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Amazon airbags for dropped cell phones

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1108/110814-airbags.html>

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14th August, 2011

THE ARTICLE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110814-airbags.html>

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos has applied for a patent for airbags for mobile phones. We are all familiar with airbag technology in cars. We could soon see them as optional add-ons when we buy a new mobile or smart phone. Bezos said many people broke their phones or lost important data because they dropped them. He added that many insurance companies do not pay out on claims for dropped mobiles. He believes his invention will save millions of people from the headache caused by a mobile phone hitting the ground. He said the tiny airbags inside the phones would offer maximum protection for a cell phone if someone dropped it. The airbags would deploy after the phone's built-in accelerometer detected that it was falling.

The patent submitted by Mr Bezos contains other safety features. He suggests using a laser or radar to work out the distance between the phone and the ground as the phone is falling to determine when to deploy the air bags. Other suggestions include springs that would be released from the phone so that the phone safely bounced when it hit the ground. The coolest part of Bezos' patent application is a gyroscope that controls tiny jets of compressed air that would change the angle of the device in mid-air. This would be able to change the phone's "flight path" to ensure a smoother landing on impact. The Amazon boss must now wait to see if his patent is accepted and if smart phone companies adopt his idea.

WARM-UPS

1. AIRBAGS: Walk around the class and talk to other students about airbags. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

patent / airbags / optional / smart phone / insurance companies / invention / falling / safety features / laser / radar / suggestions / gyroscope / jets / flight path / adopt

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. SOFT LANDING: Are airbags useful on everything? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

Airbags on	Good idea (why)?	Bad idea (why)?
mobile phones		
cars		
airplane seats		
jackets		
crash helmets		
babies		

4. INVENTION: Students A **strongly** believe airbags for mobile phones is a great invention; Students B **strongly** believe it's totally stupid. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. PROTECTION: What's most important? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the most important at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- bank account password
- email account password
- Facebook login details
- your documents folder
- your songs
- your movies
- your gaming information
- your computer password

6. DATA: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'data'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110814-airbags.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. A company will drop mobile phones into isolated Amazon villages. | T / F |
| b. Insurance companies pay out if you drop and break your cell phone. | T / F |
| c. Mobile phones give people headaches when they are on the ground. | T / F |
| d. Small airbags in a mobile phone could protect the device from a fall. | T / F |
| e. Amazon.com's boss wants to patent safety features for mobile phones. | T / F |
| f. Part of the patent is having springs in the mobile to protect it in a fall. | T / F |
| g. Another safety feature is tiny jets that could control a phone's fall. | T / F |
| h. Many companies have already adopted these safety features. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. familiar with | a. discovered |
| 2. add-ons | b. make certain of |
| 3. headache | c. extras |
| 4. deploy | d. points |
| 5. detected | e. neatest |
| 6. features | f. aware of |
| 7. work out | g. use |
| 8. coolest | h. embrace |
| 9. ensure | i. nightmare |
| 10. adopt | j. calculate |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. applied for | a. protection |
| 2. We are all familiar | b. it hit the ground |
| 3. insurance companies do not pay | c. compressed air |
| 4. offer maximum | d. with airbag technology |
| 5. the phone's built- | e. idea |
| 6. work out | f. a patent |
| 7. the phone safely bounced when | g. landing |
| 8. tiny jets of | h. in accelerometer |
| 9. ensure a smoother | i. out on claims |
| 10. adopt his | j. the distance |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110814-airbags.html>

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos has (1) _____ for a patent for airbags for mobile phones. We are all (2) _____ with airbag technology in cars. We could soon see them as optional add-ons when we buy a new mobile or (3) _____ phone. Bezos said many people broke their phones or lost important data because they (4) _____ them. He added that many insurance companies do not pay out on claims for dropped mobiles. He believes his (5) _____ will save millions of people from the headache caused by a mobile phone hitting the ground. He said the (6) _____ airbags inside the phones would offer maximum protection for a cell phone if someone dropped it. The airbags would (7) _____ after the phone's built-in accelerometer detected that it was (8) _____.

