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Bird flu spreading to Europe

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Today's contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
After Reading	6
Discussion	7
Speaking	8
Listening Gap Fill	9
Homework	10
Answers	11

23 August, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Bird flu spreading to Europe

BNE: Bird flu is spreading west and may soon reach Western Europe.

There are fears among scientists of a global pandemic. The deadly influenza started in Asia two years ago, where it killed 61 people.

Migratory birds have since carried the virus west to Siberia. In Russia, it killed 11,000 birds and officials destroyed 127,000 others to try and halt its spread. Russia has warned European nations that the deadly H5N1 strain is on its way. Holland has ordered all chicken farmers to keep their birds indoors as a safety measure.

Dr. Evgueny Nepoklonov from Russia's Department of Agriculture has appealed for international financial help to prevent the virus from threatening human life. He said: "This isn't a problem of a single state...it is a problem of all mankind that must be studied together and that needs consolidated and well-coordinated activity." Experts believe millions of infected birds will travel to Western Europe in mid-September and then to North America. The World Health Organization is concerned the virus might spread among humans.

WARM-UPS

1. IT'S HERE: Imagine bird flu has arrived in your country. How will it affect your life? What do you want your government to do? Will you be glued to the TV? Walk around the class and talk to other students. Ask them for their latest information on news of the virus.

2. PANDEMICS: In pairs / groups, talk about the following pandemics that have affected or might affect the world. Which ones are you worried about? Which ones have directly affected your life (or might affect your life)?

- Avian bird flu
- Terrorism
- Materialism
- Coca-colarization
- Anti-Semitism
- Demonization of Muslims
- AIDS
- Pollution

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Bird flu / west / global pandemics / influenza / Asia / birds / viruses / Siberia / chickens / experts / North America / World Health Organization

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

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

5. OPINIONS: Do you agree or disagree with these opinions on bird flu? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- a. Governments will stop bird flu from becoming a threat.
- b. Bird flu will never find a way to pass from human to human.
- c. Governments should start producing drugs that fight the virus.
- d. Countries need to listen to the WHO, who says millions of people could die.
- e. Many governments wrongly believe bird flu is an "Asian problem".
- f. Bird flu will be big and develop into a deadly pandemic.
- g. Hunters should start killing all wild birds now.
- h. Eating chicken is too risky.

6. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think bird flu will become a global disaster and emergency measures should be taken now. Students B think scientists are scaring people unnecessarily and the virus will cause no human deaths. Change partners often.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Avian bird flu is migrating east. | T / F |
| b. Russian officials destroyed 127,000 birds to halt the virus' spread. | T / F |
| c. Russia has warned Europe that bird flu is on its way. | T / F |
| d. Holland has ordered its farmers to keep their chickens indoors. | T / F |
| e. A Russian doctor called for international efforts to save ducks. | T / F |
| f. This is a problem for the whole of mankind, not just one country. | T / F |
| g. There is little chance of the virus reaching North America. | T / F |
| h. The WHO has warned the virus could kill millions of people. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| a. spreading | lethal |
| b. fears | migrate |
| c. deadly | inside |
| d. destroyed | stop |
| e. indoors | slaughtered |
| f. appealed | analyzed |
| g. prevent | moving |
| h. studied | asked |
| i. travel | worried |
| j. concerned | concerns |

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

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Bird flu is spreading | its spread |
| b. There are fears among scientists | measure |
| c. Migratory birds have since | threatening human life |
| d. try and halt | financial help |
| e. safety | travel to Western Europe |
| f. appealed for international | west |
| g. prevent the virus from | spread among humans |
| h. consolidated and | of a global pandemic |
| i. millions of infected birds will | well-coordinated activity |
| j. concerned the virus might | carried the virus west |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Bird flu spreading to Europe

BNE: Bird flu is _____ west and may soon reach Western Europe. There are _____ among scientists of a global pandemic. The _____ influenza started in Asia two years ago, where it killed 61 people. Migratory birds have since _____ the virus west to Siberia. In Russia, it _____ 11,000 birds and officials destroyed 127,000 others to try and _____ its spread. Russia has warned European nations that the deadly H5N1 _____ is on its way. Holland has ordered all chicken farmers to keep their birds indoors as a safety _____.

carried
spreading
deadly
halt
measure
killed
strain
fears

Dr. Evgueny Nepoklonov from Russia's Department of Agriculture has _____ for international financial help to _____ the virus from threatening human life. He said: "This isn't a _____ of a single state...it is a problem of all _____ that must be studied together and that needs consolidated and well-coordinated _____." Experts believe millions of _____ birds will travel to Western Europe in _____ -September and then to North America. The World Health Organization is concerned the virus might _____ among humans.

mankind
mid
prevent
problem
infected
appealed
spread
activity

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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 gap fill. 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. STUDENT "BIRD FLU" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about bird flu and global pandemics.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| • spreading | • appealed |
| • fears | • prevent |
| • Asia | • single |
| • destroyed | • consolidated |
| • warned | • millions |
| • measure | • spread |

DISCUSSION

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

- a. What did you think when you first read this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. Are you worried about bird flu?
- d. Do you think the world is worried about bird flu?
- e. What is your government doing to protect your country?
- f. What would you do if a human-to-human virus came to your country?
- g. What do you think is the best way to fight the virus?
- h. The WHO said the virus could kill millions. Have you seen, heard or read about this big news anywhere else?
- i. Do you think scientists are just scaring people?
- j. Do you think more money will be made available to fight bird flu if it reaches North America?

