



COVID-19

"It's going to disappear. One day — it's like a miracle — it will disappear."

Donald Trump, 45th president of the United States

1. Covid-19 Discussion

1. What is the coronavirus? What are the symptoms of covid? Who is most at risk of covid?
2. Was enough done to contain it initially? What more should have been done? Which governments had success in their covid response? Which didn't? Which leaders didn't take covid so seriously?
3. Is it easy to get a test for covid where you live? Have there been any problems getting tested?
4. Is wearing a mask sufficient to protect yourself from catching covid? Are masks to protect you or to protect others?
5. How effective was your government's vaccine rollout? Have they been successful in vaccinating the population?
6. Is it fair that the rich countries bought all the initial supplies of the vaccine and left hardly any for the poorer countries? Was this a good idea to stop the spread of the virus?
7. What are some covid conspiracy theories you've heard about? Why do so many people believe covid conspiracy theories? Do you believe any?
8. Who is responsible for spreading covid misinformation? What motivates them? 65% of all covid misinformation originated with just 12 online personalities, many of whom come from the wellness industry. What do they get out of spreading misinformation?

2. Covid-19 Vocabulary

- **social distancing** (noun) – a strategy to combat an infectious disease by maintaining physical distance from other people.
- **herd immunity** (noun) – occurs when sufficient members of a community develop immunity from a disease to slow or stop its growth, either by contracting the disease and producing antibodies or by receiving vaccines.
- **natural immunity** (noun) – antibodies created by contracting a disease which then protects a person from further infection in the future.
- **vaccine mandate** (noun) – an order or legal requirement to be vaccinated.
- **booster shot** (noun) – a vaccine administered to stimulate the production of more antibodies after antibody levels from the original vaccine shot have dropped, or to counter new mutations and variants.
- **anti-vaxxer** (noun) – someone who is opposed to vaccines.

Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun):

1. A **booster shot** will be required every year due to the emergence of new variants and falling antibody levels.
2. **Anti-vaxxers** sent death threats to doctors who were administering vaccines.
3. Boris Johnson's original plan was to achieve **herd immunity** by allowing the virus to pass through the population. When he was advised that this would lead to half a million deaths, he quietly changed his mind and insisted this was never his plan.
4. The government issued a **vaccine mandate** for all health workers.
5. While many people insist **natural immunity** will protect them from further infection, studies have shown this may only last for three months before people are at risk of reinfection.
6. While **social distancing** is an effective way of slowing down the spread of an infectious disease, more research is needed on the effect this has on people's mental health.

Covid-19 vocabulary comprehension questions

1. Is social distancing an effective way to combat an infectious disease? What are some problems with this?
2. Is it better to achieve herd immunity by allowing a disease to pass through a population or with a vaccination program? Why?
3. Is it wise to rely on natural immunity to protect against an infectious disease? What could go wrong with this?
4. Do you agree with vaccine mandates? Are they necessary, or are they a violation of human rights?
5. Why are booster shots needed to protect against some diseases?
6. What causes people to become anti-vaxxers? Do you have any concerns over the vaccines? What actions are anti-vaxxers taking around the world? Do you agree with their actions?

3. Video: Understanding mRNA Vaccines

You are going to watch a video by TED Ed called "How the COVID-19 vaccines were created so quickly."

Watch the video here: <https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-covid-19/>

While you watch the video, answer the following questions:

Multiple choice

1. How long did it take for covid vaccines to be produced and cleared for emergency use?
a) *less than 10 months* **b) less than 11 months** c) *less than 12 months*
2. mRNA contains instructions for the production of what?
a) proteins b) *white blood cells* c) *hormones*
3. How many mRNA molecules are encoded with instructions to fight a specific virus in a vaccine?
a) *millions* b) *billions* **c) trillions**
4. What substance surrounds the nano particle containing mRNA molecules?
a) fat b) *blood* c) *protein*

Sentence completion

5. To help keep the nano particle intact until it reaches its destination, **sugars and salt** are added around it.
6. mRNA vaccines must be kept at freezing temperatures to make sure its components don't **break down**.
7. It is **impossible** for an mRNA vaccine to alter human DNA.
8. Activating the **immune system** can cause people to feel tiredness, muscle aches and fever-like symptoms.

Short answer

9. Feeling sick after receiving a vaccine means the body is producing what? **Antibodies**
10. Traditional vaccines contain weakened versions of what? **Live viruses**
11. Every mRNA vaccine could have roughly the same what? **(List of) ingredients**
12. mRNA technology could make it possible to develop a new vaccine within how much time?
Weeks

4. Covid-19 Conversation Questions

1. How effective do you think the covid vaccines have been in stopping the spread of covid and protecting people?
2. How did your government help people during the pandemic? Did the government provide money to people who were unable to work? How has the covid pandemic changed the way we work? Is this the new normal?
3. How did they help companies who lost their customers? How has the covid pandemic affected the economy? What will the long-term effects on the economy be?
4. What effect has the covid pandemic had on people's mental health?
5. What effect has the covid pandemic had on civil liberties?
6. Has the covid pandemic increased polarisation in society? If so, how? Has covid led to an increase in racism and xenophobia?
7. What kind of corruption happened during the covid pandemic?
8. How do new variants affect the effectiveness of a vaccine? Do you think covid will become seasonal like the flu and will stay with us forever? How will the covid pandemic change the world and the way we live our lives?

5. Covid-19 Writing Task

Write about your opinion of the covid pandemic. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this lesson. In your answer, you could include some of the following topics:

- How your government responded.
- Why people spread misinformation about covid.
- How covid has changed our lives.

Alternative exam practice question:

As the covid pandemic shows no signs of ending, many governments around the world are considering vaccine mandates, either for the entire population or for certain key sectors like health and transport. To what extent do you agree or disagree with vaccine mandates to stop the spread of covid?