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**Level 6 – 29th November, 2021**

## **Omicron coronavirus variant spreading worldwide**

**FREE online quizzes, mp3 listening and more for this lesson here:**

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211129-omicron.html>

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**Please try Levels 4 and 5 (they are easier).**

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# THE ARTICLE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211129-omicron.html>

A new variant of the covid-19 virus is beginning to spread worldwide. The WHO named the mutation Omicron, after a letter of the Greek alphabet. It was first reported in Botswana on the 9th of November. Two weeks later, it was detected in South Africa and flagged as a "virus of concern". Soon after this, cases were reported in Hong Kong, Israel, Madagascar and Belgium. Epidemiologists have warned that this new strain could be extremely infectious. They also said it may be able to evade protections afforded us by current vaccines. This has led to countries reinstating travel bans. Despite these, new cases have already been reported in the UK, Germany and the Czech Republic.

Scientists are currently analyzing Omicron to assess the dangers it might pose. They have detected 50 genetic changes in the DNA that affects the spikes surrounding the crown of the virus. Current vaccines focus on these spikes. Any changes in the DNA of the spikes could make the virus more virulent, more transmissible and possibly more resistant against vaccines. Scientists say it could take a few weeks to determine how effective our vaccines are against Omicron. The White House's chief medical adviser has warned that: "When you have a virus that is showing this degree of transmissibility, and you're already having travel-related cases...it almost invariably is ultimately going to go all over [the world]."

Sources: <https://nypost.com/2021/11/27/omicron-variant-found-in-uk-germany-czech-republic/>  
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/27/omicron-variant-covid-southern-africa-travel-restrictions>  
<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2021/11/27/1059501446/covid-coronavirus-omicron-variant>

# WARM-UPS

**1. OMICRON:** Students walk around the class and talk to other students about Omicron. Change partners often and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, talk about these topics or words from the article. What will the article say about them? What can you say about these words and your life?

variant / covi-19 / virus / WHO / Omicron / concern / epidemiologist / travel ban / scientists / dangers / genetic changes / DNA / vaccines / transmissibility / the world

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. DISAPPEAR:** Students A **strongly** believe covid-19 will disappear in a year or two and we can go back to normal; Students B **strongly** believe this won't happen. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**4. COVID-19:** How has the coronavirus affected these things? Have you been affected? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	Effects	On You
Work / Study		
Shopping		
Travel		
Socializing		
The economy		
Mental health		

**5. ALPHABET:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "alphabet". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**6. MEASURES:** Rank these with your partner. Put the best measures to keep the virus at bay at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Hand washing
- Social isolation
- Mask wearing
- Social distancing
- Hand sanitizer
- Ventilation
- Talking quietly
- Losing weight

# VOCABULARY MATCHING

## Paragraph 1

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| 1. mutation       | a. A variety of a microorganism.   |
| 2. detected       | b. Marked something for attention or treatment in a specified way.                 |
| 3. flagged        | c. Discovered or identified the presence or existence of.                          |
| 4. epidemiologist | d. Have enough money to pay for something.   |
| 5. strain         | e. The action or process of changing in form or nature.                            |
| 6. evade          | f. A person who studies or is an expert in diseases.                               |
| 7. afford         | g. Escape or stay away from someone or something, especially by guile or trickery. |

## Paragraph 2

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 8. pose           | h. Of a disease or poison that is extremely severe or harmful in its effects.   |
| 9. virulent       | i. Cause something to occur in a particular way or to have a particular nature. |
| 10. transmissible | j. Finally; in the end.   |
| 11. resistant     | k. How spreadable a virus or disease is.  |
| 12. determine     | l. In every case or on every occasion; always.                                  |
| 13. invariably    | m. The ability not to be affected by something, especially something bad.       |
| 14. ultimately    | n. Present or constitute a problem or danger.                                   |

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211129-omicron.html>

## 1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

1. The new Omicron variant was named by South Africa's government. **T / F**
2. The Omicron variant was first reported in Botswana on November 19. **T / F**
3. Israel, Madagascar and Belgium have reported cases of Omicron. **T / F**
4. Epidemiologists say current vaccines will protect us against Omicron. **T / F**
5. Scientists have found 50 different genetic changes in Omicron. **T / F**
6. Vaccines currently in use focus on the centre of the coronavirus crown. **T / F**
7. Scientists need over two months to know if vaccines can fight Omicron. **T / F**
8. The White House said Omicron would spread all across the world. **T / F**

