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Level 4 – 16th November 2026

Wire upgrade at fault for grounding all US flights

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https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2611/261116-ground-stop-at-us-airports-4.html

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Please try Levels 5 and 6. They are (a little) harder.

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THE READING

From https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2611/261116-ground-stop-at-us-airports-4.html

Thousands of flights across the USA were grounded on Friday after a failure in air traffic control systems. The Federal Aviation Administration said there were problems with communications equipment. More than 3,500 airplanes were already in the air. Thousands of flights were cancelled, leaving passengers stranded. The problem was traced to the replacing of old copper wires with fibre-optic cables. It will take days for things to return to normal.

The incident made people worry. Officials reassured people it was not another 9/11. They said there was no sign of a cyberattack or security threat. They called the incident a "telecommunications outage". The transportation secretary blamed the failure on outdated infrastructure. He said: "It's an old system that went down. It got overloaded." The secretary warned that systems would "continue to break" unless he got allocated extra funds.

Sources: https://www.**yahoo.com**/news/us/article/faa-says-nationwide-ground-stop-is-over-after-thousands-of-flights-canceled-021133009.html
https://www.**theguardian.com**/world/2026/nov/13/faa-nationwide-ground-stop-flights
https://www.**bbc.com**/news/articles/c6wy9lynq4qno

PHRASE MATCHING

From https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2611/261116-ground-stop-at-us-airports-4.html

PARAGRAPH ONE:

1. a failure in air traffic	a. cables
2. problems with communications	b. already in the air
3. 3,500 airplanes were	c. days
4. leaving passengers	d. control systems
5. the replacing	e. stranded
6. fibre-optic	f. to normal
7. It will take	g. equipment
8. things to return	h. of old copper wires

PARAGRAPH TWO:

1. The incident made	a. outage
2. Officials reassured people it was	b. threat
3. there was no sign	c. extra funds
4. security	d. not another 9/11
5. a telecommunications	e. overloaded
6. blamed the failure on outdated	f. people worry
7. It got	g. infrastructure
8. he got allocated	h. of a cyberattack

LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2611/261116-ground-stop-at-us-airports-4.html

Thousands (1) _____ the USA were grounded on Friday after a (2) _____ traffic control systems. The Federal Aviation Administration said there were problems (3) _____. More than 3,500 airplanes were already (4) _____. Thousands of flights were cancelled, leaving passengers stranded. The problem was traced to the (5) _____ copper wires with fibre-optic cables. It will take days for things to (6) _____.

The (7) _____ worry. Officials reassured people it was not another 9/11. They said there was (8) _____ a cyberattack or security threat. They called (9) _____ "telecommunications outage". The transportation secretary blamed the (10) _____ infrastructure. He said: "It's an old system that went down. (11) _____." The secretary warned that systems would "continue to break" unless he got (12) _____.

PUT A SLASH (/) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2611/261116-ground-stop-at-us-airports-4.html

ThousandsofflightsacrosstheUSAweregroundedonFridayafterafailur
einairtrafficcontrolsystems.TheFederalAviationAdministrationsaidt
herewereproblemswithcommunicationsequipment.Morethan3,500
airplaneswerealreadyintheair.Thousandsofflightswerecancelled,lea
vingpassengersstranded.Theproblemwastracedtothereplacingofold
copperwireswithfibre-opticcables.Itwilltakedaysforthingstoreturnt
onormal.Theincidentmadepeopleworry.Officialsreassuredpeopleitw
asnotanother9/11.Theysaidtherewasnosignofacyberattackorsecuri
tythreat.Theycalledtheincidenta"telecommunicationsoutage".Thetr
ansportationsecretaryblamedthefailureonoutdatedinfrastructure.H
esaid:"It'sanoldsystemthatwentdown.Itgotoverloaded."Thesecreta
rywarnedthatsystemswould"continuetobreak"unlesshegotallocated
extrafunds.

FLYING SURVEY

From https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2611/261116-ground-stop-at-us-airports-4.html

Write five GOOD questions about flying 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/2611/261116-ground-stop-at-us-airports-4.html

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