The Value of Books

What was the last physical book you bought? Are books going up or down in price? Which types of book do you think are the most valuable?

You are going to read two articles about rare and valuable books. Order the words to make the two headlines for the articles.

Business Insider: reportedly a criminal books gang stole £2 million worth of rare books

The Times: idea invest in books novel ? what a

What do you think the articles are going to say?

Read the sections from the articles that you are given. Then separate them into the two articles and put the paragraphs in order.

Answer these questions without referring back to the articles:

1 What is one theory about who was behind the robbery?
2 Which was the most valuable book stolen in the raid?
3 What percentage of Britons do not own a single printed book?
4 What has opened up the market for rare books?
5 Apart from rare books, what other alternative assets are mentioned in the article?
6 What makes a book collectible?

What other items do you think are stolen to order?

Would you consider investing in books? Why / Why not?

Which of the alternative assets mentioned in the article do you think are the best investments?

Which do you think is the most valuable book you own?

Complete these extracts from the article with the correct prepositions:

1 The book, which can be translated as “On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres,” set _________ Copernicus’ theory that the Sun is at the centre of the universe...

2 Auction experts say that the internet and the ebook era has opened _____ the market for rare books…

3 More investors are looking ______ places to put their money...

4...but if you buy the right thing and hold ______ ______ it for long enough, you’ve got the potential to make a return.

5 The difference in value between copies of the same book often comes ______ ______ provenance, or binding.

6...the first to put __________________ an influential theory...

7 Other books that fall _________ this category...
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Match the phrasal verbs to these definitions:

__________________ offer an idea, opinion, reason etc., especially so that people can discuss it and make a decision
__________________ belong to (a group, category, etc.)
__________________ search for; try to find
__________________ keep something for yourself
__________________ be dependent on (a specified factor)
__________________ make something more accessible to more people
__________________ explain or describe in a clear and detailed way, especially in writing

Write sentences of your own with the phrasal verbs.

What does the highlighted expression in this extract from the article mean?

Business Insider

February 2017

The books were being stored in the warehouse temporarily as they **made their way** to the California Book Fair.

There are other expressions with the word ‘way’. What do you think these mean?

| 1 by the way | 2 have a way with | 3 in a way | 4 in someone’s way |
| 5 make way | 6 no way | 7 pave the way | 8 get one’s way |

Match them to these definitions:

__ allow to pass / relinquish to another
__ (said in the course of one’s conversation) incidentally
__ have a charming or effective manner of dealing with
__ not under any circumstances
__ create the circumstances to enable (something) to happen or be done
__ to some extent
__ forming a hindrance, impediment or obstruction
__ get or do what one wants in spite of opposition

Complete these sentences with the expressions above:

1 “______________________, did I mention to you that it’s my birthday today.” “Yes, about ten times now.”
2 James is going first to _____________________________ for us so that it will be easier when we arrive.
3 I’m resigning to _____________________________ for a younger CEO.
4 “Would you consider working nights?” “______________________, it would be awful.”
5 “Catherine deals with our clients, she really _____________________________ people, they’re always happy after speaking to her.
You are going to read two articles about rare and valuable books. **Rearrange the words below to make the two headlines for the articles.**

**A criminal gang reportedly stole £2 million worth of rare books**

**Invest in books? What a novel idea**

Complete these extracts from the article with the correct prepositions:

1. **out**
2. **up**
3. **for**
4. **on to**
5. **down to**
6. **forward**
7. **into**

Complete these sentences with the expressions above:

1. **By the way**
2. **pave the way**
3. **make way**
4. **No way**
5. **has a way with**

Read the sections from the articles that you are given. Then separate them into the two articles and put the paragraphs in order.

**Business Insider - February 2017:** A criminal gang reportedly stole £2 million worth of rare books - paragraph order: C - H - F - A

**The Times - February 2017:** Invest in books? What a novel idea - paragraph order: E - B - G - D

A gang of thieves has reportedly stolen over £2 million worth of rare books from a warehouse near Heathrow airport in a “Mission Impossible”-style heist, The Mail on Sunday reports.

