

UOW College Hong Kong / Community College of City University
Student English Enhancement Unit (SEE U)
Daily English Practice

Week 8

#139 Greatest Frauds in History— Enron

Skills/ Objectives: Reading, Listening and Writing Skills

PART 1: Before you read...

Preparatory questions

Qt 1: What was your worst experience in losing money?

Qt 2: Do you know of anyone who invests in the stock market?

Qt 3: What do you think explains the stock price of a listed company to plunge from US\$90 to US\$1?

The answers to relevant question in the preceding set of exercises (Greatest Frauds in History- Jordan Belfort) are as follows:

Answer to Qt 2: the movie Wall Street (1987) starring Michael Douglas

Vocabulary

- Profitability (noun): the situation in which a company, product, etc. is producing a profit.
- Loophole (noun): a small mistake in an agreement that gives someone the chance to avoid having to do something.
- Overinflate (verb): to make a number or value much higher or greater than it should be.
- Bankruptcy (noun): a situation in which a business or a person becomes unable to pay their debts.
- Fraudulent (adjective): dishonest and illegal.

PART 2: Article for Reading

Read the following student paper submitted to Harvard University where the student has succinctly captured the Enron fraud:

The Enron Scandal

<http://large.stanford.edu/courses/2018/ph240/smith1/>

PART 3: Listening Comprehension

Listen to the following short video to learn more about every stock market investor's worst

nightmare:

What Went Wrong at Enron?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSyk1kil4Fc>

PART 4: Writing Practice

Did you notice this sentence written in the main text?

Enron's meteoric fall marked the largest corporate bankruptcy in US history

A meteor is a rock or other matter from space that produces a bright light as it travels through the atmosphere. A meteor shower is an exciting sight to many sky watchers. The adjective "meteoric" is used in two ways: 1. to describe anything to do with this natural phenomenon; 2. to describe something that develops very fast and attracts a lot of attention.

Here, Enron's fall, noticeably, from a listed stock price of US\$90 to almost nothing, is described as "meteoric," because the fall only took 26 days, whereas the company had stayed in business for 26 years.

Another example of how "meteoric" can be used is this:

The singer had a meteoric rise to fame in the 1980s, and today she is considered a music legend.

Can you write a sentence of your own using the expression "meteoric fall/ rise"? Send your writing to: see.u@cccu.edu.hk. Remember! Our SEE U teachers are always ready to give you feedback.