

УДК 378.147:811.111:616-036.21(045)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32589/1817-8510.2021.4.248304>

**Ruslan Slobozhenko,**

Senior Lecturer of the Foreign Languages Department,  
Faculty of International Relations,  
National Aviation University, Kyiv  
ORCID ID 0000-0002-1372-2913  
[ruslan.slobozhenko@gmail.com](mailto:ruslan.slobozhenko@gmail.com)

## THE ENGLISH LESSON PLAN ON THE THEME “THE CONTINUOUS FIGHT BETWEEN THE HUMAN RACE AND VIRUSES: ARE WE LOSING IT?”

*The paper is an English lesson on the theme “The Continuous fight between the human race and viruses: are we losing it?” It raises the most pressing issue of pandemic and its impact on society, looking for solutions to prevent future pandemics. The activities aim to develop skills in listening, reading and speaking at the B2-C1 level, enable the students to acquire the key vocabulary effectively during the discussion and spur them to express their opinions while reading the authentic article and watching videos for language learning.*

**Keywords:** human race; virus; peril; pandemic; outbreak; vaccine; immunity; the English lesson.

**Слобоженко Руслан Анатолійович,**  
старший викладач кафедри іноземних мов,  
факультет міжнародних відносин,  
Національний авіаційний університет, м. Київ,  
ORCID ID 0000-0002-1372-2913  
[ruslan.slobozhenko@gmail.com](mailto:ruslan.slobozhenko@gmail.com)

### ПРАКТИЧНЕ ЗАНЯТТЯ З АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ НА ТЕМУ «БИТВА, ЩО ТРИВАЄ МІЖ ЛЮДСТВОМ ТА ВІРУСАМИ: МИ ПРОГРАЄМО?»

*Методична розробка заняття за темою «Битва, що триває між людством та вірусами: ми програємо?» стосується актуальної проблеми пандемії та її впливу на суспільство, шляхів запобігання пандемій у майбутньому. Запропоновані завдання мають на меті формування навичок та розвиток умінь у рецептивних видах мовленнєвої діяльності студентів рівня B2-C1, допомагають студентам ефективно засвоїти лексичний матеріал під час дискусії та спонукають їх висловлювати власну думку щодо проблеми, спираючись на автентичний текстовий та відеоматеріал.*

**Ключові слова:** людство; вірус; загроза; пандемія; спалах; вакцина; імунітет; заняття з англійської мови.

**Слобоженко Руслан Анатольевич,**  
старший преподаватель кафедры иностранных языков,  
факультет международных отношений,  
Национальный авиационный университет, г. Киев,  
ORCID ID 0000-0002-1372-2913  
[ruslan.slobozhenko@gmail.com](mailto:ruslan.slobozhenko@gmail.com)

### ПРАКТИЧЕСКОЕ ЗАНЯТИЕ ПО АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ НА ТЕМУ «НЕПРЕКРАЩАЮЩЕЕСЯ ПРОТИВОСТОЯНИЕ МЕЖДУ ЧЕЛОВЕЧЕСТВОМ И ВИРУСАМИ: МЫ ПРОИГРЫВАЕМ?»

*Методическая разработка занятия на тему «Непрекращающееся противостояние между человечеством и вирусами: мы проигрываем?» касается актуальной*

*проблемы пандемии и ее влияния на общество, предотвращения пандемий в будущем. Целью предложенных заданий является формирование навыков и развитие умений рецептивных видов речевой деятельности студентов уровня B2-C1, эффективное усвоение лексического материала в ходе дискуссии и выражение своего мнения о проблеме, с опорой на аутентичный текстовый и видеоматериал.*

**Ключевые слова:** человечество; вирус; угроза; пандемия; вспышка; вакцина; иммунитет; занятие по английскому языку.

*Taken over by arrogance, humankind thought it could win in the fight against viruses. But reading today's articles and watching the news, we can see how vain it turned out to be. New scourges are looming menacingly on the horizon and older diseases are coming roaring back, rapidly evolving into forms that are resistant to antibiotics. The epidemics recur and grab the headlines, affecting, afflicting and decimating the world's population.*

