² make it something easier or more convenient

⁵³ preferred or relied-upon option or choice

[00:18:22] Now, as to exactly how much money the family made, which members of the family made it, and when this was made, this is also not public information, and is a subject of disagreement even with Rothschild biographers and historians.

[00:18:40] While Nathan, the head of the London branch, is probably the most famous of the brothers and the one that many people would say was the most [savvy](#)⁵⁴, and brought the most profits to the family, a [critically acclaimed](#)⁵⁵ relatively recent biography by the Scottish historian Niall Ferguson claims that, although Nathan was the undisputed leader of the brothers and it was his London branch that had the first big success, the fortune was created more equally, with all five of the brothers [pulling their weight](#)⁵⁶.

[00:19:14] In any case, the fortune was vast.

[00:19:18] According to Ferguson's biography, "When Nathan died in 1836, his personal fortune was equivalent to 0.62 per cent of British national income."

⁵⁴ knowledgeable or experienced

⁵⁵ highly praised or well-received by experts or critics

⁵⁶ contributing their fair share or doing their part

[00:19:31] In other words, one individual, who had come to Britain in his twenties, had [accumulated](#)⁵⁷ a fortune of nearly 1% of the total income in the country. If someone was to have a similar fortune today, it would be something like 20 billion Euro.

[00:19:51] And, as you might imagine, the family bought up and built huge [mansions](#)⁵⁸ and palaces all over Europe. By the end of the 19th century, this luxury property [portfolio](#)⁵⁹ of the family consisted of almost 50 palaces across Europe'.

[00:20:08] It is quite [astounding](#)⁶⁰, and what is perhaps even more [astounding](#) is that the Rothschild family has not only managed to not lose this vast fortune, but, with some [exceptions](#)⁶¹, subsequent generations of Rothschilds have shown a [remarkable](#)⁶² talent for growing it.

[00:20:28] Of course, given that the family started in the late 18th century with five brothers, and is now going on 10 generations, the Rothschild [dynasty](#) is vast, linked

⁵⁷ gathered or collected over time

⁵⁸ large, grand houses or residences

⁵⁹ collection of investments or assets

⁶⁰ extremely surprising or impressive

⁶¹ cases that did not follow the usual rule or pattern

⁶² worthy of attention or notice

through marriage with European royalty, spread out through Europe and involved in all manner of different businesses and industries.

[00:20:47] But it is still [remarkably](#)⁶³ [tight](#)⁶⁴, [facilitated](#)⁶⁵ by a lot of [intermarriage](#)⁶⁶, so things are kept “in the family”.

[00:20:56] The [bread and butter](#)⁶⁷ of the Rothschilds is still in the world of high finance, both offering financial services and managing the vast Rothschild fortune.

[00:21:07] But the Rothschilds have spread out beyond the world of finance, they are also involved in property, oil and gas, luxury yachts, and if you are a wine lover you will no doubt have heard of the famous and very expensive Château Lafite Rothschild and Château Mouton Rothschild.

[00:21:25] The point is, the influence of the Rothschild family is vast, and this, combined with the [underlying](#)⁶⁸ antisemitism that the family has dealt with its entire life, this has led it to being the subject of all sorts of conspiracy theories. These range from the

⁶³ in a way that is worthy of attention

⁶⁴ closed firmly

⁶⁵ made easier or enabled

⁶⁶ marriage between close relations

⁶⁷ the main source of income

⁶⁸ being at the basis, forming the base

Rothschilds [artificially](#)⁶⁹ creating wars in the 19th century to profit from them through to the family controlling the weather, so that they can make money from knowing whether it will rain or shine tomorrow.

[00:21:54] There are images shared on social media claiming that the Rothschild family owns some ridiculous amount of the world's wealth, I found one claiming that it is 80% of all money in the world that is owned by the Rothschilds.

[00:22:09] It is certainly an [alluring](#)⁷⁰ theory, that there is some incredibly secretive rich family somewhere that controls the flow of money, that is [pulling the strings](#)⁷¹ of every politician and can make or break the fortunes of a country with the [click of its fingers](#)⁷².

[00:22:24] But, much like the [pamphlet alleging](#)⁷³ Nathan Rothschild was at Waterloo, it is simply not true.

[00:22:32] Estimates of the Rothschild family wealth vary, but they typically have it at somewhere in the tens of billions through to the hundreds of billions.

⁶⁹ in a way that was intentionally caused by their actions

⁷⁰ powerfully and mysteriously attractive or fascinating

⁷¹ controlling or influencing

⁷² a simple and quick action

⁷³ claiming or stating without having proof

[00:22:41] So, to [wrap things up](#)⁷⁴, the Rothschild story is a tale of family unity, financial [acumen](#)⁷⁵, and adaptation through the centuries.

