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**Level 2 – 16th November 2023**

## **Diseases in 'Factor X' could be next global threat**

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

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2311/231116-factor-x-2.html>

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**Please try Levels 0, 1 and 3. They are (a little) harder.**

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# THE READING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2311/231116-factor-x-2.html>

Ancient bacteria under frozen ground could contain many deadly diseases. The microbes have been trapped for millennia in permafrost. This is ground that stays completely frozen for at least two years. It is common in mountains and near the North and South Poles. The permafrost is melting because of climate change. The result could be the release of unknown, harmful viruses. Scientists are calling these 'Factor X'. A professor in infectious diseases said we know little about Factor X and the biological dangers trapped in Earth's permafrost.

A virologist says there are viruses in the permafrost that are more than 50,000 years old. These could be harmful to humans. The virologist said unknown, "ancient viruses up to a million years old" could be terrifying because we have never seen them before. He added that deadly bacterial diseases like smallpox could be released worldwide. Factor X could be an even bigger problem. However, many scientists say the release of methane is a bigger danger from melting permafrost. Methane is a greenhouse gas that is 80 times more harmful than CO<sub>2</sub>.

Sources: <https://www.newsweek.com/scientists-fear-cataclysmic-disease-emerge-earth-permafrost-climate-change-pandemic-1842724>  
<https://www.sciencealert.com/a-dangerous-factor-x-could-be-lurking-in-earths-ice-scientist-warns>  
<https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/world/rising-global-temperature-could-awaken-ancient-pathogens-in-russian-permafrost/ar-AA1jS25C>

# PHRASE MATCHING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2311/231116-factor-x-2.html>

## PARAGRAPH ONE:

- |                                     |                          |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Ancient bacteria under           | a. Poles                 |
| 2. The microbes have been           | b. least two years       |
| 3. completely frozen for at         | c. 'Factor X'            |
| 4. near the North and South         | d. dangers               |
| 5. permafrost is melting because of | e. frozen ground         |
| 6. Scientists are calling these     | f. diseases              |
| 7. A professor in infectious        | g. climate change        |
| 8. the biological                   | h. trapped for millennia |

## PARAGRAPH TWO:

- |                                |                           |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. viruses in the              | a. to a million years old |
| 2. These could be harmful      | b. greenhouse gas         |
| 3. ancient viruses up          | c. like smallpox          |
| 4. we have never seen          | d. bigger danger          |
| 5. deadly bacterial diseases   | e. harmful than CO2       |
| 6. the release of methane is a | f. them before            |
| 7. Methane is a                | g. permafrost             |
| 8. 80 times more               | h. to humans              |

# LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2311/231116-factor-x-2.html>

Ancient bacteria (1) \_\_\_\_\_ could contain many deadly diseases. The microbes have (2) \_\_\_\_\_ millennia in permafrost. This is ground that stays completely frozen (3) \_\_\_\_\_ two years. It is common in mountains and near the North and South Poles. The permafrost is melting (4) \_\_\_\_\_ change. The result could be the release of unknown, harmful viruses. Scientists are calling these 'Factor X'. A professor (5) \_\_\_\_\_ said we know little about Factor X and (6) \_\_\_\_\_ trapped in Earth's permafrost.

A virologist says there (7) \_\_\_\_\_ the permafrost that are more than 50,000 years old. These could be (8) \_\_\_\_\_. The virologist said unknown, "ancient viruses (9) \_\_\_\_\_ million years old" could be terrifying because we have never seen them before. He added that (10) \_\_\_\_\_ like smallpox could be released worldwide. Factor X could be an (11) \_\_\_\_\_. However, many scientists say the release of methane is a bigger danger from melting permafrost. Methane is a greenhouse gas that is 80 times (12) \_\_\_\_\_ CO<sub>2</sub>.

# PUT A SLASH ( / ) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2311/231116-factor-x-2.html>

Ancient bacteria under frozen ground could contain many deadly diseases. The microbes have been trapped for millennia in permafrost. This is ground that stays completely frozen for at least two years. It is common in mountains and near the North and South Poles. The permafrost is melting because of climate change. The result could be the release of unknown, harmful viruses. Scientists are calling these 'Factor X'. A professor in infectious diseases said we know little about Factor X and the biological danger trapped in Earth's permafrost. A virologist says there are viruses in the permafrost that are more than 50,000 years old. These could be harmful to humans. The virologist said unknown, "ancient viruses up to a million years old" could be terrifying because we have never seen them before. He added that deadly bacterial diseases like smallpox could be released worldwide. Factor X could be an even bigger problem. However, many scientists say the release of methane is a bigger danger from melting permafrost. Methane is a greenhouse gas that is 80 times more harmful than CO<sub>2</sub>.

# WORLD THREATS SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2311/231116-factor-x-2.html>

Write five GOOD questions about world threats 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.

## WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student A: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

d) \_\_\_\_\_

e) \_\_\_\_\_

f) \_\_\_\_\_

*Diseases in 'Factor X' could be next global threat – 16th November 2023*  
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## WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student B: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

d) \_\_\_\_\_

e) \_\_\_\_\_

f) \_\_\_\_\_

