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Level 5 – 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-5.html

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Please try Levels 4 and 6. They are (a little) harder.

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THE READING

From https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2611/261116-ground-stop-at-us-airports-5.html

Thousands of flights across the USA were grounded on Friday after a major communications failure in air traffic control systems. The Federal Aviation Administration ordered a nationwide ground stop after problems with communications equipment. More than 3,500 airplanes were in the air at the time. Thousands of flights were cancelled, leaving passengers stranded. The problem was traced to an overloaded router, possibly as a result of maintenance to replace old copper wires with fibre-optic cables. Operations may take days to return to normal.

The incident sparked widespread concern. Officials reassured people that it was not another 9/11. The homeland security secretary said there was no sign of a cyberattack or security threat. He called the incident a "telecommunications outage". The transportation secretary blamed the failure on outdated infrastructure. He said: "We use 1980s little copper lines." He added: "It's an old system that went down. It got overloaded." The secretary warned that systems would "continue to break" unless Congress allocated extra funds. He said: "I can't build things if I don't have money."

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-5.html

PARAGRAPH ONE:

1. a major communications	a. fibre-optic cables
2. problems with communications	b. failure
3. 3,500 airplanes were in the	c. stranded
4. leaving passengers	d. return to normal
5. The problem was traced to	e. air at the time
6. as a result	f. equipment
7. replace old copper wires with	g. of maintenance
8. Operations may take days to	h. an overloaded router

PARAGRAPH TWO:

1. The incident sparked widespread	a. cyberattack
2. reassured people that it was not	b. outage
3. there was no sign of a	c. funds
4. security	d. concern
5. a telecommunications	e. threat
6. on outdated	f. continue to break
7. systems would	g. another 9/11
8. unless Congress allocated extra	h. infrastructure

LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2611/261116-ground-stop-at-us-airports-5.html

Thousands of flights across the USA (1) _____ Friday after a major communications failure in air (2) _____. The Federal Aviation Administration ordered a nationwide ground stop after problems with communications equipment. More than 3,500 airplanes were in the air (3) _____. Thousands of flights were cancelled, leaving passengers stranded. The problem was (4) _____ overloaded router, possibly as a result of maintenance to (5) _____ wires with fibre-optic cables. Operations may take days to (6) _____.

The incident (7) _____. Officials reassured people that it was not another 9/11. The homeland security secretary said there was no sign of a (8) _____ threat. He called the incident a "telecommunications outage". The transportation secretary blamed the (9) _____ infrastructure. He said: "We use 1980s little copper lines." He added: "It's (10) _____ that went down. It got overloaded." The secretary warned that systems would "(11) _____" unless Congress (12) _____. He said: "I can't build things if I don't have money."

PUT A SLASH (/) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2611/261116-ground-stop-at-us-airports-5.html

ThousandsofflightsacrosstheUSAweregroundedonFridayafteramajorcommunicationsfailureinairtrafficcontrolsystems.TheFederalAviationAdministrationorderedanationwidegroundstopafterproblemswithcommunicationsequipment.Morethan3,500airplaneswereintheairatthetime.Thousandsofflightswerecancelled,leavingpassengersstranded.Theproblemwastracedtoanoverloadedrouter,possiblyasaresultofmaintenancetoreplaceoldcopperwireswithfibre-opticcables.Operationsmaytakedaystoreturntonormal.Theincidentsparkedwidespreadconcern.Officialsreassuredpeoplethatitwasnotanother9/11.Thehomelandsecuritysecretarysaidtherewasnosignofacyberattackorsecuritythreat.Hecalledtheincidenta"telecommunicationsoutage".Thetransportationsecretaryblamedthefailureonoutdatedinfrastructure.Hesaid:"Weuse1980slittlecopperlines."Headded:"It'sanoldsystemthatwentdown.Itgotoverloaded."Thesecretarywarnedthatsystemswould"continuetobreak"unlessCongressallocatedextrafunds.Hesaid:"Ican'tbuildthingsifIdon'thavemoney."

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-5.html

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