[00:22:51] It's a story that has [intermingled](#)⁷⁶ with European history, politics, and business in myriad ways, leaving an [indelible](#)⁷⁷ mark on the continent and beyond.

[00:23:01] And to think, it all started with five brothers in a tiny [cramped](#) bedroom in a Frankfurt [ghetto](#).

[00:23:10] OK then, that is it for today's little exploration of The Rothschilds. There is so much more to say on this, tens of thousands of pages have been written on the subject, so I think this is certainly a topic to revisit and [dive into](#)⁷⁸ in slightly more detail in a future episode.

[00:23:27] As always, I would love to know what you thought about this episode.

[00:23:30] Have you heard of the Rothschilds before? What does the name “Rothschild” mean in your country?

⁷⁴ conclude or finish

⁷⁵ keen insight or the ability to make good judgements

⁷⁶ mixed or blended together

⁷⁷ not able to be removed or forgotten

⁷⁸ delve deeply into or explore in detail

[00:23:36] I would love to know, so let's get this discussion started.

[00:23:39] You can head right into our community forum, which is at
community.leonardoenglish.com and get chatting away to other curious minds.

[00:23:47] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo
English.

[00:23:52] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]

Key vocabulary

Word	Definition
Cramped	uncomfortably small or crowded
Ghetto	separate area for a particular group, often with poor living conditions
Perseverance	the act of persisting or continuing despite difficulties
Cunning	cleverness or slyness in achieving a goal
Accumulate	gather or collect over time
Pamphlet	small booklet or brochure
Bold	daring, brave
Wielding	holding and using
Regiment	military unit consisting of soldiers
Conglomerate	a large organisation, involving different businesses
Eagerly	with great interest and impatiently
Coalition	alliance or partnership
Merely	simply or union

Obligations	duties or responsibilities that it was required to fulfil
Riding on	depending on
Alleged	claimed or stated without proof
To his horror	to his great dismay or shock
Asked around	inquired or questioned different people
Money was no object	no price was too high
Handsomely	in a generous or substantial manner
Get his hands on	obtain or acquire
Soared	rose quickly or increased dramatically
Gargantuan	extremely large or vast
Swooped in	acted fast or decisively to gain an advantage
Refute	disprove or prove it to be false
Stir up	provoke or cause
Animosity	hostility or hatred
Prejudice	judgement in advance, negative bias

Dynasty	a succession of important people from the same family or group
Got his big break	experienced a significant success
Forbade	prohibited or didn't allow
Usury	the practice of making unethical or immoral loans
Infrastructure	basic systems or organisation
A double-edged sword	something that had both positive and negative consequences
On the flip side	on the other hand or as a contrasting point
Mercenaries	soldiers for hire
Sowing the seeds	planting the beginnings or foundations
Blacksmith	a person who made and repaired iron objects and horseshoes
Ammunition	projectiles or materials used in weapons
Peasants	simple farmers
Facilitating	making something easier or more accessible
Characterised	described or defined
Booms and busts	periods of fast economic growth followed by periods of failure

Go bust	go bankrupt or financially fail
Allegation	statement or claim without proof
Couriers	messengers who transported information
Allegedly	supposedly or according to what was claimed
Homing pigeons	pigeons trained to return to a specific location, often used to carry messages
Ensured	made it certain or guaranteed
Creditworthiness	the likelihood that it would be able to be repaid
Sophisticated	advanced or complex in terms of design or operation
Facilitate	make it something easier or more convenient
Go-to	preferred or relied-upon option or choice
Savvy	knowledgeable or experienced
Critically acclaimed	highly praised or well-received by experts or critics
Pulling their weight	contributing their fair share or doing their part
Accumulated	gathered or collected over time
Mansions	large, grand houses or residences

Portfolio	collection of investments or assets
Astounding	extremely surprising or impressive
Exceptions	cases that did not follow the usual rule or pattern
Remarkable	worthy of attention or notice
Remarkably	in a way that is worthy of attention
Tight	closed firmly
Facilitated	made easier or enabled
Intermarriage	marriage between close relations
Bread and butter	the main source of income
Underlying	being at the basis, forming the base
Artificially	in a way that was intentionally caused by their actions
Alluring	powerfully and mysteriously attractive or fascinating
Pulling the strings	controlling or influencing
Click of its fingers	a simple and quick action
Alleging	claiming or stating without having proof

English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #423
The Rothschilds | Power, Money & Family

Wrap things up	conclude or finish
Acumen	keen insight or the ability to make good judgements
Intermingled	mixed or blended together
Indelible	not able to be removed or forgotten
Dive into	delve deeply into or explore in detail

Language spotlight

1. Riding on

- Meaning: Depending on or being influenced by.
- Synonyms: Hinging on, relying on, counting on.
- Antonyms: Independent of, detached from.
- Examples:
 - The success of our project is **riding on** the approval of the board of directors.
 - His promotion is **riding on** his performance in the upcoming presentation.

