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Level 0 – 8th October 2026

Death of worker at plague lab raises concerns

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

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2610/261008-suspected-pneumonic-plague-0.html>

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Please try Levels 1, 2 and 3. They are (a little) harder.

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THE READING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2610/261008-suspected-pneumonic-plague-0.html>

A worker at a research laboratory in Siberia died. Local reports say she may have broken a test tube of pneumonic plague bacteria. Russia said the woman's death was from "pneumonia of an unknown origin" and not plague. The USA said there was no "cause for alarm," but officials should "keep an eye on it".

Pneumonic plague can be deadly. It can kill in 18 hours. It spreads quickly through the air when someone coughs. It can be treated if drugs are given when symptoms appear. A scientist said: "Pneumonic plague can spread from person to person, and that is why there is the concern around this."

Sources: <https://www.dw.com/en/suspected-pneumonic-plague-in-siberia-what-we-know-about-the-disease/a-79547919>
<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cv5yn3nwp5n5o>
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/russia-plague-outbreak-siberia-lab-leak-trump-rubio-b3061858.html>

PHRASE MATCHING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2610/261008-suspected-pneumonic-plague-0.html>

PARAGRAPH ONE:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. A worker at a research | a. alarm |
| 2. Local reports say she may | b. bacteria |
| 3. broken a test | c. origin |
| 4. pneumonic plague | d. on it |
| 5. the woman's | e. have |
| 6. pneumonia of an unknown | f. laboratory |
| 7. there was no cause for | g. tube |
| 8. keep an eye | h. death |

PARAGRAPH TWO:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Pneumonic plague can | a. in 18 hours |
| 2. It can kill | b. symptoms appear |
| 3. It spreads quickly through | c. to person |
| 4. when someone | d. the air |
| 5. It can be | e. coughs |
| 6. drugs are given when | f. be deadly |
| 7. plague can spread from person | g. around this |
| 8. that is why there is the concern | h. treated |

LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2610/261008-suspected-pneumonic-plague-0.html>

A worker (1) _____ laboratory in Siberia died. Local reports say she may have broken (2) _____ of pneumonic plague bacteria. Russia said the woman's (3) _____ "pneumonia (4) _____ origin" and not plague. The USA said there was no (5) _____," but officials should "keep (6) _____ it".

Pneumonic plague (7) _____. It can kill in 18 hours. It (8) _____ the air when someone coughs. It (9) _____ if drugs are given (10) _____. A scientist said: "Pneumonic plague can (11) _____ to person, and that is why there is the (12) _____."

PUT A SLASH (/) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2610/261008-suspected-pneumonic-plague-0.html>

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BACTERIA

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2610/261008-suspected-pneumonic-plague-0.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.

WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

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

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) _____

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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) _____

WRITING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2610/261008-suspected-pneumonic-plague-0.html>

Write about **bacteria** for 10 minutes. Read and talk about your partner's paper.

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.