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**"1,000 IDEAS & ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS"**

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## **Deadly E. coli strikes Europe**

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1106/110603-e-coli.html>

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# THE ARTICLE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1106/110603-e-coli.html>

The deadly bacteria that has killed 18 people in Europe is a new form of E. coli, the World Health Organization (WHO) says. Scientists are scrambling to find out more about the deadly strain behind the European outbreak. As well as the dead, more than 1,600 people are sick. This new outbreak is the deadliest in modern history and is the third in terms of the number of people made ill because of it. The source of the outbreak remains unknown. Germany was quick to blame Spanish cucumbers but this now appears not to be the case. Most of the sick and dead either live in Germany or recently travelled there. Authorities believe the bacteria is on salad vegetables and warned people to avoid eating salad and cook all vegetables.

The WHO says the new E. coli strain could be from a genetic merger of two different E. coli bacteria that has resulted in a super-strong bug. E. coli mostly spreads via food contaminated with human or animal feces. It leads to diarrhoea and vomiting, and can lead to kidney failure and death. Doctors say it is essential for people to wash their hands regularly to avoid contact with the bacteria, especially before eating. The outbreak is affecting Europe's economy. Russia has banned all fruit and vegetable imports from the European Union, a move that could cost EU farmers billions. Spain's politicians are asking Germany for compensation for blaming Spanish cucumbers for the outbreak.

# WARM-UPS

**1. BACTERIA:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about bacteria. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*deadly / bacteria / WHO / outbreak / modern history / cucumbers / authorities / genetic / super-strong bug / contaminated / avoid / imports / billions / compensation*

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

**3. DANGERS:** How to stay safe? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

Danger	How worried are you?	How to stay safe
Deadly bacteria		
Identity theft		
Computer virus		
Terrorist attack		
Natural disasters		
Crime		

**4. GONE:** Students A **strongly** believe scientists will one day end all outbreaks of killer disease; Students B **strongly** believe not. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. STAYING SAFE:** What's the best way to stay safe during an E. coli outbreak? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- wash your hands
- avoid eating salad
- stay at home
- take antibiotics
- boil all vegetables
- don't shake hands
- move to an unaffected country
- buy produce from unaffected countries

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

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1106/110603-e-coli.html>

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

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. The E. coli bacteria has not yet affected people outside Europe. | T / F |
| b. Over 2,000 people have been made ill in the outbreak.            | T / F |
| c. The outbreak is the deadliest in recent memory.                  | T / F |
| d. Authorities are warning people not to eat salad or vegetables.   | T / F |
| e. The new killer is an old bacteria that suddenly got stronger.    | T / F |
| f. E. coli usually comes from human and animal waste.               | T / F |
| g. The outbreak is causing divisions between Russia and the EU.     | T / F |
| h. Germany has agreed to compensate Spain's cucumber farmers.       | T / F |

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

- |                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. deadly        | a. a mystery   |
| 2. form          | b. prohibited  |
| 3. scrambling    | c. lethal      |
| 4. unknown       | d. vital       |
| 5. warned        | e. type        |
| 6. merger        | f. damages     |
| 7. mostly        | g. combination |
| 8. essential     | h. cautioned   |
| 9. banned        | i. largely     |
| 10. compensation | j. rushing     |

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

- |                                       |                                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. a new form                         | a. eating salad                |
| 2. Scientists are scrambling          | b. of E. coli                  |
| 3. This new outbreak is the           | c. imports                     |
| 4. The source of the outbreak remains | d. human or animal feces       |
| 5. warned people to avoid             | e. to find out more            |
| 6. a genetic merger of                | f. for compensation            |
| 7. food contaminated with             | g. two different E. coli       |
| 8. lead to kidney                     | h. deadliest in modern history |
| 9. banned all fruit and vegetable     | i. failure                     |
| 10. politicians are asking Germany    | j. unknown                     |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1106/110603-e-coli.html>

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The deadly bacteria that has killed 18 people in Europe is a new (1) \_\_\_\_\_ of E. coli, the World Health Organization (WHO) says. Scientists are scrambling to find out more about the (2) \_\_\_\_\_ strain behind the European outbreak. As well as the (3) \_\_\_\_\_, more than 1,600 people are sick. This new outbreak is the deadliest in modern history and is the third in (4) \_\_\_\_\_ of the number of people made ill because of it. The (5) \_\_\_\_\_ of the outbreak remains unknown. Germany was quick to (6) \_\_\_\_\_ Spanish cucumbers but this now appears not to be the case. Most of the sick and dead either live in Germany or recently travelled there. Authorities believe the bacteria is on salad vegetables and (7) \_\_\_\_\_ people to (8) \_\_\_\_\_ eating salad and cook all vegetables.