tiny
dropped
familiar
deploy
applied
falling
smart
invention

The patent (9) _____ by Mr Bezos contains other safety features. He suggests using a laser or radar to (10) _____ out the distance between the phone and the ground as the phone is falling to determine when to deploy the air bags. Other suggestions (11) _____ springs that would be released from the phone so that the phone safely (12) _____ when it hit the ground. The coolest part of Bezos' patent application is a gyroscope that controls tiny (13) _____ of compressed air that would change the angle of the device in mid-air. This would be able to change the phone's "(14) _____ path" to ensure a smoother landing on (15) _____. The Amazon boss must now wait to see if his patent is accepted and if smart phone companies (16) _____ his idea.

include
adopt
submitted
flight
bounced
work
impact
jets

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110814-airbags.html>

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos _____ for airbags for mobile phones. We are all familiar with airbag technology in cars. We could soon see _____ when we buy a new mobile or smart phone. Bezos said many people broke their phones or lost important data because they dropped them. He added that many insurance companies _____ claims for dropped mobiles. He believes his invention will save millions of people from _____ by a mobile phone hitting the ground. He said _____ the phones would offer maximum protection for a cell phone if someone dropped it. The airbags would deploy after _____ accelerometer detected that it was falling.

The patent submitted by Mr Bezos contains _____. He suggests using a laser or radar to work out the distance between the phone and the ground as the phone is _____ when to deploy the air bags. Other suggestions include springs that would be released from the phone so that the phone safely _____ the ground. The coolest part of Bezos' patent application is a gyroscope that controls tiny _____ air that would change the angle of the device in mid-air. This would be able to change the phone's "flight path" to _____ on impact. The Amazon boss must now wait to see if his patent is accepted and if smart phone companies _____.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110814-airbags.html>

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'smart' and 'phone'.

smart	phone
--------------	--------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• familiar• optional• lost• save• tiny• after	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• safety• work out• hit• angle• path• adopt
--	--

STUDENT AIRBAGS SURVEY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110814-airbags.html>

Write five GOOD questions about airbags in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

AIRBAGS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'airbag'?
- c) What do you know about airbag technology?
- d) What do you think of Jeff Bezos' idea?
- e) How would you feel if you lost the data in your phone?
- f) What do you do to safeguard the info in your phone?
- g) Do you think the mobile phone airbags would work?
- h) Should insurance companies pay out when people drop and break their mobile phones?
- i) How much extra would you pay for airbags in your phone?
- j) What other things would you like to see airbags in?

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AIRBAGS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) How many safety features do mobile phones need?
- c) Should mobile phones have anti-theft alarms and anti-hacking software?
- d) What do you think mobile phones will be like in the future?
- e) Would you like to see airbags in clothes?
- f) What do you think of air jets controlling the "flight path" of a falling mobile phone?
- g) What three adjectives would you use to describe this article?
- h) Do you think many companies will adopt Jeff Bezos' idea?
- i) What uninvented invention would you like to be invented?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Jeff Bezos?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110814-airbags.html>

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos has (1) _____ for a patent for airbags for mobile phones. We are all (2) _____ with airbag technology in cars. We could soon see them as optional add-ons when we buy a new mobile or smart phone. Bezos said many people broke their phones or lost important data because they dropped them. He added that many insurance companies do not pay (3) _____ on claims for dropped mobiles. He believes his invention will save millions of people from the (4) _____ caused by a mobile phone hitting the ground. He said the tiny airbags inside the phones would (5) _____ maximum protection for a cell phone if someone dropped it. The airbags would deploy after the phone's built-(6) _____ accelerometer detected that it was falling.

