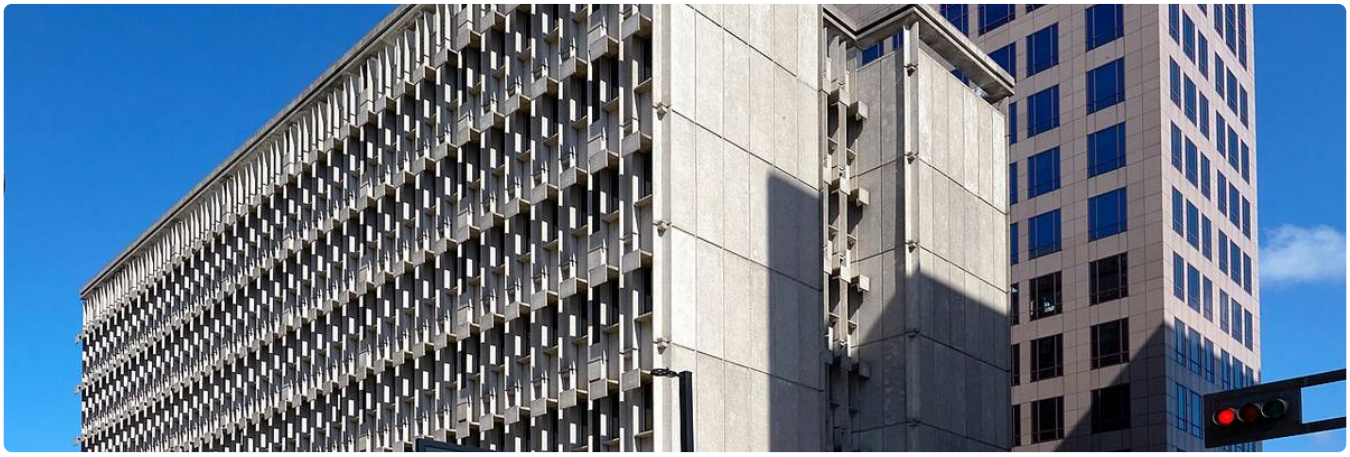
CLASSROOM WORKSHEET

FBI arrests 82-year-old at Florida nursing home on child abuse charges

Culture · Nov 7, 2026 · 3 min read

NAME _____ CLASS _____ DATE _____ SCORE _____ / 7



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1 Read

The number beside each paragraph helps you talk about it.

1 Federal investigators arrested Thomas Markle, aged 82, at a nursing home near Tampa, Florida, on Friday morning, charging him with one count of possessing child sexual abuse material — an offence carrying a maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison. A 14-page criminal complaint alleges that agents seized approximately 78 items from two storage units Markle had rented in the Los Angeles area since 2008, including dozens of slides, photographs, film negatives and books. FBI Director Kash Patel declared that Markle allegedly targeted innocent children, vowing that no predator who preys on minors would find a safe haven. Markle, however, denied the accusations outright, describing them as sick lies in a statement to a UK newspaper. The case carries an additional dimension: Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, had previously said she was deeply distressed by allegations involving her father, adding that her decision to distance herself from him was intended to protect her children. Meanwhile, authorities in the Philippines launched a separate investigation into Markle last month after similar allegations surfaced regarding his former residence there, suggesting the Florida arrest may represent only one strand of a broader inquiry.

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2 Key words

allege /əˈledʒ/ *verb*

To state that someone has committed a wrongdoing or crime without yet having proved it in a court of law.

The prosecutor alleged that the company had concealed toxic waste disposal records for over a decade.

seize /siːz/ *verb*

To take possession of something forcibly or by legal authority, especially in the context of law enforcement confiscating evidence.

Customs officers seized a shipment of counterfeit pharmaceuticals at the port.

predator /ˈpredə(tə)r/ *noun*

A person who exploits, harms, or preys upon vulnerable individuals, used in formal legal and journalistic contexts to describe criminals who target the weak.

The task force was assembled specifically to track down online predators operating across international borders.

safe haven /seɪf ˈheɪvən/ *idiom*

A place or situation where someone is protected from danger, pursuit, or consequences; often used ironically or in declarations that no such refuge exists for wrongdoers.

The finance minister declared that tax evaders would find no safe haven in an era of automatic information exchange.

outright /ˈaʊtraɪt/ *adverb*

In a complete and total manner; used to emphasise that something is done without qualification, hesitation, or partiality.

The ambassador denied the diplomatic incident outright, calling the reports a fabrication by rival outlets.

strand /strænd/ *noun*

A separate element, thread, or component of a larger, complex matter; used metaphorically in journalism to describe one part of a multifaceted investigation or situation.

The journalist followed one strand of the conspiracy theory that led her to an entirely different set of suspects.

3 Grammar focus

Hedging and distancing

reportedly / is thought to / appears to / is expected to + verb

Hedging language (reportedly, is thought to, appears to) lets a writer report information without vouching for it. It marks the difference between established fact and claim or expectation.

1. FBI Director Kash Patel declared that Markle allegedly targeted innocent children, vowing that no predator who preys on minors would find a safe haven.

What does the writer avoid stating as a certain fact?

4 Reading comprehension

EXERCISE 1 Understanding the Complaint

3 points

Read the passage below and answer the questions. All answers must be found directly in the text.

