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Level 1 – 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-1.html>

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Please try Levels 0, 2 and 3. They are (a little) harder.

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THE READING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2610/261008-suspected-pneumonic-plague-1.html>

The USA is worried after a worker at a research laboratory in Siberia died. She died of severe pneumonia. Local reports say she may have broken a test tube of pneumonic plague bacteria. Officials are checking people who were in contact with her. 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". However, it said officials should "keep an eye on it".

Pneumonic plague can be deadly. It attacks the lungs. It can kill in 18 hours. It also spreads quickly. It moves through the air when someone coughs. The disease can be treated with medicine if drugs are given when symptoms appear.

Pneumonic plague is different from COVID-19, which is caused by a virus. A microbiologist 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-1.html>

PARAGRAPH ONE:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. The USA is | a. contact with her |
| 2. a worker at a research | b. tube |
| 3. She died of severe | c. an eye on it |
| 4. she may have broken a test | d. worried |
| 5. people who were in | e. origin |
| 6. pneumonia of an unknown | f. laboratory |
| 7. there was no cause | g. pneumonia |
| 8. officials should keep | h. for alarm |

PARAGRAPH TWO:

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

LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2610/261008-suspected-pneumonic-plague-1.html>

The USA is worried after a worker ⁽¹⁾ _____
laboratory in Siberia died. She ⁽²⁾ _____
pneumonia. Local reports say she may have broken
⁽³⁾ _____ of pneumonic plague bacteria.
Officials are checking people who were
⁽⁴⁾ _____ her. Russia said the woman's
death was from "pneumonia of ⁽⁵⁾ _____"
and not plague. The USA said there was no "cause for alarm".
However, it said officials should "keep an
⁽⁶⁾ _____".

Pneumonic plague ⁽⁷⁾ _____. It attacks the
lungs. It ⁽⁸⁾ _____ 18 hours. It also spreads
quickly. It moves through the air ⁽⁹⁾ _____.
The disease can be treated with medicine if drugs are given
⁽¹⁰⁾ _____. Pneumonic plague is different
from COVID-19, which is caused ⁽¹¹⁾ _____.
A microbiologist said: "Pneumonic plague can spread from person
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-1.html>

The USA is worried after a worker at a research laboratory in Siberia died.
She died of severe pneumonia. Local reports say she may have broken a test tube of pneumonic plague bacteria. Officials are checking people who were in contact with her. 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". However, it said officials should "keep an eye on it". Pneumonic plague can be deadly. It attacks the lungs. It can kill in 18 hours. It also spreads quickly. It moves through the air when someone coughs. The disease can be treated with medicine if drugs are given when symptoms appear. Pneumonic plague is different from COVID-19, which is caused by a virus. A microbiologist said: "Pneumonic plague can spread from person to person, and that is why there is the concern around this."

BACTERIA SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2610/261008-suspected-pneumonic-plague-4.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-1.html>

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

[illegible]