## 2. SYNONYM MATCH: (The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                       |                |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1. <b>variant</b>     | a. deadly      |
| 2. <b>spread</b>      | b. catching    |
| 3. <b>flagged</b>     | c. present     |
| 4. <b>infectious</b>  | d. always      |
| 5. <b>evade</b>       | e. form        |
| 6. <b>pose</b>        | f. find out    |
| 7. <b>focus</b>       | g. dodge       |
| 8. <b>virulent</b>    | h. disseminate |
| 9. <b>determine</b>   | i. concentrate |
| 10. <b>invariably</b> | j. marked      |

## 3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. The WHO named the                     | a. pose                 |
| 2. flagged as a virus of                 | b. travel bans          |
| 3. this new strain could be              | c. changes in the DNA   |
| 4. They also said it may be able to      | d. of transmissibility  |
| 5. This has led to countries reinstating | e. extremely infectious |
| 6. assess the dangers it might           | f. mutation Omicron     |
| 7. They have detected 50 genetic         | g. vaccines             |
| 8. make the virus more                   | h. evade protections    |
| 9. more resistant against                | i. virulent             |
| 10. showing this degree                  | j. concern              |

# GAP FILL

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211129-omicron.html>

A new (1) \_\_\_\_\_ of the covid-19 virus is beginning to spread worldwide. The WHO named the mutation Omicron, after a letter of the Greek (2) \_\_\_\_\_. It was first reported in Botswana on the 9th of November. Two weeks later, it was (3) \_\_\_\_\_ in South Africa and flagged as a "virus of (4) \_\_\_\_\_". Soon after this, cases were (5) \_\_\_\_\_ in Hong Kong, Israel, Madagascar and Belgium. Epidemiologists have warned that this new strain could be extremely (6) \_\_\_\_\_. They also said it may be able to evade protections afforded us by current (7) \_\_\_\_\_. This has led to countries reinstating travel bans. Despite these, new (8) \_\_\_\_\_ have already been reported in the UK, Germany and the Czech Republic.

*alphabet*  
*infectious*  
*detected*  
*cases*  
*reported*  
*vaccines*  
*variant*  
*concern*

Scientists are (9) \_\_\_\_\_ analyzing Omicron to assess the dangers it might pose. They have (10) \_\_\_\_\_ 50 genetic changes in the DNA that affects the spikes (11) \_\_\_\_\_ the crown of the virus. Current vaccines focus on these spikes. Any changes in the DNA of the spikes could make the virus more (12) \_\_\_\_\_, more transmissible and possibly more resistant against vaccines. Scientists say it could take a few weeks to (13) \_\_\_\_\_ how effective our vaccines are against Omicron. The White House's (14) \_\_\_\_\_ medical adviser has warned that: "When you have a virus that is showing this (15) \_\_\_\_\_ of transmissibility, and you're already having travel-related cases...it almost invariably is (16) \_\_\_\_\_ going to go all over [the world]."

*surrounding*  
*determine*  
*currently*  
*degree*  
*virulent*  
*detected*  
*ultimately*  
*chief*

# LISTENING – Guess the answers. Listen to check.

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211129-omicron.html>

- 1) A new variant of the covid-19 virus is beginning \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. to spared worldwide
  - b. twos spread worldwide
  - c. two spread worldwide
  - d. to spread worldwide
- 2) The WHO named the mutation Omicron, after a letter of \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. the Greek alpha beta
  - b. the Greek alphabet
  - c. the Greek alpha bet
  - d. the Greek Al for bet
- 3) Two weeks later, it was detected in South Africa and flagged as a " \_\_\_\_\_ "
  - a. virus oft concern
  - b. virus off concern
  - c. virus if concern
  - d. virus of concern
- 4) Epidemiologists have warned that this new strain could \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. be extremity infectious
  - b. be extremely infectious
  - c. be eggs stream lymph vexes
  - d. be eggs stream lee insect juice
- 5) This has led to countries \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. reinstating travel buns
  - b. reinstating travel bins
  - c. reinstating travel burns
  - d. reinstating travel bans
- 6) Scientists are currently analyzing Omicron to assess the dangers \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. it might pose
  - b. it might prose
  - c. it might posse
  - d. it might oppose
- 7) changes in the DNA that affects the spikes \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. surrounding the crown
  - b. surround din the crown
  - c. surround in the crown
  - d. sir round in the crown
- 8) Any changes in the DNA of the spikes could make the \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. virus more opulent
  - b. virus more petulant
  - c. virus more flatulent
  - d. virus more virulent
- 9) more transmissible and possibly more \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. resistance against vaccines
  - b. resistant again vaccines
  - c. resistant against vaccines
  - d. resistance a gains vaccines
- 10) When you have a virus that is showing this \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. decree of trans miss ability
  - b. decree of transmits ability
  - c. degree off transmissibility
  - d. degree of transmissibility

# LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211129-omicron.html>

A (1) \_\_\_\_\_ the covid-19 virus is beginning to spread worldwide. The WHO (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Omicron, after a letter of the Greek alphabet. It was first reported in Botswana on the 9th of November. Two weeks later, it (3) \_\_\_\_\_ South Africa and flagged as a "virus of concern". Soon after this, cases were reported in Hong Kong, Israel, Madagascar and Belgium. Epidemiologists have warned that this new strain could (4) \_\_\_\_\_. They also said it may be able (5) \_\_\_\_\_ afforded us by current vaccines. This has led to countries (6) \_\_\_\_\_. Despite these, new cases have already been reported in the UK, Germany and the Czech Republic.

Scientists are currently analyzing Omicron to (7) \_\_\_\_\_ it might pose. They have detected 50 genetic changes in the DNA that affects the spikes surrounding the crown of the virus. Current (8) \_\_\_\_\_ these spikes. Any changes in the DNA of the spikes could make the virus (9) \_\_\_\_\_ transmissible and possibly more resistant against vaccines. Scientists say it could take a few weeks to (10) \_\_\_\_\_ our vaccines are against Omicron. The White House's chief medical adviser has warned that: "When you have a virus that is showing (11) \_\_\_\_\_ transmissibility, and you're already having travel-related cases...it almost (12) \_\_\_\_\_ going to go all over [the world]."



# COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211129-omicron.html>

1. Who named the new variant Omicron?
2. Where was the variant first reported?
3. What is Omicron being flagged as?
4. Who warned Omicron could be extremely infectious?
5. What have many countries reinstated?
6. How many genetic changes in Omicron have scientists discovered?
7. What do current vaccines focus on?
8. How long might it take scientists to find out how dangerous Omicron is?
9. Which member of the White House staff commented on Omicron?
10. Where did the White House staffer say Omicron might travel?

# MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211129-omicron.html>

- 1) Who named the new variant Omicron?
  - a) South Africa's government
  - b) the WHO
  - c) the Greek Alphabet Association
  - d) a person got covid
- 2) Where was the variant first reported?
  - a) Israel
  - b) South Africa
  - c) Hong Kong
  - d) Botswana
- 3) What is Omicron being flagged as?
  - a) a worry
  - b) extremely dangerous
  - c) a virus of concern
  - d) a warning
- 4) Who warned Omicron could be extremely infectious?
  - a) epidemiologists
  - b) neurologists
  - c) entomologists
  - d) endocrinologists
- 5) What have many countries reinstated?
  - a) mask wearing
  - b) travel bans
  - c) social distancing
  - d) working from home
- 6) How many genetic changes in Omicron have scientists discovered?
  - a) 50
  - b) 40
  - c) 60
  - d) 20
- 7) What do current vaccines focus on?
  - a) white blood cells
  - b) arms
  - c) coronavirus spikes
  - d) the respiratory system
- 8) How long might it take scientists to find out how dangerous Omicron is?
  - a) a few weeks
  - b) days
  - c) hours
  - d) ages
- 9) Which member of the White House staff commented on Omicron?
  - a) the special advisor to the President
  - b) the chief of staff
  - c) the special advisor to vaccines
  - d) the chief medical adviser
- 10) Where did the White House staffer say Omicron might travel?
  - a) to warmer countries
  - b) across the continent of Africa
  - c) all over the world
  - d) to colder countries

# ROLE PLAY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211129-omicron.html>

## **Role A – Hand Washing**

You think hand washing is the best way to keep covid-19 at bay. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their methods. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): mask wearing, social distancing or ventilation.