1 According to the text, where were the storage units located that were the source of the seized items?

(a) Near Tampa, Florida
(b) In the Los Angeles area
(c) In the Philippines
(d) At a nursing home in Florida

2 What reason did Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, give for distancing herself from her father?

(a) She had been personally harmed by him
(b) Her decision was intended to protect her children
(c) The FBI Director had advised her to do so
(d) She wanted to cooperate with the Philippine investigation

3 What does the text suggest about the relationship between the Florida arrest and the Philippine investigation?

(a) The Philippine investigation was triggered by the Florida arrest
(b) The two investigations are entirely unrelated and coincidental
(c) The Florida arrest may represent only one strand of a broader inquiry
(d) The FBI Director personally ordered the Philippine investigation

EXERCISE 2 Key Details

Answer the following questions in complete sentences using information from the text.

1 What maximum penalty is associated with the charge against Thomas Markle?

2 How did Thomas Markle respond to the accusations, and through what medium did he communicate his denial?

3 What prompted Philippine authorities to open an investigation into Markle?

5 Vocabulary and grammar practice

EXERCISE 3 Tense and Form in Formal Reporting

4 points

Complete each sentence with the correct form of the verb in brackets, as it would appear in a formal news report about this story.

1. A 14-page criminal complaint _____ (allege) that agents seized approximately 78 items from two storage units.
2. Markle had rented _____ (rent) two storage units in the Los Angeles area since 2008, from which agents later seized items.
3. Authorities in the Philippines launched a separate investigation after similar allegations _____ (surface) regarding his former residence there.
4. The Florida arrest may _____ (represent) only one strand of a broader inquiry.

6 Guided writing

EXERCISE 4 Critical Commentary

Write a summary (150–220 words) of the news story in the style of a formal analytical commentary. Your summary must be faithful to the facts presented in the text, use appropriate formal register, and address the legal, personal, and geopolitical dimensions of the case. You must incorporate the following keywords/phrases from the text: 'alleges,' 'safe haven,' 'outright,' and 'strand.'. Write 150 to 220 words.

7 Discussion

Talk with a partner, then share one idea.

EXERCISE 5 Speaking

1 FBI Director Kash Patel used the phrase 'safe haven' in his statement. In what ways does this particular word choice frame the issue as a moral imperative rather than a purely procedural legal matter, and how might such framing influence public perception before any trial takes place?

2 The text describes the Philippine investigation as a 'separate' one and the Florida arrest as potentially 'one strand of a broader inquiry.' What does the language of 'strands' and 'dimensions' suggest about how journalists and authorities perceive complex, multi-national criminal cases, and what challenges might arise when a suspect is pursued across different legal systems?

3 Markle 'denied the accusations outright' via a UK newspaper. Discuss the role of informal media channels versus official legal processes in shaping public narratives. Is a denial made to a newspaper a meaningful part of the legal record, or is it primarily a public-relations act?

Answer key

For the teacher

Keep this page for yourself and copy only the pages before it. Short-answer and writing tasks list one possible answer.

Exercise 1 Understanding the Complaint

1. B. In the Los Angeles area The text explicitly states that agents seized items from two storage units Markle had rented in the Los Angeles area since 2008.
2. B. Her decision was intended to protect her children The text states: 'her decision to distance herself from him was intended to protect her children.'
3. C. The Florida arrest may represent only one strand of a broader inquiry The final sentence states that authorities in the Philippines launched a separate investigation 'suggesting the Florida arrest may represent only one strand of a broader inquiry.'

Exercise 2 Key Details

1. The charge against Thomas Markle carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison. The text states the offence carries 'a maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison.'
2. Markle denied the accusations outright, describing them as sick lies in a statement to a UK newspaper. The text says he 'denied the accusations outright, describing them as sick lies in a statement to a UK newspaper.'
3. Authorities in the Philippines launched an investigation into Markle after similar allegations surfaced regarding his former residence there. The text states the Philippine investigation was launched 'after similar allegations surfaced regarding his former residence there.'

Exercise 3 Tense and Form in Formal Reporting

1. alleges In legal and news register, complaints and indictments are conventionally described in the present simple ('the complaint alleges'), even when the event has already occurred, because the document is understood to be stating its contents now.
2. rented The past perfect 'had rented' is used here because the renting occurred before the seizure and arrest (earlier past relative to the reporting). Note the text itself uses 'had rented' with 'since 2008' to mark the duration leading up to the seizure.
3. surfaced The past simple 'surfaced' is used because this event occurred before the launch of the investigation and is narrated as a completed past action in sequence.
4. represent After the modal 'may,' the bare infinitive is required. The construction 'may represent' expresses a cautious, hedged assessment typical of C2 journalistic register.

Exercise 4 Critical Commentary

The arrest of 82-year-old Thomas Markle at a Florida nursing home on charges of possessing child sexual abuse material illustrates how a single legal case can intersect with personal estrangement and international jurisdiction. A 14-page criminal complaint alleges that federal agents seized approximately 78 items from storage units in the Los Angeles area, carrying a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. FBI Director Kash Patel framed the arrest within a broader moral declaration, vowing that no predator who preys on minors would find a safe haven under his watch. Markle denied the accusations outright, dismissing them as sick lies via a UK newspaper, while his daughter, the Duchess of Sussex, stated her long-standing distancing from him was intended to protect her children. Beyond the domestic dimension, authorities in the Philippines have launched a separate inquiry after similar allegations surfaced regarding Markle's former residence there, suggesting the Florida case may represent only one strand of a wider investigation. The story thus operates simultaneously as a criminal matter, a family tragedy, and an unfolding multi-national legal challenge. One possible answer. Yours will be different and can still be good: check it against the list.