*terms*  
*warned*  
*dead*  
*blame*  
*form*  
*avoid*  
*deadly*  
*source*

The WHO says the new E. coli strain could be from a (9) \_\_\_\_\_ merger of two different E. coli bacteria that has resulted in a super-strong (10) \_\_\_\_\_. E. coli mostly spreads via food contaminated with human or (11) \_\_\_\_\_ feces. It leads to diarrhoea and vomiting, and can lead to kidney (12) \_\_\_\_\_ and death. Doctors say it is essential for people to wash their hands regularly to avoid contact with the bacteria, especially before eating. The outbreak is (13) \_\_\_\_\_ Europe's economy. Russia has (14) \_\_\_\_\_ all fruit and vegetable (15) \_\_\_\_\_ from the European Union, a move that could cost EU farmers billions. Spain's politicians are asking Germany for compensation for (16) \_\_\_\_\_ Spanish cucumbers for the outbreak.

*affecting*  
*bug*  
*blaming*  
*failure*  
*imports*  
*genetic*  
*banned*  
*animal*

## LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1106/110603-e-coli.html>

The deadly bacteria that has killed 18 people in Europe \_\_\_\_\_  
E. coli, the World Health Organization (WHO) says. Scientists are scrambling  
to find out more about the \_\_\_\_\_ the European outbreak.  
As well as the dead, more than 1,600 people are sick. This new outbreak is  
the deadliest in modern history and \_\_\_\_\_ of the number  
of people made ill because of it. The source of the outbreak  
\_\_\_\_\_. Germany was quick to blame Spanish cucumbers  
but this now appears \_\_\_\_\_. Most of the sick and dead  
either live in Germany or recently travelled there. Authorities believe the  
bacteria is on salad vegetables and warned people \_\_\_\_\_  
salad and cook all vegetables.

The WHO says the new E. coli strain could be from \_\_\_\_\_  
two different E. coli bacteria that has resulted in a super-strong bug. E. coli  
mostly spreads via food \_\_\_\_\_ human or animal feces. It  
leads to diarrhoea and vomiting, and can lead to kidney failure and death.  
Doctors say \_\_\_\_\_ people to wash their hands regularly to  
avoid contact with the bacteria, especially before eating. The  
\_\_\_\_\_ Europe's economy. Russia has banned all fruit and  
vegetable imports from the European Union, a \_\_\_\_\_ EU  
farmers billions. Spain's politicians are asking Germany  
\_\_\_\_\_ blaming Spanish cucumbers for the outbreak.

Deadly E. coli strikes Europe – 3rd June, 2011

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1106/110603-e-coli.html>

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

<b>deadly</b>	<b>bacteria</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>• form</li><li>• 1,600</li><li>• modern</li><li>• unknown</li><li>• quick</li><li>• recently</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• merger</li><li>• via</li><li>• failure</li><li>• essential</li><li>• banned</li><li>• asking</li></ul>
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# STUDENT BACTERIA SURVEY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1106/110603-e-coli.html>

Write five GOOD questions about bacteria 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.

# BACTERIA DISCUSSION

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

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'bacteria'?
- c) What do you think of this story?
- d) Do you worry that outbreaks might affect you?
- e) Are you surprised it's the deadliest outbreak in modern history?
- f) Have you been following this story on the news?
- g) What other outbreaks do you know of?
- h) What do you know about E. coli?
- i) Would you eat salad vegetables from Germany and Spain?
- j) Do you worry about food safety?

*Deadly E. coli strikes Europe – 3rd June, 2011*  
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# BACTERIA DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think there'll be more new super-bugs in the future?
- c) How likely is it a super-bug could kill us all?
- d) Do you have good hand-washing habits?
- e) Was Russia right to ban all vegetables from the European Union?
- f) Should Germany pay compensation to Spain's cucumber farmers?
- g) Would this outbreak stop you traveling to Germany?
- h) What should we do to be more hygienic?
- i) Have you seen any movies about outbreaks of deadly diseases?
- j) What questions would you like to ask the head of the WHO?

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1106/110603-e-coli.html>

The deadly bacteria that has killed 18 people in Europe is a new (1) \_\_\_\_\_ of E. coli, the World Health Organization (WHO) says. Scientists are scrambling to find out more about the deadly (2) \_\_\_\_\_ behind the European outbreak. As well as the (3) \_\_\_\_\_, more than 1,600 people are sick. This new outbreak is the deadliest in modern history and is the third in (4) \_\_\_\_\_ of the number of people made ill because of it. The source of the outbreak remains unknown. Germany was quick to blame Spanish cucumbers but this now appears (5) \_\_\_\_\_ to be the case. Most of the sick and dead either live in Germany or recently travelled there. Authorities believe the bacteria is on salad vegetables and warned people (6) \_\_\_\_\_ avoid eating salad and cook all vegetables.