## **Role B – Mask Wearing**

You think mask wearing is the best way to keep covid-19 at bay. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their methods. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): hand washing, social distancing or ventilation.

## **Role C – Social Distancing**

You think social distancing is the best way to keep covid-19 at bay. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their methods. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): mask wearing, hand washing or ventilation.

## **Role D – Ventilation**

You think ventilation is the best way to keep covid-19 at bay. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their methods. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): mask wearing, social distancing or hand washing.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211129-omicron.html>

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'virus' and 'vaccine'.

<b>virus</b>	<b>vaccine</b>
--------------	----------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• beginning</li><li>• letter</li><li>• flagged</li><li>• strain</li><li>• evade</li><li>• despite</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• currently</li><li>• 50</li><li>• focus</li><li>• possibly</li><li>• chief</li><li>• ultimately</li></ul>
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# OMICRON SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211129-omicron.html>

Write five GOOD questions about Omicron in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

# OMICRON DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'virus'?
3. What do you know about the Omicron variant?
4. How worried are you about covid-19?
5. What success has your country had with covid-19?
6. How dangerous do you think Omicron will be?
7. What do you do stay safe during the pandemic?
8. Do you think people will take necessary precautions against Omicron?
9. What do you think of the covid vaccines?
10. What advice do you have for people now Omicron is here?

*Omicron coronavirus variant spreading worldwide – 29th November, 2021*  
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# OMICRON DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'vaccine'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. What dangers might Omicron pose?
15. What happens if Omicron is very virulent and transmissible?
16. Have you argued with anyone about covid-19?
17. How has the current pandemic affected your life?
18. When do you think the pandemic will be over?
19. Do you think there should be a global travel ban?
20. What questions would you like to ask epidemiologists?

## **DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)**

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

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## **DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)**

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

# LANGUAGE - CLOZE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211129-omicron.html>

A new variant of the covid-19 virus is (1) \_\_\_\_\_ to spread worldwide. The WHO named the mutation Omicron, after a (2) \_\_\_\_\_ of the Greek alphabet. It was first reported in Botswana on the 9th of November. Two weeks later, it was (3) \_\_\_\_\_ in South Africa and flagged as a "virus of concern". Soon after this, cases were reported in Hong Kong, Israel, Madagascar and Belgium. Epidemiologists have warned that this new (4) \_\_\_\_\_ could be extremely infectious. They also said it may be able to (5) \_\_\_\_\_ protections afforded us by current vaccines. This has led to countries (6) \_\_\_\_\_ travel bans. Despite these, new cases have already been reported in the UK, Germany and the Czech Republic.

Scientists are currently analyzing Omicron to assess the dangers it might (7) \_\_\_\_\_. They have detected 50 genetic changes in the DNA that affects the spikes (8) \_\_\_\_\_ the crown of the virus. Current vaccines focus on these spikes. Any changes in the DNA of the spikes could make the virus more (9) \_\_\_\_\_, more transmissible and possibly more resistant against vaccines. Scientists say it could take a few weeks to (10) \_\_\_\_\_ how effective our vaccines are against Omicron. The White House's chief medical adviser has warned that: "When you have a virus that is showing this (11) \_\_\_\_\_ of transmissibility, and you're already having travel-related cases...it almost invariably is (12) \_\_\_\_\_ going to go all over [the world]."

## Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- |     |                 |                |                |                 |
|-----|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1.  | (a) beginning   | (b) began      | (c) beginnings | (d) begins      |
| 2.  | (a) mark        | (b) character  | (c) letter     | (d) symbol      |
| 3.  | (a) defected    | (b) detected   | (c) deflated   | (d) dejected    |
| 4.  | (a) pressure    | (b) anxiety    | (c) stress     | (d) strain      |
| 5.  | (a) evade       | (b) invade     | (c) pervade    | (d) void        |
| 6.  | (a) warning     | (b) cautioning | (c) banning    | (d) reinstating |
| 7.  | (a) prose       | (b) pose       | (c) oppose     | (d) suppose     |
| 8.  | (a) fencing in  | (b) confining  | (c) besieging  | (d) surrounding |
| 9.  | (a) ebullient   | (b) flatulent  | (c) virulent   | (d) corpulent   |
| 10. | (a) detriment   | (b) determine  | (c) demarcate  | (d) delimit     |
| 11. | (a) station     | (b) degree     | (c) status     | (d) standing    |
| 12. | (a) penultimate | (b) ultimate   | (c) ultimately | (d) ultimatum   |