*History of humanity is a continuous fight between mankind and viruses. Are we losing it?*

*There are uncountable perils that haven't even been named. Over the years, pandemics have shaped human civilizations taking on a heavy human toll. Today, faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, we are dealing with a new dangerous virus that cannot be treated and we have no protection from it.*

*What is to be done? Can we learn to control and prevent future pandemics? The answer is our collaborative effort to explore the world around us and within us, develop new vaccines and drugs, vaccinate susceptible groups, improve health conditions around the world and get information to the public as the price of doing nothing may be measured in millions of lost lives.*

*We think that this theme is relevant, therefore, it draws the students' attention to the current issue and fosters an interest in it.*

**Theme: THE CONTINUOUS FIGHT BETWEEN  
THE HUMAN RACE AND VIRUSES:  
ARE WE LOSING IT?**

**Level: B2-C1**

**Learning goals:** to increase students' vocabulary to boost their confidence while speaking English; to practice speaking, listening and reading skills using the authentic materials.

**Authentic materials:** article "The Forever Virus: A strategy for the long fight against COVID-19" (available at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-06-08/coronavirus-strategy-forever-virus>); video "The Spanish flu was deadlier than WWI?" (available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZD95Lp7ikU&t=143s>); video "Can we get rid of Covid-19 forever?" (available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34oI0yd5YUc>);

### 1. Warm-up activities.

**T:** Look at the words and tell what these words have in common.

devastation; outbreak; epidemic; virus; quarantine; lock-down; vaccine.

**T:** Give the definitions of the words.

devastation; outbreak; epidemic; virus; quarantine; lock-down; vaccine.

**T:** What do you think these dates and numbers are associated with?

1918

20 000 000

50 000 000

100 000 000

500 000 000

3 %

**T:** Read a short extract about the Spanish flu pandemic paying attention to the dates and numbers.

The 1918 pandemic was one of the most devastating pandemics in recent history. It infected an estimated 500 million people. The death toll related to the Spanish flu is often estimated at 20 million to 50 million victims worldwide, other estimates run as high as 100 million victims—around 3 percent of the world's population.

(<https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-i/1918-flu-pandemic>)

### 2. Watching video 1

**T:** Watch the video "The Spanish Flu Was Deadlier Than WWI" and be prepared to answer these questions:

- 1 What is the Spanish flu?
2. What caused the Spanish flu? How exactly did a flu virus cause such massive death and destruction across the world?
3. Why was it called the Spanish flu? Did it originate in Spain?
4. Why did it spread swiftly?
5. How did authorities handle the pandemic?
6. What caused the outbreak of Spanish Flu spur?
7. When was the first flu vaccine developed?

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZD95Lp7ikU&t=143s>)

