

Killer flu virus mistakenly sent worldwide (Thu 14 Apr, 2005)

WARM-UPS

CHAT: Talk in pairs or groups about: viruses / influenza / WHO / young people / injections / bio-terrorism. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

VIRUS BRAINSTORM: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word “virus”. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

MISTAKES: Your task is to find out the kind of mistakes your classmates have made. Talk to as many people you can about their biggest / costliest / funniest / most regrettable / most annoying... mistakes. In pairs / groups talk about the mistakes you heard about and hold an “Academy Award” ceremony for those who made the best or most interesting mistakes.

MY FLU HISTORY: Brainstorm all of the symptoms of colds and flu. Interview your partner / group members about these symptoms and how flu and colds affect their lives. Ask many questions because you think your partner / one of your classmates may be carrying a deadly virus and need to know about their every sniff and sneeze.

OPINIONS: Look at the following opinions and discuss them with your partner / group:

- a. Everyone makes mistakes. We're only human.
- b. Some day, someone will make a very deadly mistake.
- c. I'm amazed terrorists haven't yet stolen any viruses.
- d. The person responsible for this mistake should be fired.
- e. It's scary to think of all the biohazardous and nuclear materials that are sent around the world every minute of every day.
- f. Wow. I'd hate to work in such a dangerous job.
- g. I don't feel too good. I wonder if I have the flu.
- h. I think a virus killed off the dinosaurs and will do the same to us.
- i. One day, all viruses will be things of the past.

PRE-READING IDEAS

WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... of the words 'flu' and 'strain'.

TRUE FALSE: Guess whether the following statements about the article are true or false:

- a. A killer virus was e-mailed to people's homes. T / F
- b. The virus could start a worldwide flu epidemic. T / F
- c. It isn't so easy to catch the virus. T / F
- d. The virus killed almost 4 billion people in 1957-58. T / F
- e. People under 36 years old are more at risk. T / F
- f. The virus vanished ten years ago. T / F
- g. The WHO was worried about bio-terrorism. T / F

SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| (a) deadly | catching |
| (b) start | in danger |
| (c) asked | requested |
| (d) contagious | trigger |
| (e) at risk | vanished |
| (f) injections | killer |
| (g) disappeared | epidemic |
| (h) outbreak | jabs (UK) / shots (USA) |

PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| (a) deadly influenza | of an outbreak |
| (b) around | injections |
| (c) could start a worldwide | risk |
| (d) It is very | population |
| (e) may be at | flu epidemic |
| (f) flu | virus |
| (g) little danger | contagious |
| (h) the WHO delayed | are real |

SPOT THE MISTAKES: Half of the words in bold in each paragraph are right and half are wrong. Circle the incorrect words and try to replace them with words that fit.

Killer flu virus mistakenly sent worldwide

A deadly influenza virus has been accidentally sent to thousands of laboratories around the **universe**. The virus could start a worldwide flu epidemic if it gets into the **human** population. The World Health Organization has asked the labs to “immediately” **destroy** the samples of the flu strain. It is very **contagious** and killed almost 4 million people in 1957-58. **Old** people, those under 36 years old, may be at risk because they have no immunity to the virus. It has not been included in flu injections since 1968, when it suddenly disappeared. The WHO website says there is little danger of an outbreak: “The risk for the general population is...**high**.” However, the WHO delayed putting news of the accident on its website to avoid the danger of bio-terrorism.

DISCUSSION:

- a. Was there anything in this article that made you worry?
- b. Are you feeling OK today?
- c. How often do you have a cold or the flu?
- d. How badly do you suffer from colds or the flu?
- e. Is your body strong?
- f. What do you think of the mistake in this article?
- g. Should the person who made this mistake be fired?
- h. Are you careful to avoid contact with viruses?
- i. How often do you wash your hands?
- j. What do you do when someone near coughs or sneezes near you?
- k. Do you ever get a flu shot / jab?
- l. Would you like to work in a virus research laboratory?
- m. What would you do today if a newsflash appeared on TV alerting of a killer virus?
- n. Are you more worried about flu epidemics after reading this article?
- o. Will a cure for the cold ever be found?
- p. Do you think scientists will beat all viruses one day?
- q. Do you think terrorists will get a virus and release it?
- r. Which virus would you like to disappear?
- s. Did you like this discussion?
- t. Teacher / Student additional questions.

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 information on the WHO. Share your findings with your class next lesson.

3. ANGRY LETTER: Write a letter to the College of American Pathologists expressing your outrage at this mistake. Read it to your class in your next lesson.

4. ONE VIRUS: Write a short article about one virus that has been in the news recently. Talk about your article in your next class.

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EXTRA FLUENCY ACTIVITIES

OUTBREAK PLAN: You are the head of your town's government. In pairs / groups, create an emergency plan on what citizens should do if a killer virus hits your region. Some the following may be important in your plans: hospitals / TV stations / water supplies / army / vaccines / international help / animals ...

When you have finished, change partners / groups and explain your plans. Decide who has the best plan.

VIRUS ROLE PLAY: Use the following role play cards in a discussion about the H2N2 virus. Team up with partners to discuss your roles and "strategy" before the role play begins. After the role play, discuss whether you really believed what you were saying.

THE ROLES:

Student A

You think you sent the virus around the world. You accept full responsibility and apologize for everything every time someone is angry with you.

Student B

You are a Student B's co-worker. You know Student A did not send the killer virus around the world. The information is top secret. You must support Student A.

Student C

You are the president of the laboratory that sent the killer virus around the world. You are shocked. You must apologize to everyone. You are very angry with Student A and want him / her fired.

Student D

You are a paparazzi reporter. You think you have a great story. You know that if you can make a link between Student A and international terrorists, you can sell your story for \$1,729,938.

Student E

You are a police officer from Interpol. You think Student A is part of an international terrorism gang. You have information that Student A wants to sell the virus to terrorists.

Student F

You are president of your own laboratory. You are 35. Last week you received the killer virus. Today you have a bad cold and are very worried. You want to sue Student C.

Student G

You are the mother / father of Student A. You know he / she would never harm anybody. Protect your son / daughter.

Student H

You love the sound of your own voice. Agree or disagree with anyone at any time. You just love talking.

TEXT

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