The WHO says the new E. coli strain could be from a genetic (7) \_\_\_\_\_ of two different E. coli bacteria that has resulted (8) \_\_\_\_\_ a super-strong bug. E. coli mostly spreads via food contaminated with human or animal feces. It leads to diarrhoea and vomiting, and can lead to kidney failure and death. Doctors say it is essential (9) \_\_\_\_\_ people to wash their hands regularly to avoid contact with the bacteria, especially before (10) \_\_\_\_\_. The outbreak is affecting Europe's economy. Russia has banned all fruit and vegetable imports from the European Union, a (11) \_\_\_\_\_ that could cost EU farmers billions. Spain's politicians are asking Germany for compensation for (12) \_\_\_\_\_ Spanish cucumbers for the outbreak.

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

- |     |             |                 |               |            |
|-----|-------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|
| 1.  | (a) from    | (b) farm        | (c) firm      | (d) form   |
| 2.  | (a) train   | (b) strain      | (c) taint     | (d) splint |
| 3.  | (a) dead    | (b) death       | (c) dies      | (d) died   |
| 4.  | (a) trams   | (b) teams       | (c) terms     | (d) terns  |
| 5.  | (a) now     | (b) non         | (c) not       | (d) know   |
| 6.  | (a) at      | (b) to          | (c) by        | (d) for    |
| 7.  | (a) merger  | (b) combine     | (c) links     | (d) mixes  |
| 8.  | (a) on      | (b) an          | (c) un-       | (d) in     |
| 9.  | (a) from    | (b) for         | (c) with      | (d) so     |
| 10. | (a) ate     | (b) eaten       | (c) eats      | (d) eating |
| 11. | (a) moving  | (b) mover       | (c) move      | (d) moved  |
| 12. | (a) blaming | (b) blameworthy | (c) blameless | (d) blames |



# 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 bacteria. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

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

**4. OUTBREAK:** Write a magazine article about the E. coli outbreak in Europe. Include imaginary interviews with scientists and people worried about the outbreak.

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. LETTER:** Write a letter to an E. coli expert. Ask him/her three questions about the bacteria. Give him/her three suggestions on how to stop the outbreak from spreading. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

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

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. deadly        | a. lethal      |
| 2. form          | b. type        |
| 3. scrambling    | c. rushing     |
| 4. unknown       | d. a mystery   |
| 5. warned        | e. cautioned   |
| 6. merger        | f. combination |
| 7. mostly        | g. largely     |
| 8. essential     | h. vital       |
| 9. banned        | i. prohibited  |
| 10. compensation | j. damages     |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                       |                                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. a new form                         | a. of E. coli                  |
| 2. Scientists are scrambling          | b. to find out more            |
| 3. This new outbreak is the           | c. deadliest in modern history |
| 4. The source of the outbreak remains | d. unknown                     |
| 5. warned people to avoid             | e. eating salad                |
| 6. a genetic merger of                | f. two different E. coli       |
| 7. food contaminated with             | g. human or animal feces       |
| 8. lead to kidney                     | h. failure                     |
| 9. banned all fruit and vegetable     | i. imports                     |
| 10. politicians are asking Germany    | j. for compensation            |

## GAP FILL:

### Deadly E. coli strikes Europe

The deadly bacteria that has killed 18 people in Europe is a new (1) **form** of E. coli, the World Health Organization (WHO) says. Scientists are scrambling to find out more about the (2) **deadly** strain behind the European outbreak. As well as the (3) **dead**, more than 1,600 people are sick. This new outbreak is the deadliest in modern history and is the third in (4) **terms** of the number of people made ill because of it. The (5) **source** of the outbreak remains unknown. Germany was quick to (6) **blame** Spanish cucumbers but this now appears not to be the case. Most of the sick and dead either live in Germany or recently travelled there. Authorities believe the bacteria is on salad vegetables and (7) **warned** people to (8) **avoid** eating salad and cook all vegetables.

The WHO says the new E. coli strain could be from a (9) **genetic** merger of two different E. coli bacteria that has resulted in a super-strong (10) **bug**. E. coli mostly spreads via food contaminated with human or (11) **animal** feces. It leads to diarrhoea and vomiting, and can lead to kidney (12) **failure** and death. Doctors say it is essential for people to wash their hands regularly to avoid contact with the bacteria, especially before eating. The outbreak is (13) **affecting** Europe's economy. Russia has (14) **banned** all fruit and vegetable (15) **imports** from the European Union, a move that could cost EU farmers billions. Spain's politicians are asking Germany for compensation for (16) **blaming** Spanish cucumbers for the outbreak.

## LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d    2 - b    3 - a    4 - c    5 - c    6 - b    7 - a    8 - d    9 - b    10 - d    11 - c    12 - a