### 3. Video discussion 1

**T:** Work in pairs. Discuss your answers.

### 4. Before-reading activities.

**T:** Work in groups. Discuss the questions.

1 How has the COVID-19 changed our lives? How has it changed the world?

2 Do you agree that conquering a pandemic is only about money and resources?

3 What do you think governments should do to get better at identifying and containing outbreaks?

### 5. Reading stage.

**T:** Read the text. Are the following statements true or false?

1 Lack of vaccines, slow global vaccination and refusal to get a jab can scupper the chances of containing the pandemic.

2 The economic cost of the pandemic is about \$20 billion.

3 It is obvious that the COVID-19 pandemic has gone away.

4 By the end of the decade, thanks to ring vaccination, smallpox had been eliminated.

5 We have all the resources that can let us live with the virus as we have learnt to fight other diseases.

6 But now it is becoming clear that the world can wait for herd immunity to contain the pandemic.

### The Forever Virus: A strategy for the long fight against COVID-19

**A)** It is time to say it out loud: the virus behind the COVID-19 pandemic is not going away. SARS-CoV-2 cannot be eradicated, since it is already growing in more than a dozen different animal species. Among humans, global herd immunity, once promoted as a singular solution, is unreachable. Most countries simply don't have enough vaccines to go around, and even in the lucky few with an ample supply, too many people are refusing to get the shot. As a result, the world will not reach the point where enough people are immune to stop the virus's spread before the emergence of dangerous variants—ones that are more transmissible, vaccine resistant, and even able to evade current diagnostic tests. Such supervariants could bring the world back to square one.

**B)** Rather than die out, the virus will likely ping-pong back and forth across the globe for years to come. Some of yesterday's success stories are now vulnerable to serious outbreaks. Many of these are places that kept the pandemic at bay through tight border controls and excellent testing, tracing, and isolation but have been unable to acquire good vaccines. [...] But even countries that have vaccinated large proportions of their populations will be vulnerable to outbreaks caused by certain variants.

**C)** Conquering a pandemic is not only about money and resources; it is also about ideas and strategy. In 1854, at a time when germ theory had yet to take hold, the physician John Snow stopped a cholera epidemic in London by tracing its source to an infected well; after he persuaded community leaders to remove the handle from the well's pump, the outbreak ended. In the 1970s, smallpox was rampant in Africa and India. The epidemiologist William Foege, working in a hospital in Nigeria, recognized

that the small amount of vaccine he had been allocated was not enough to inoculate everyone. So he pioneered a new way of using vaccines, focusing not on volunteers or the well-connected but on the people most at risk of getting the disease next. By the end of the decade, thanks to this strategy—first called “surveillance and containment” and later “ring vaccination”—smallpox had been eradicated. It is a twenty-first-century version of this strategy, along with faster mass vaccination, that could help make COVID-19 history.

**D)** For this pandemic, epidemiology also has tools to return the world to a state of relative normalcy, to allow us to live with SARS-CoV-2 as we learned to deal with other diseases, such as influenza and measles. The key lies in treating vaccines as transferable resources that can be rapidly deployed where they are needed most: to hot spots where infection rates are high and vaccine supplies are low. [...]

**E)** Meanwhile, governments should exploit new technologies to get better at identifying and containing outbreaks. That means embracing exposure notification systems to alert people to their possible infection. And it means enhancing capabilities to sequence viral genomes, so that researchers can rapidly determine which variant is where and which vaccines work best against each. All this needs to happen as quickly as possible. The slower countries vaccinate people most at risk of spreading the disease, the more variants will emerge.

The international system for responding to pandemics must also be repaired. As the current crisis has laid bare, that system is dangerously underfunded, slow, and vulnerable to political interference. [...]

**F)** The pandemic is in many ways a story of magical thinking. In the early days of 2020, many leaders denied that what began as a regional outbreak in Wuhan, China, could spread far and wide. As the months went on, governments imagined that the virus could be contained with border controls and that its spread would miraculously slow with warm weather. They believed that temperature checks could identify everyone who harbored the virus, that existing drugs could be repurposed to mitigate the disease, and that natural infection would result in durable immunity—all assumptions that proved wrong. [...] Now, governments must come to grips with another inconvenient truth: that what many hoped would be a short-lived crisis will instead be a long, slow fight against a remarkably resilient virus. [...]

**G)** Vaccine development has been one of the few bright spots in this pandemic. Pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies worked hand in hand with governments to make powerful new vaccines in record time. [...] Although the creation of the vaccines was a triumph of international cooperation, their distribution has been anything but. [...]

Over a year and a half into the pandemic, it has become clear that the race to contain the virus is simultaneously

a sprint and a marathon. Yes, the world needs to vaccinate as many people as possible as quickly as possible to slow the spread of the virus. But if every human on the planet were vaccinated tomorrow, SARS-CoV-2 would still live on in multiple animal species, including monkeys, cats, and deer.

