

# Face Masks

## Pre-Reading

### A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Why do health-care workers wear face masks?
2. Why do everyday citizens sometimes need face masks?
3. Do you have a face mask? If yes, when and where do you wear it? If no, why not?



### B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ___ 1. essential ( <i>noun</i> )           | a) required by law   |
| ___ 2. pandemic                            | b) a new way of doing something that many people are already doing                               |
| ___ 3. social distancing                   | c) something that is very important  |
| ___ 4. mandatory                           | d) the state of not having enough of something   |
| ___ 5. shortage                            | e) the global spread of a new disease  |
| ___ 6. personal protective equipment (PPE) | f) masks, gloves, gowns, and other equipment worn to prevent the spread of disease               |
| ___ 7. first responders                    | g) the first people to arrive at the scene of an emergency                                       |
| ___ 8. face the reality                    | h) negative ideas that many members of society think about a specific thing                      |
| ___ 9. stigma                              | i) to realize the difficult truth  |
| ___ 10. the new normal                     | j) staying a safe physical distance away from others in order to prevent the spread of a disease |

## Reading

### FACE MASKS

#### *The New Normal*

1. Do you need to pick up some **essentials** at the grocery store? Don't forget your face mask! Before the COVID-19 **pandemic**, shoppers had to remember to bring their reusable shopping bags. Now they have to remember a face mask. Face masks help reduce the spread of disease in places where **social distancing** is difficult, such as grocery stores.
2. The main purpose of wearing a face mask during a public health crisis is to help protect others from getting sick from you. Without a face mask, you could pass an infectious disease to another person by simply sneezing or coughing. Even if you don't feel sick, you might be carrying the coronavirus. In fact, some establishments have even made face masks **mandatory** in order to protect the staff and patrons.
3. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, health experts asked everyday citizens not to purchase face masks. After all, there was a **shortage** of **personal protective equipment (PPE)** for health specialists and **first responders**. Later, health experts said it was a good idea for non-essential workers to wear face masks in public places. In some hard-hit places like New York City, wearing a face mask became a civic duty.
4. Even though most people understand the necessity of face masks, many people don't wear one. Unlike hats or scarves, face masks don't look or feel good. Face masks also make it difficult to do everyday things like talk and eat. And, let's face it—face masks even feel a bit scary when you aren't used to wearing or seeing them in your own city or place of work. They also force us to **face the reality** that the world is experiencing troubling times.
5. Face masks are becoming so common, however, that they are starting to lose their **stigma**, even in countries where face masks were previously rare. In fact, these days, people are more uncomfortable getting caught without a mask than with one. Have face masks become **the new normal**?

*“Return to normalcy will require the widespread acceptance and adoption of mask wearing...”*

—Dr. Fauci, infectious disease specialist

## Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs and write the answers in your notebook.

1. How has grocery shopping changed since the pandemic?
2. What is the main reason for an everyday citizen to wear a mask in public during a pandemic?
3. Why should you wear a face mask even if you don't feel sick?
4. What was there a shortage of at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic?
5. What is paragraph 4 mainly about?
6. According to the reading, why are face masks beginning to lose their stigma?

## Vocabulary Review

Use the word list to create six words or expressions. Write example sentences for each one.

**Word List:**

- infectious
- social
- face
- personal
- face the
- disease
- the new
- reality
- normal
- masks
- protective equipment
- distancing

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

# Grammar Review

## A. Review

Review the usage of a common modal of advice.

### Should

*Should* is the most common modal of advice.

Modals are always followed by a base verb.  
A base verb is a verb with no ending (-s, -ed, -ing, etc.) added to it.

- You should wear a mask at the grocery store.
- You should place your mask over your nose and your mouth.
- You should wash your mask regularly.

Use the modal *should* at the beginning of a question when asking for advice.

- Should I wear a mask in the car?
- Should my kids have face masks on too?
- Should we make face masks or buy them?

## B. Practice

Use the prompts to write questions or suggestions with *should*.

Ex. 1: kids / wear / face masks (question)

Answer: Should kids wear face masks?

Ex. 2: you / wear / face mask / work (suggestion)

Answer: You should wear a face mask at work.

1. pets / wear / face masks (question)

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2. children / wear / face masks / school (suggestion)

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3. we / sew / face masks / home (suggestion)

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4. I / reuse / face mask (question)

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5. they / buy / cloth or paper / face masks (question)

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## Usage Note

### To Face

The verb “to face” means to realize or accept that something is bad but true.