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

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Should governments kill all wild birds to wipe out bird flu?
- d. What would happen to the world if millions started dying in Europe and North America?
- e. Do you think a pandemic will hit the world in the next ten years?
- f. What do you think of the WHO's claim that millions could die?
- g. Do you think governments are working together to fight bird flu?
- h. Will you now think twice about eating chicken?
- i. Do you think you'll become suspicious of flocks of birds?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

ROLE PLAY: This role play is to discuss whether or not more international action should be taken immediately to stop the spread of bird flu. Team up with classmates who have the same role as you. Develop your roles and discuss ideas and “strategies” before the role play begins.

Introduce yourself to the other role players.

Role A – Head of WHO

You are positive avian bird flu is the greatest threat to mankind for centuries. You are amazed so few countries seem concerned. You have data that suggest the virus is very close to spreading to humans. Worldwide action must be taken now.

THINK OF ACTIONS THAT MUST BE TAKEN TO FIGHT BIRD FLU.

Role B – Chicken farmer

Your job is at risk from bird flu. You understand the danger but do not want to kill any of your chickens until people start dying. You don't think more humans will die. You think the WHO is over-reacting. You believe keeping chickens indoors will prevent the spread of the virus.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY BIRD FLU WILL NOT BE A PROBLEM.

Role C – Citizen

You are shocked that your government is not acting to protect your country from bird flu. You know 61 people died in Asia from the virus. You think the virus will mutate and spread to humans soon. You believe international governments are not well prepared enough.

THINK OF MEASURES YOUR GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE TAKING.

Role D – Government official

Naturally, you know about bird flu. You have all of the scientific reports available. You are 100% sure the virus will not affect humans. It killed people in Asia because people lived so close to chickens. You are shocked at the WHO's irresponsibility in scaring people. You have enough vaccine.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY BIRD FLU IS NOT A BIG RISK.

Change roles and repeat the role play. Comment in groups about the differences between the two role plays.

In pairs / groups, discuss whether you really believe in what you said while you were in your roles.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Bird flu spreading to Europe

BNE: Bird flu is _____ west and may soon reach Western Europe. There are fears among scientists of a global _____. The deadly influenza started in Asia two years ago, where it killed 61 people. _____ birds have since carried the virus west to Siberia. In Russia, it killed 11,000 birds and officials _____ 127,000 others to try and halt its spread. Russia has warned European nations that the _____ H5N1 strain is on its way. Holland has ordered all chicken farmers to keep their birds indoors as a _____ measure.

Dr. Evgueny Nepoklonov from Russia's Department of _____ has appealed for international financial help to _____ the virus from threatening human life. He said: "This isn't a problem of a single state...it is a problem of all _____ that must be studied together and that needs consolidated and well-_____ activity." Experts believe millions of _____ birds will travel to Western Europe in mid-September and then to North America. The World Health Organization is concerned the virus might _____ among humans.

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 more information on avian bird flu and the H5N1 virus. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. LETTER: Write a letter to your government. Express your concerns over the threat of a potentially lethal, global bird flu pandemic. Tell the government what it should be doing right now. Read your letters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

4. CHICKEN: You are a chicken. You have heard the stories about bird flu. You're not sure which worries you more – bird flu or being slaughtered by your farmer. Write your diary / journal entry for a day in your life and your thoughts on the virus reaching your farm. Read your entries to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all have similar concerns?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. T d. T e. F f. T g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| a. spreading | moving |
| b. fears | concerns |
| c. deadly | lethal |
| d. destroyed | slaughtered |
| e. indoors | inside |
| f. appealed | asked |
| g. prevent | stop |
| h. studied | analyzed |
| i. travel | migrate |
| j. concerned | worried |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Bird flu is spreading | west |
| b. There are fears among scientists | of a global pandemic |
| c. Migratory birds have since | carried the virus west |
| d. try and halt | its spread |
| e. safety | measure |
| f. appealed for international | financial help |
| g. prevent the virus from | threatening human life |
| h. consolidated and | well-coordinated activity |
| i. millions of infected birds will | travel to Western Europe |
| j. concerned the virus might | spread among humans |

GAP FILL:

Bird flu spreading to Europe

BNE: Bird flu is **spreading** west and may soon reach Western Europe. There are **fears** among scientists of a global pandemic. The **deadly** influenza started in Asia two years ago, where it killed 61 people. Migratory birds have since **carried** the virus west to Siberia. In Russia, it **killed** 11,000 birds and officials destroyed 127,000 others to try and **halt** its spread. Russia has warned European nations that the deadly H5N1 **strain** is on its way. Holland has ordered all chicken farmers to keep their birds indoors as a safety **measure**.

Dr. Evgueny Nepoklonov from Russia's Department of Agriculture has **appealed** for international financial help to **prevent** the virus from threatening human life. He said: "This isn't a **problem** of a single state...it is a problem of all **mankind** that must be studied together and that needs consolidated and well-coordinated **activity**." Experts believe millions of **infected** birds will travel to Western Europe in **mid**-September and then to North America. The World Health Organization is concerned the virus might **spread** among humans.