2. Swooped in

- Meaning: Acted swiftly or decisively, often to gain an advantage.
- Synonyms: Pounced, seized an opportunity, capitalised on.
- Antonyms: Hesitated, dawdled, procrastinated.
- Examples:

- She **swooped in** and secured the last available ticket to the concert.
- The company **swooped in** on the market opportunity and launched a successful product.

3. Pulling their weight

- Meaning: Contributing their fair share or doing their part.
- Synonyms: Carrying their load, sharing the burden, fulfilling their responsibilities.
- Antonyms: Slacking off, shirking duties, not contributing.
- Examples:
 - In a group project, it's important that everyone is **pulling their weight** to ensure success.
 - She felt like her colleagues weren't **pulling their weight** in the team, and it was affecting the project's progress.

4. Wrap things up

- Meaning: Conclude or finish.
- Synonyms: Complete, finalise, bring to an end.
- Antonyms: Begin, initiate, start.
- Examples:
 - Let's **wrap things up** and go over the main points of the presentation.
 - It's time to **wrap things up** for the day; we'll continue tomorrow.

5. Alluring theory

- Meaning: An enticing or tempting idea.
- Synonyms: Captivating concept, seductive hypothesis, appealing notion.
- Antonyms: Unattractive theory, unconvincing idea, repelling concept.
- Examples:
 - The notion of discovering hidden treasure is an **alluring theory** for many adventurers.

- The **alluring theory** of a secret society controlling world events has captured the imagination of conspiracy theorists.

Quiz

Listening Comprehension Multiple Choice Questions

1. How did the Rothschilds make money by facilitating government loans?
 - a) By selling land
 - b) By manufacturing goods
 - c) By charging interest to investors
 - d) By offering free services

2. According to the podcast, why did Nathan Rothschild rush to England after the Battle of Waterloo?
 - a) To break the news to the king
 - b) To see the battle firsthand
 - c) To create a pamphlet
 - d) To seize a money-making opportunity

3. What was the primary business of the Rothschild family?
 - a) Manufacturing
 - b) Banking
 - c) Farming
 - d) Technology

4. Why were Jewish people often involved in money lending during medieval times?
 - a) They were skilled farmers
 - b) They were not allowed to own land
 - c) They were excellent soldiers
 - d) They were blacksmiths

5. What did the Rothschild brothers do with their father's instructions to go to different European countries?
 - a) Ignored them
 - b) Set up their own businesses

- c) Went on vacation
- d) Established Rothschild banks in those countries

True or False:

- 6. Nathan Rothschild was at the Battle of Waterloo. (True or False)
- 7. The Rothschilds played a significant role in financing wars in the 19th century.
(True or False)
- 8. Nathan Rothschild profited from the Battle of Waterloo by selling debt when people thought Britain had lost. (True or False)
- 9. The Rothschild family's vast fortune has been lost over time. (True or False)
- 10. The Rothschild family is involved in various industries, including property, oil and gas, and wine production. (True or False)

Fill-in-the-Blank:

- 11. But to his _____ he found that there had been a terrible storm and all ships had been ordered not to go out to sea.
- 12. Money was no _____, the banker added, no price was too high.
- 13. He went straight to the stock market, the pamphlet alleged, and bought up as much government debt as he could get his _____ on.

14. Mayer Rothschild was initially a coin dealer, buying and selling coins, but he got his big _____ managing the financial affairs of William IX of Hesse.
15. Mayer Rothschild himself grew very wealthy, but this was only _____ the seeds for what was to come.

Vocabulary Practice:

16. What does the word "**cunning**" mean in the context of the podcast?
- a) Wise and knowledgeable
 - b) Clever and deceitful
 - c) Honest and straightforward
 - d) Naive and gullible
17. What is the synonym of "**accumulate**" as used in the podcast?
- a) Distribute
 - b) Gather
 - c) Decrease
 - d) Scatter

18. What does the term "**prejudice**" refer to in the podcast?

- a) Positive beliefs about a group
- b) Negative beliefs about a group without evidence
- c) Religious practices
- d) Legal regulations

19. In the podcast, what does "**sowing the seeds**" mean?

- a) Planting crops
- b) Starting a family
- c) Establishing a foundation
- d) Generating wealth

20. What is the antonym of "**swooped in**" as used in the podcast?

- a) Moved very quickly
- b) Hovered

c) Hesitated

d) Descended

Answers

1. c) By charging interest to investors
2. d) To seize a money-making opportunity
3. b) Banking
4. b) They were not allowed to own land
5. d) Established Rothschild banks in those countries
6. False
7. True
8. False
9. False
10. True
11. horror
12. object
13. hands
14. break
15. sowing
16. b) Clever and deceitful
17. b) Gather
18. b) Negative beliefs about a group without evidence
19. c) Establishing a foundation
20. c) Hesitated