# SPELLING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211129-omicron.html>

## Paragraph 1

1. The WHO named the mtuintoa Omicron
2. after a letter of the Greek athbpale
3. it was eeetdcdt in South Africa
4. this new strain could be extremely icefuitnos
5. it may be able to vdeae protections
6. current ascinvce

## Paragraph 2

7. 50 teiengc changes in the DNA
8. make the virus more vnetulri
9. possibly more nsettsrai
10. take a few weeks to inemtdree how effective
11. this degree of siybtsisinramitl
12. ealmtiyiltu going to go all over the world

# PUT THE TEXT BACK TOGETHER

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211129-omicron.html>

**Number these lines in the correct order.**

- ( ) protections afforded us by current vaccines. This has led to countries reinstating travel bans. Despite these, new
- ( ) concern". Soon after this, cases were reported in Hong Kong, Israel, Madagascar and Belgium. Epidemiologists have
- ( ) Scientists are currently analyzing Omicron to assess the dangers it might pose. They have detected 50 genetic
- ( ) medical adviser has warned that: "When you have a virus that is showing this degree
- ( ) focus on these spikes. Any changes in the DNA of the spikes could make the virus more virulent, more
- ( ) cases have already been reported in the UK, Germany and the Czech Republic.
- ( ) determine how effective our vaccines are against Omicron. The White House's chief
- ( **1** ) A new variant of the covid-19 virus is beginning to spread worldwide. The WHO named the mutation
- ( ) Omicron, after a letter of the Greek alphabet. It was first reported in Botswana on
- ( ) transmissible and possibly more resistant against vaccines. Scientists say it could take a few weeks to
- ( ) warned that this new strain could be extremely infectious. They also said it may be able to evade
- ( ) of transmissibility, and you're already having travel-related cases...it almost invariably is ultimately going to go all over [the world]."
- ( ) changes in the DNA that affects the spikes surrounding the crown of the virus. Current vaccines
- ( ) the 9th of November. Two weeks later, it was detected in South Africa and flagged as a "virus of

# PUT THE WORDS IN THE RIGHT ORDER

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211129-omicron.html>

1. to is The covid-19 virus spread beginning worldwide .
2. could be new infectious . This strain extremely
3. protections Evade by vaccines . us current afforded
4. led This has to countries bans . reinstating travel
5. already Cases have UK . in the reported been
6. assess Omicron Analyzing poses . the dangers to it
7. of virus . spikes the surrounding Affects the crown
8. virulent . The make the spikes more could virus
9. few could to determine . take weeks a It
10. degree showing virus A this that's transmissibility . of

# CIRCLE THE CORRECT WORD (20 PAIRS)

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211129-omicron.html>

A new variant of the covid-19 virus is beginning to spread worldwide. The WHO named the mutation Omicron, *after* / *before* a letter of the Greek alphabet. It was first reported in Botswana on the 9th of November. Two weeks later, it was *defected* / *detected* in South Africa and *flagged* / *flogged* as a "virus of *anxiety* / *concern*". Soon after this, *causes* / *cases* were reported in Hong Kong, Israel, Madagascar and Belgium. Epidemiologists have warned that this new *stress* / *strain* could be *extremely* / *extremity* infectious. They also said it may be able to *pervade* / *evade* protections afforded us by current vaccines. This has led to countries reinstating travel *bins* / *bans*. Despite *these* / *them*, new cases have already been reported in the UK, Germany and the Czech Republic.

Scientists are *currently* / *currency* analyzing Omicron to assess the dangers it might pose. They have detected 50 genetic *chances* / *changes* in the DNA that *affects* / *effects* the spikes surrounding the *tiara* / *crown* of the virus. Current vaccines focus on these spikes. Any changes in the DNA of the spikes could make the virus more *virulent* / *vacant*, more transmissible and possibly more resistant against vaccines. Scientists say it could take a few weeks to *detriment* / *determine* how effective our vaccines are against Omicron. The White House's chief medical *adviser* / *reviser* has warned that: "When you have a virus that is *showing* / *shown* this degree of transmissibility, and you're *already* / *readily* having travel-related cases...it almost *invariably* / *variable* is ultimately going to go all over [the world]."