The patent submitted by Mr Bezos contains (7) _____ safety features. He suggests using a laser or radar to work (8) _____ the distance between the phone and the ground as the phone is falling to determine when to deploy the air bags. Other suggestions include springs that would be released from the phone so that the phone safely (9) _____ when it hit the ground. The coolest part of Bezos' patent application is a gyroscope that controls tiny (10) _____ of compressed air that would change the angle of the device in mid-air. This would be able to change the phone's "flight path" (11) _____ ensure a smoother landing on impact. The Amazon boss must now wait to see if his patent is accepted and if smart phone companies (12) _____ his idea.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. | (a) replied | (b) supplied | (c) complied | (d) applied |
| 2. | (a) knowing | (b) familiar | (c) aware | (d) friends |
| 3. | (a) out | (b) to | (c) at | (d) for |
| 4. | (a) toothache | (b) stomachache | (c) headache | (d) backache |
| 5. | (a) request | (b) sale | (c) offer | (d) bargain |
| 6. | (a) up | (b) in | (c) down | (d) on |
| 7. | (a) other | (b) the other | (c) others | (d) another |
| 8. | (a) of | (b) up | (c) in | (d) out |
| 9. | (a) bouncy | (b) bounced | (c) bounces | (d) bouncing |
| 10. | (a) lets | (b) wets | (c) nets | (d) jets |
| 11. | (a) so | (b) of | (c) to | (d) as |
| 12. | (a) adopt | (b) adept | (c) depot | (d) despot |

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HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about airbags. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. AIRBAGS: Make a poster about airbags for mobile phones and other devices. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. FUTURE MOBILES: Write a magazine article about mobile phones of the future. Include imaginary interviews with people who want high-tech phones and inventors who want to design them.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to Jeff Bezos. Ask him three questions about airbags for mobile phones. Give him three of your ideas on how to improve mobile phones. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. F c. F d. T e. T f. T g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. familiar with | a. aware of |
| 2. add-ons | b. extras |
| 3. headache | c. nightmare |
| 4. deploy | d. use |
| 5. detected | e. discovered |
| 6. features | f. points |
| 7. work out | g. calculate |
| 8. coolest | h. neatest |
| 9. ensure | i. make certain of |
| 10. adopt | j. embrace |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. applied for | a. a patent |
| 2. We are all familiar | b. with airbag technology |
| 3. insurance companies do not pay | c. out on claims |
| 4. offer maximum | d. protection |
| 5. the phone's built- | e. in accelerometer |
| 6. work out | f. the distance |
| 7. the phone safely bounced when | g. it hit the ground |
| 8. tiny jets of | h. compressed air |
| 9. ensure a smoother | i. landing |
| 10. adopt his | j. idea |

GAP FILL:

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Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos has (1) **applied** for a patent for airbags for mobile phones. We are all (2) **familiar** with airbag technology in cars. We could soon see them as optional add-ons when we buy a new mobile or (3) **smart** phone. Bezos said many people broke their phones or lost important data because they (4) **dropped** them. He added that many insurance companies do not pay out on claims for dropped mobiles. He believes his (5) **invention** will save millions of people from the headache caused by a mobile phone hitting the ground. He said the (6) **tiny** airbags inside the phones would offer maximum protection for a cell phone if someone dropped it. The airbags would (7) **deploy** after the phone's built-in accelerometer detected that it was (8) **falling**.

The patent (9) **submitted** by Mr Bezos contains other safety features. He suggests using a laser or radar to (10) **work** out the distance between the phone and the ground as the phone is falling to determine when to deploy the air bags. Other suggestions (11) **include** springs that would be released from the phone so that the phone safely (12) **bounced** when it hit the ground. The coolest part of Bezos' patent application is a gyroscope that controls tiny (13) **jets** of compressed air that would change the angle of the device in mid-air. This would be able to change the phone's "(14) **flight** path" to ensure a smoother landing on (15) **impact**. The Amazon boss must now wait to see if his patent is accepted and if smart phone companies (16) **adopt** his idea.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - b 3 - a 4 - c 5 - c 6 - b 7 - a 8 - d 9 - b 10 - d 11 - c 12 - a

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