



- Neil:** Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English, I'm Neil and with me today is Jennifer.
- Jennifer:** Hi there. In 6 Minute English, we take a story from the BBC news, have a chat about it and teach you some words on the way!
- Neil:** Now Jennifer, I have a bit of a sensitive question to ask you...
- Jennifer:** Oh, I'm not sure if I want to answer this... What is it?
- Neil:** I want to know if you have ever stolen anything.
- Jennifer:** How dare you! Of course I haven't!
- Neil:** Really? Nothing? Not even a pen from work?
- Jennifer:** Well, OK, maybe a pen from work...
- Neil:** How about five billion dollars-worth of oil?
- Jennifer:** What!?
- Neil:** Yes, apparently about five billion dollars-worth of crude oil is stolen from Nigeria every year and it's causing massive economic problems for the African country.
- Jennifer:** This sounds like the beginning of a quiz question...
- Neil:** Yes it is. What is the capital city of Nigeria? Is it:
- a) Lagos
 - b) Abuja
 - c) Freetown
- Jennifer:** I don't know but I will take a guess. I think it is Lagos.
- Neil:** We will find out at the end of the programme. Now a few facts about the oil industry in Nigeria.
- Jennifer:** Oil is the country's largest industry and nearly all of it is found around the delta of the Niger River in the south of the country.

Neil: The problem is that large quantities of oil are stolen and shipped – or taken by boat – to international markets. Now there's a strange expression used to describe this type of theft.

Jennifer: Listen to the first part of this report from the BBC's Martin Plaut. See if you can hear what the word is.

Insert

Nigeria has for years suffered from the illegal syphoning off of large quantities of its oil production. The practice, known locally as bunkering, involves tapping into pipelines. The oil is then taken by barge to tankers waiting offshore. These then ship the oil to international markets, where it is sold.

Neil: What was that word, Jennifer?

Jennifer: It was 'bunkering'. It involves tapping into **pipelines** – the tubes used to transport things like oil and gas and stealing the oil.

Neil: The oil is then taken in a **barge**, which is a long boat with a heavy bottom used for transportation.

Jennifer: These barges then carry the oil to offshore **tankers** – huge ships used for transporting liquid or gas. From there it goes to **refineries** to be sold in international markets.

Neil: A refinery is a factory where crude oil is made suitable for use as fuel. But the president of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan wants to put a stop to this practice. What would you do, Jennifer, if you were the president, to try to stop this?

Jennifer: Well, I'd probably think of a solution using technology. I'd try to track – or follow the movements – of those involved in the illegal trade.

Neil: Listen to the next part of this BBC report to find out what he's ordered the navy to do.

Insert

Now Nigeria's Trade and Industry minister, Olusegun Aganga, says President Goodluck Jonathan has ordered the navy and other arms of government to use satellite technology to track the tankers and seize them wherever these illegal shipments are taken.

Neil: Well Jennifer, perhaps you should be in charge of this operation because that's exactly what the president has ordered! He has told the navy and other arms of the government to use satellite technology to track the tankers and **seize** them – meaning take them by force.

Jennifer: I wonder if it'll work. The problem has been going on for a while now. Even before the 2009 **amnesty**, militants were tapping into the pipelines and selling oil to pay for weapons. An amnesty is a fixed period of time during which people are not punished for a crime.

Neil: And oil theft is costing the country dearly. I did mention at the beginning of the programme the amount of money the stolen oil is worth annually. Can you remember what it was?

Jennifer: Listen to the last part of this BBC report and see if you can hear the total.

Insert

The Nigerian government says the illegal exploitation of the oil is currently costing the country five billion dollars a year and it is determined to end it. But the practice has gone on for years, with commentators suggesting that the Nigerian navy has been involved and that smugglers are protected by senior politicians. Mr Aganga insisted that these links can be broken and those responsible brought to justice.

Jennifer: The Nigerian government says the illegal exploitation of oil is costing the country five billion dollars a year.

Neil: Five billion dollars! That's an immense amount of money to go out of the economy. I wonder if they can stop it.

Jennifer: Well, one of the problems is that there seems to be widespread **corruption** – the dishonest behaviour of people in power for their own personal or financial gain.

Neil: According to the report, the Nigerian navy has been involved and smugglers are actually protected by senior politicians. But is there hope?

Jennifer: Well, the country's trade minister insists that the corruption can be eliminated and those responsible can be **brought to justice**.

Neil: It's a very complex story; billions of dollars are lost every year and yet the practice of 'bunkering' still goes on. Time now, Jennifer, to find out the answer to the quiz question I asked at the beginning of the programme. I asked what the capital of Nigeria is.

The options were:

- a) Lagos
- b) Abuja
- c) Freetown

Jennifer: And I guessed Lagos.

Neil: And you were wrong. The answer is Abuja. That's all we have time for today, but do join us again for more 6 Minute English from bbclearningenglish.com. Bye!

Jennifer: Bye!

Vocabulary and definitions

pipelines	tubes used to transport things like oil and gas
barge	a long boat with a heavy bottom used for transportation
tankers	huge ships used for transporting liquid or gas
refineries	factories where crude oil is made suitable for use as fuel
seize	take by force
amnesty	a fixed period of time during which people are not punished for a crime

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