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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## Words in the News

### Shining a light on the past



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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#### Transcript

They might not look like much, but these are in fact texts from **ancient Rome**.

Since their discovery 250 years ago, no one has been able to read the so-called  
Herculaneum **scrolls**. Open them, and they **disintegrate**.

Now, scientists in France have made a **breakthrough**. By firing **intense** beams of light at  
the documents, they can see what is written inside.

Experts are overjoyed.

#### Vocabulary

##### **ancient Rome**

a society thousands of years ago in the area of Rome, now the capital of Italy

##### **scrolls**

long pieces of paper that were used for writing on and could be rolled up

##### **disintegrate**

to break apart into many small pieces

##### **breakthrough**

an important discovery after a long period of work

##### **intense**

very strong or powerful

**Watch the video online: Shining a light on the past** <http://bbc.in/1KqJm0K>

## Exercise

Use one of the words or phrases below to complete each of these sentences from news reports. Note that you may have to change the form of a word to complete the sentence correctly.

**intense / scrolls / disintegrate / breakthrough / ancient Rome**

1. "Every so often in the history of human endeavour, there comes a \_\_\_\_\_ that takes mankind across the frontier and into a new era."
2. Pope Francis has ordered souvenir shops to end a profitable trade in Vatican \_\_\_\_\_, completing a process said to have been started by his predecessor.  
  
The ornate parchments, bearing the seal of the Vatican, have been sold as gifts or to mark major church events such as weddings, baptisms and ordinations.
3. "In both \_\_\_\_\_ and London the streetlife is terribly important," says Professor Beard. "Streets are the key. "You have people flogging things in markets, all the hustle and bustle.
4. Mr Hennessy, a CSIRO principal research scientist, says Australia's weather and environment will be noticeably affected by climate change over the next 15 to 30 years. The report predicts that... the hot, dry weather that contributes to bushfires will become more frequent and more \_\_\_\_\_.
5. From shopping centres and schools, to our greatest buildings, it is claimed many of Britain's best murals are being allowed to \_\_\_\_\_.

## Answers

1. "Every so often in the history of human endeavour, there comes a **breakthrough** that takes mankind across the frontier and into a new era."

**Source:** Astra Zeneca drive to develop drugs from genome project

<http://tinyurl.com/l34zsq>

2. Pope Francis has ordered souvenir shops to end a profitable trade in Vatican **scrolls**, completing a process said to have been started by his predecessor.

The ornate parchments, bearing the seal of the Vatican, have been sold as gifts or to mark major church events such as weddings, baptisms and ordinations.

**Source:** Pope Francis plans to rein in trade in Vatican scrolls

<http://tinyurl.com/n7j7ysl>

3. "In both **ancient Rome** and London the streetlife is terribly important," says Professor Beard. "Streets are the key. "You have people flogging things in markets, all the hustle and bustle.

**Source:** How similar are London and ancient Rome?

<http://tinyurl.com/9pn2tlw>

4. Mr Hennessy, a CSIRO principal research scientist, says Australia's weather and environment will be noticeably affected by climate change over the next 15 to 30 years. The report predicts that... the hot, dry weather that contributes to bushfires will become more frequent and more **intense**.

**Source:** Climate report: Hot days may double in Australia by 2090

<http://tinyurl.com/mnczzqf>

5. From shopping centres and schools, to our greatest buildings, it is claimed many of Britain's best murals are being allowed to **disintegrate**.

**Source:** Are we allowing great works of art to disintegrate?

<http://tinyurl.com/cw9rube>