The newspaper reports that over 160 rare books were stolen, including works by Galileo, Isaac Newton, and Leonardo da Vinci.

Thieves reportedly gained access to the warehouse in Feltham, Middlesex by climbing onto the roof, cutting holes through the reinforced skylights, and then abseiling down into the building.

The heist, which took place on the evening of January 29, was captured on the warehouse’s CCTV cameras, The Mail on Sunday reports.
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Teacher’s notes 2/3

Thieves were observed ignoring all other items stored in the warehouse, instead targeting four containers that stored rare books. A source told The Mail on Sunday that the gang of criminals checked the contents of the containers against a list, “throwing the ones they didn’t want away.” The books were being stored in the warehouse temporarily as they made their way to the California Book Fair. The gang then placed the rare books into holdalls and pulled them onto the roof of the building using ropes. The bags were then placed into a van and driven away. The Mail on Sunday reports that the thieves likely stole the books to order, as it would be difficult to resell the titles. The newspaper says that scientific works, of the type stolen in the raid, “are particularly in demand.” It speculates that a wealthy collector known as “the Astronomer” may have ordered gangs to steal books for him.

The International League of Antiquarian Booksellers has published two separate lists detailing every book believed to have been stolen in the heist. It lists two dealers who have had stock stolen from them: Librario Bado e Mart s.a.s. di Bado R. e C. from Padua, Italy, and Michael Kühn from Berlin, Germany.

Another book that is believed to have been stolen is a 1656 Galileo book titled “Opere di Galileo Galilei,” another early scientific work about the universe.

A copy of “Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica” by Isaac Newton was also stolen in the raid. The book was a landmark work covering physics and mathematics.

The number of first-edition copies of a book can have an impact on prices hundreds of years later, according to Mr Wiltshire. The Harry Potter books are ten a penny now, but when a publisher first took a punt on Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone there were only 500 copies in the initial print run. One of them can sell today for tens of thousands of pounds.

Dust jackets are key when it comes to modern books; if in good condition they can increase the value tenfold. For instance, a Bonhams auction on March 1 will include two first-edition copies of Ian Fleming’s Casino Royale — one with a dust jacket as issued, which is valued between £8,000 and £12,000, and another in a leather binding without a dust jacket, valued between £1,000 and £2,000.
From an investment perspective, interest in alternative assets has been piqued since the 2009 recession, says Keith Heddle, the managing director of Stanley Gibbons Investment, the collectibles dealer. “More investors are looking for places to put their money and in assets that are non-correlated with mainstream financial markets, such as rare books, coins and stamps. They fly below the radar and don’t have the same cachet as fine wine and art, but if you buy the right thing and hold on to it for long enough, you’ve got the potential to make a return.”

What makes a book collectible? Rarity, desirability and condition are the buzzwords. The most valuable books are those signed by the author or that have belonged to someone famous. The difference in value between copies of the same book often comes down to provenance, or binding.

The most expensive lot on offer at the auction is a first edition of Adam Smith’s revolutionary economic work The Wealth of Nations, expected to fetch between £30,000 and £50,000. Matthew Haley, the head of books and manuscripts at Bonhams, calls it an example of “books that changed the world” — the first to put forward an influential theory, include a certain poem or give an account of a new place — which are much sought-after by collectors. Other books that fall into this category and fetch high premiums are Galileo’s Sidereus Nuncius (on the heliocentric system), the King James Bible and Darwin’s Origin of Species.

Films and related franchises can enhance the desirability of a book. Pristine first-edition copies with the original dust jacket of The Great Gatsby by F Scott Fitzgerald, for example, have increased in price over the past decade, partly buoyed by the 2013 screen adaptation starring Leonardo DiCaprio. According to the Rare Book Index compiled by Stanley Gibbons, they went from being sold for £18,056 in 1996 to £246,636 in 2015.