**Talk about the connection between each pair of words in italics, and why the correct word is correct.**

# INSERT THE VOWELS (a, e, i, o, u)

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\_ n\_w v\_r\_\_nt \_f th\_ c\_v\_d-19 v\_r\_s \_s b\_g\_nn\_ng t\_ spr\_\_d w\_rldw\_d\_. Th\_ WH\_ n\_m\_d th\_ m\_t\_t\_\_n \_m\_cr\_n, \_ft\_r \_l\_ttr \_f th\_ Gr\_\_k \_lph\_b\_t. \_t w\_s f\_rst r\_p\_rt\_d \_n B\_tsw\_n\_ \_n th\_ 9th \_f N\_v\_mb\_r. Tw\_ w\_\_ks l\_t\_r, \_t w\_s d\_t\_ct\_d \_n S\_\_th \_fr\_c\_ \_nd fl\_gg\_d \_s \_ "v\_r\_s \_f c\_nc\_rn". S\_\_n \_ft\_r th\_s, c\_s\_s w\_r\_ r\_p\_rt\_d \_n H\_ng K\_ng, \_sr\_\_l, M\_d\_g\_sc\_r \_nd B\_lg\_\_m. \_p\_d\_m\_\_l\_g\_sts h\_v\_ w\_rn\_d th\_t th\_s n\_w str\_\_n c\_\_ld b\_ \_xtr\_m\_ly \_nf\_ct\_\_s. Th\_y \_ls\_s\_\_d \_t m\_y b\_ \_bl\_ t\_ \_v\_d\_ pr\_t\_ct\_\_ns \_ff\_rd\_d \_s by c\_rr\_nt v\_cc\_n\_s. Th\_s h\_s l\_d t\_ c\_\_ntr\_\_s r\_\_nst\_t\_ng tr\_v\_l b\_ns. D\_sp\_t\_ th\_s\_, n\_w c\_s\_s h\_v\_ \_lr\_\_dy b\_\_n r\_p\_rt\_d \_n th\_ \_K, G\_rm\_ny \_nd th\_ Cz\_ch R\_p\_bl\_c.

Sc\_\_nt\_sts \_r\_ c\_rr\_ntly \_n\_lyz\_ng \_m\_cr\_n t\_ \_ss\_s\_s th\_ d\_ng\_rs \_t m\_ght p\_s\_. Th\_y h\_v\_ d\_t\_ct\_d 50 g\_n\_t\_c ch\_ng\_s \_n th\_ DN\_ th\_t \_ff\_cts th\_ sp\_k\_s s\_rr\_\_nd\_ng th\_ cr\_wn \_f th\_ v\_r\_s. C\_rr\_nt v\_cc\_n\_s f\_c\_s \_n th\_s\_ sp\_k\_s. \_ny ch\_ng\_s \_n th\_ DN\_ \_f th\_ sp\_k\_s c\_\_ld m\_k\_ th\_ v\_r\_s m\_r\_ v\_r\_l\_nt, m\_r\_ tr\_nsm\_ss\_bl\_ \_nd p\_ss\_bly m\_r\_ r\_s\_st\_nt \_g\_\_nst v\_cc\_n\_s. Sc\_\_nt\_sts s\_y \_t c\_\_ld t\_k\_ \_f\_w w\_\_ks t\_ d\_t\_rm\_n\_ h\_w \_ff\_ct\_v\_ \_\_r v\_cc\_n\_s \_r\_ \_g\_\_nst \_m\_cr\_n. Th\_ Wh\_t\_ H\_\_s\_'s ch\_\_f m\_d\_c\_l \_dv\_s\_r h\_s w\_rn\_d th\_t: "Wh\_n y\_\_ h\_v\_ \_ v\_r\_s th\_t \_s sh\_w\_ng th\_s d\_gr\_\_ \_f tr\_nsm\_ss\_b\_l\_ty, \_nd y\_\_'r\_ \_lr\_\_dy h\_v\_ng tr\_v\_l-r\_l\_t\_d c\_s\_s...t \_lm\_st \_nv\_r\_\_bly \_s \_lt\_m\_t\_ly g\_\_ng t\_ g\_ \_ll \_v\_r [th\_ w\_rld]."

