

Pandemics

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What is a pandemic?
2. How can you avoid getting sick?
3. Do you like staying home?



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. virus | a) not necessary |
| _____ | 2. Middle Ages | b) a chemical product used to kill germs |
| _____ | 3. non-essential | c) a country's money and resources |
| _____ | 4. isolate | d) an agent that invades living cells and causes an infective illness |
| _____ | 5. disinfectant | e) easily transferred from one person to another |
| _____ | 6. recent | f) to stay away from other people |
| _____ | 7. contagious | g) a period of European history between AD 1100 and 1453. |
| _____ | 8. economy | h) having happened a short time ago |

Reading

PANDEMICS

1. A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease. Often a **virus** causes the disease. Sometimes the virus begins in animals. The Black Death, a disease that killed between 75 and 200 million people during the **Middle Ages**, came from fleas that were living on rats.
2. Throughout history, there have been many pandemics. The worst pandemic of the 20th century was called the “Spanish Flu,” although it is unclear where it started. It began in 1918 and infected one-fifth of the world’s population. Fifty million people died. There was no vaccine, but people learned other ways to stop the spread of the disease. They **isolated** themselves and used **disinfectants**.
3. COVID-19 is the world’s most **recent** pandemic. Many scientists believe that the virus that caused this disease jumped from bats to humans in China in late 2019. Because the virus is so **contagious**, it quickly spread to other countries.
4. To stop the spread of COVID-19, countries started closing borders and restricting travel. Governments ordered **non-essential** businesses to close and asked people to stay home.
5. In the first ten months of the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 850,000 people died from the virus worldwide, and it damaged the **economies** of many countries. But, thanks to past pandemics, people now know ways to stay safe.

Word Forms

Word endings can be changed to make different word forms:

- **Isolation** is the best way to stop the disease. (*noun*)
- The man lived in an **isolated** part of the country. (*adjective*)
- I **isolate** myself from others to keep safe. (*verb*)

Comprehension

A. Questions

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

1. Where did the Black Death come from?
2. How did people stop the spread of the Spanish Flu?
3. What animal do many scientists think COVID-19 came from?
4. What did governments do to stop the spread of COVID-19?
5. How many people died of COVID-19 in the first ten months?

B. Sorting

Look at the topics. Which paragraph in the reading does each one belong to?

- _____ A. What happened in the first ten months of COVID-19?
- _____ B. How did countries deal with the spread of COVID-19?
- _____ C. How serious was the Spanish Flu?
- _____ D. Which pandemic occurred in the Middle Ages?
- _____ E. How did COVID-19 begin?

Movement Break

Stand up and take a pledge to keep yourself and other safe. Raise your right hand and repeat these words while marching in place. Repeat the pledge until you can do it without reading it.

- I promise to stay home if I don't feel well.
- I promise to wear a mask if I leave home.
- I promise to encourage my friends to stay home if they feel sick.
- I promise to remind others to wear a mask.

Vocabulary Review

A. Complete the Sentences

Circle the correct word or phrase to complete each sentence.

1. _____ make things clean, but they often have a strong smell.
 - a) Viruses
 - b) Pandemics
 - c) Disinfectants
2. In my opinion, cakes are _____ part of birthday parties.
 - a) an essential
 - b) a recent
 - c) a contagious
3. The _____ started after the fall of the Roman Empire.
 - a) isolation
 - b) Middle Ages
 - c) economy
4. World War II is a more _____ event than World War I.
 - a) recent
 - b) isolated
 - c) contagious
5. Please come visit me at the hospital. Broken legs are not _____ !
 - a) essential
 - b) disinfected
 - c) contagious
6. Governments need to choose what is more important—the _____ or public safety.
 - a) disinfectants
 - b) economy
 - c) Middle Ages

B. Choose the Closest Meaning

Choose the word or phrase with the closest meaning to each word.

1. isolate
 - a) distance
 - b) clean
 - c) cure
2. contagious
 - a) brave
 - b) unpleasant
 - c) transmittable
3. economy
 - a) literature
 - b) disease
 - c) resources
4. virus
 - a) society
 - b) infection
 - c) education
5. essential
 - a) foreign
 - b) necessary
 - c) comfortable
6. disinfectants
 - a) cleaning products
 - b) medical equipment
 - c) government regulations

Discussion

1. Why do you think some countries responded more slowly to COVID-19 than others?
2. Did your country make new rules during the COVID-19 crisis?
3. Do you think there will be more pandemics in the future?
4. What are some ways to stay positive while you are isolating yourself?

Class Survey

Walk around the class and ask your classmates the questions in the chart. Write their names and answers in the blank boxes.

Name	Do you know anyone who is an essential worker? Who? What is their job?	How will the world be different after COVID-19?

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

PANDEMICS

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2. Throughout history, there have been many pandemics. The worst pandemic of the 20th century was called the “Spanish Flu,” although it is unclear where it started. It began in 1918 and infected one-fifth of the world’s population. Fifty million people died. There was no vaccine, but people learned other ways to stop the spread of the disease. They _____ themselves and used _____ .
3. COVID-19 is the world’s most _____ pandemic. Many scientists believe that the virus that caused this disease jumped from bats to humans in China in late 2019. Because the virus is so _____ , it quickly spread to other countries.
4. To stop the spread of COVID-19, countries started closing _____ and restricting travel. Governments ordered non-essential businesses to _____ and asked people to stay home.
5. In the first ten months of the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 850,000 people _____ from the virus worldwide, and it damaged the _____ of many countries. But, thanks to past pandemics, people now know ways to stay safe.

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read about and discuss pandemics. They review related word forms and survey their classmates on how the world will be different after COVID-19.

TEACHING TIPS:

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

LEVEL: Low Int

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: discussion, pandemics, COVID-19, virus, economy, health, society, coronavirus

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or as a class.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

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

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. 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

A. QUESTIONS

- The Black Death came from fleas that were living on rats.
- People stopped the spread of the Spanish Flu by isolating themselves and using disinfectants.
- Many scientist think COVID-19 came from bats.
- Governments closed borders, restricted travel, and closed non-essential businesses.
- Approximately 850,000 people died from COVID-19 in the first ten months.

B. SORTING

- A. 5 B. 4 C. 2 D. 1 E. 3

Vocabulary Review

A. COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

1. c 2. a 3. b 4. a 5. c 6. b

B. CHOOSE THE CLOSEST MEANING

1. a 2. c 3. c 4. b 5. b 6. a

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Discussion

Answers will vary.

Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs.

Class Survey

Answers will vary.

Listening

1. virus, disease
2. isolated, disinfectants
3. recent, contagious
4. borders, close
5. died, economies