- Face it! The kids are not going back to school this semester.
- It’s time to face the facts. The cruise we booked for next year is going to be canceled.
- I can’t face going to the gardening store. It’s so crowded and some people aren’t wearing a mask.



## Discussion

1. Should world leaders wear face masks?  
Why should or shouldn't they?
2. Should children wear face masks to school until a COVID-19 vaccine is available?
3. Would you dine in a restaurant where face masks are mandatory?
4. Will masks become fashionable?
5. What do you like least about face masks?

## Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

### FACE MASKS

*The New Normal*

1. Do you need to pick up some \_\_\_\_\_ at the grocery store? Don't forget your face mask! Before the COVID-19 \_\_\_\_\_, shoppers had to remember to bring their reusable shopping bags. Now they have to remember a face mask. Face masks help reduce the spread of disease in places where social distancing is difficult, such as grocery stores.
2. The main purpose of wearing a face mask during a public health crisis is to help protect others from getting sick from you. Without a face mask, you could pass an \_\_\_\_\_ disease to another person by simply sneezing or coughing. Even if you don't feel sick, you might be carrying the coronavirus. In fact, some establishments have even made face masks \_\_\_\_\_ in order to protect the staff and patrons.
3. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, health experts asked everyday citizens not to purchase face masks. After all, there was a \_\_\_\_\_ of personal protective equipment (PPE) for health specialists and \_\_\_\_\_. Later, health experts said it was a good idea for non-essential workers to wear face masks in public places. In some hard-hit places like New York City, wearing a face mask became a civic duty.
4. Even though most people understand the necessity of face masks, many people don't wear one. Unlike hats or scarves, face masks don't look or feel good. Face masks also make it difficult to do everyday things like talk and eat. And, let's \_\_\_\_\_ —face masks even feel a bit scary when you aren't used to wearing or seeing them in your own city or place of work. They also force us to \_\_\_\_\_ that the world is experiencing troubling times.
5. Face masks are becoming so common, however, that they are starting to lose their \_\_\_\_\_, even in countries where face masks were previously rare. In fact, these days, people are more uncomfortable getting caught without a mask than with one. Have face masks become \_\_\_\_\_?

# Answer Key

### LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Should everyone wear face masks in public during a pandemic? In this lesson, students discuss the importance of face masks and the reasons why some people don't wear them. This lesson includes a review of modals of advice.

### TEACHING TIPS:

See *Discussion Starters Teaching Guide* (<https://esllibrary.com/courses/72/lessons/>) for a variety of ways to use the reading.

**LEVEL:** Int

**TIME:** 1.5–2 hours

**TAGS:** discussion, fashion, first responders, health care, health, PPE, social distancing, pandemic, face masks, Dr. Fauci

## Pre-Reading

### A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or discuss as a class.

### B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

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

## Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. Discuss the quote. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 6. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

## Comprehension

- Many people now wear face masks at grocery stores because it's difficult to keep a safe social distance while grocery shopping.
- The main reason for an everyday citizen to wear a face mask is to protect others from getting sick.
- You might be carrying a virus without knowing it, and you can unknowingly spread it by simply coughing or sneezing.

- There was a shortage of PPE for health-care workers and first responders at the beginning of the pandemic.
- Paragraph 4 is mainly about the reasons people don't like wearing face masks.
- It's becoming more common to wear a mask than not wear one, so face masks are starting to lose their stigma.

## Vocabulary Review

Example sentences will vary.

- infectious disease
- social distancing
- face masks
- personal protective equipment
- face the reality
- the new normal

*(continued on the next page...)*

## Answer Key cont.

### Grammar Review

Go over the grammar notes about the modal of advice *should*.  
After doing the practice work, invite your students to try to make their own sentences.

If you need a full lesson on this target, try our Grammar Practice Worksheets lesson: <https://esllibrary.com/courses/88/lessons/1629>

1. Should pets wear face masks?
2. Children should wear face masks at/to school.
3. We should sew face masks at home.
4. Should I reuse my face mask?
5. Should they buy cloth or paper face masks?

### Usage Note

Review the common usage of “face” as a verb.

### Discussion

Answers will vary. Can be done in small groups or as a class.

### Listening

1. essentials, pandemic
2. infectious, mandatory
3. shortage, first responders
4. face it, face the reality
5. stigma, the new normal

### SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the word *Canceled*.  
Most other English-speaking countries spell it this way: *Cancelled*.  
Make it a challenge for your students to find this word in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spelling.