# PUNCTUATE THE TEXT AND ADD CAPITALS

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a new variant of the covid19 virus is beginning to spread worldwide the who named the mutation omicron after a letter of the greek alphabet it was first reported in botswana on the 9th of november two weeks later it was detected in south africa and flagged as a virus of concern soon after this cases were reported in hong kong israel madagascar and belgium epidemiologists have warned that this new strain could be extremely infectious they also said it may be able to evade protections afforded us by current vaccines this has led to countries reinstating travel bans despite these new cases have already been reported in the uk germany and the czech republic

scientists are currently analyzing omicron to assess the dangers it might pose they have detected 50 genetic changes in the dna that affects the spikes surrounding the crown of the virus current vaccines focus on these spikes any changes in the dna of the spikes could make the virus more virulent more transmissible and possibly more resistant against vaccines scientists say it could take a few weeks to determine how effective our vaccines are against omicron the white houses chief medical adviser has warned that when you have a virus that is showing this degree of transmissibility and youre already having travelrelated cases it almost invariably is ultimately going to go all over the world

# PUT A SLASH ( / ) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2111/211129-omicron.html>

A new variant of the covid-19 virus is beginning to spread worldwide. The WHO named the mutation Omicron, after a letter of the Greek alphabet. It was first reported in Botswana on the 9th of November. Two weeks later, it was detected in South Africa and flagged as a "virus of concern". Soon after this, cases were reported in Hong Kong, Israel, Madagascar and Belgium. Epidemiologists have warned that this new strain could be extremely infectious. They also said it may be able to evade protections afforded us by current vaccines. This has led to countries reinstating travel bans. Despite these, new cases have already been reported in the UK, Germany and the Czech Republic. Scientists are currently analyzing Omicron to assess the dangers it might pose. They have detected 50 genetic changes in the DNA that affect the spikes surrounding the crown of the virus. Current vaccines focus on these spikes. Any changes in the DNA of the spikes could make the virus more virulent, more transmissible and possibly more resistant against vaccines. Scientists say it could take a few weeks to determine how effective our vaccines are against Omicron. The White House's chief medical adviser has warned that: "When you have a virus that is showing this degree of transmissibility, and you're already having travel-related cases... it almost invariably is ultimately going to go all over [the world]."







# 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 out more about this news story. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. OMICRON:** Make a poster about Omicron. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. MASKS:** Write a magazine article about mandating mask wearing worldwide to limit the spread of Omicron. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against this.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?** Write a newspaper article about the next stage in this news story. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Give each other feedback on your articles.

**6. LETTER:** Write a letter to an expert on covid-19. Ask him/her three questions about it. Give him/her three of your ideas on how to limit it. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## VOCABULARY (p.4)

1. e    2. c    3. b    4. f    5. a    6. g    7. d  
8. n    9. h    10. k    11. m    12. i    13. l    14. j

## TRUE / FALSE (p.5)

- 1 F    2 F    3 T    4 F    5 T    6 F    7 F    8 T

## SYNONYM MATCH (p.5)

1. e	2. h	3. j	4. b	5. g
6. c	7. i	8. a	9. f	10. d

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS (p.9)

1. The WHO
2. Botswana
3. A virus of concern
4. Epidemiologists
5. Travel bans
6. Fifty
7. Coronavirus spikes
8. A few weeks
9. The chief medical adviser
10. All over the world

## WORDS IN THE RIGHT ORDER (p.19)

1. The covid-19 virus is beginning to spread worldwide.
2. This new strain could be extremely infectious.
3. Evade protections afforded us by current vaccines.
4. This has led to countries reinstating travel bans.
5. Cases have already been reported in the UK.
6. Analyzing Omicron to assess the dangers it poses.
7. Affects spikes surrounding the crown of the virus.
8. The spikes could make the virus more virulent.
9. It could take a few weeks to determine.
10. A virus that's showing this degree of transmissibility.

## MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ (p.10)

1. b    2. d    3. c    4. a    5. b    6. a    7. c    8. a    9. d    10. c

## ALL OTHER EXERCISES

Please check for yourself by looking at the Article on page 2.  
(It's good for your English ;-)