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Level 2 – 8th October 2026

Death of worker at plague lab raises concerns

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<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2610/261008-suspected-pneumonic-plague-2.html>

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Please try Levels 0, 1 and 3. They are (a little) harder.

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THE READING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2610/261008-suspected-pneumonic-plague-2.html>

The USA is worried after a worker at a research laboratory in Siberia died. Some newspapers suspect that she came into contact with plague bacteria. She died after developing severe pneumonia. Local reports say she may have broken a test tube of plague bacteria. Officials are checking people who were in contact with the worker. Russia said the woman's death was from "pneumonia of an unknown origin" and not plague. The US secretary of state said there was no "cause for alarm". However, he said officials should "keep an eye on it".

Pneumonic plague can be deadly. It attacks the lungs. It can kill 18 to 24 hours after symptoms begin. It can also spread quickly. It moves from person to person through the air when someone coughs or sneezes. The disease can be treated with antibiotics if they are given as soon as symptoms appear. Pneumonic plague is different from COVID-19, which is caused by a virus and not a bacterium. A microbiologist told the BBC: "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-2.html>

PARAGRAPH ONE:

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

PARAGRAPH TWO:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Pneumonic plague can be | a. through the air |
| 2. It attacks | b. symptoms begin |
| 3. It can kill 18 to 24 hours after | c. a bacterium |
| 4. It can also | d. the lungs |
| 5. It moves from person to person | e. with antibiotics |
| 6. when someone coughs | f. deadly |
| 7. The disease can be treated | g. or sneezes |
| 8. caused by a virus and not | h. spread quickly |

LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2610/261008-suspected-pneumonic-plague-2.html>

The USA (1) _____ a worker at a research laboratory in Siberia died. Some newspapers (2) _____ came into contact with plague bacteria. She died (3) _____ pneumonia. Local reports say she may have broken a test tube of plague bacteria. Officials are checking people who were (4) _____ the worker. Russia said the woman's death was from "pneumonia of (5) _____" and not plague. The US secretary of state said there was no "cause for alarm". However, he said officials should "keep an (6) _____".

Pneumonic plague (7) _____. It attacks the lungs. It can kill 18 to 24 hours (8) _____. It can also spread quickly. It moves from person to person through the air when someone (9) _____. The disease can be treated with antibiotics if they are given as soon (10) _____. Pneumonic plague is different from COVID-19, which is caused (11) _____ and not a bacterium. A microbiologist told the BBC: "Pneumonic plague can spread from person to person, and that is why there is (12) _____ this."

PUT A SLASH (/) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2610/261008-suspected-pneumonic-plague-2.html>

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BACTERIA SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2610/261008-suspected-pneumonic-plague-2.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-2.html>

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

[illegible]