More recently, epidemiologists were debating what percentage of a population had to be vaccinated to reach herd immunity and when that threshold would be reached. But now it is becoming clear that the world cannot wait for herd immunity to contain the pandemic. For one thing, vaccination is proceeding too slowly. It is taking too long to produce and deliver sufficient supplies of vaccines, and a sizable global anti-vaccine movement is dampening demand for them. For another thing, there has been a constant flow of new variants of the virus, threatening the progress that has been made with vaccines and diagnostics.

**H)** COVID-19 is not yet the worst pandemic in history. But we should not tempt fate. The past year and a half revealed how globalization, air travel, and the growing proximity between people and animals—in a word, modernity—have made humanity more vulnerable to infectious diseases. Sustaining our way of life thus requires deep changes in the way we interact with the natural world, the way we think about prevention, and the way we respond to global health emergencies. It also requires even populist leaders to think globally. Self-interest and nationalism don't work when it comes to a lethal infectious disease that moves across the globe at the speed of a jet plane and spreads at an exponential pace. In a pandemic, domestic and foreign priorities converge.

**I)** Most of the planet is still mourning for what has been lost since this pandemic began. At least three and a half million people have died. Many more are suffering from lingering effects of the disease. The financial toll of the pandemic has been estimated at some \$20 trillion. Virtually no one has been spared from some grieving or some loss.

**J)** The psychiatrist Elisabeth Kьbler-Ross famously and controversially outlined the stages of grief that people go through as they learn to live with what has been lost: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Almost everyone has experienced at least one of these stages during the pandemic, although in many ways, the world is still stuck in the first stage, denial, refusing to accept that the pandemic is far from over. To these five stages, the bioethicist David Kessler has added one more that is crucial: finding meaning. From the devastation of COVID-19, the world must work together to build an enduring system for mitigating this pandemic and preventing the next one. Figuring out how to do that might be the most meaningful challenge of our lifetime.

(<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-06-08/coronavirus-strategy-forever-virus>)

## 6. Vocabulary activities

### Giving definitions

**T:** Match each word with its definition.

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| 1 transmissible | a) a sudden appearance of something, esp. of a disease           |
| 2 mitigate      | b) the level or point at which you start to experience something |
| 3 toll          | c) lasting for a long time                                       |
| 4 eradicated    | d) passed from one person to another                             |
| 5 miraculously  | e) to give a person or animal a vaccine                          |
| 6 outbreak      | f) got rid of or destroyed something completely                  |
| 7 dampening     | g) the total amount of harm or damage                            |
| 8 threshold     | h) increasing or growing very fast                               |
| 9 inoculate     | i) in a very surprising manner or way                            |
| 10 lingering    | j) extremely important or necessary                              |
| 11 exponential  | k) to reduce the harmful effects                                 |
| 12 crucial      | l) making something less strong                                  |

**T:** Identify words and phrases in the text with their meanings.

- 1 to have to start something again because you were not successful the first time (paragraph A)
- 2 has made something known that has been hidden or secret (paragraph E)
- 3 spreading in an uncontrolled way (paragraph C)
- 4 prevented something dangerous or unpleasant from happening (paragraph B)
- 5 contained the virus that can cause a disease to spread (paragraph F)
- 6 together (paragraph G)
- 7 brought into effective action (paragraph D)
- 8 cause your good luck to end (paragraph H)
- 9 has been left undamaged or unharmed (paragraph I)
- 10 start to deal with a problem, situation that you have to do (paragraph F)
- 11 protection within population against a particular disease where a great majority of people are immune to the disease (paragraph G)
- 12 damage and destruction (paragraph J)

### Making word partnerships

**T:** Match the words to make the following partnerships from the text.

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1 herd        | a) pace         |
| 2 political   | b) effects      |
| 3 exponential | c) toll         |
| 4 lingering   | d) immunity     |
| 5 financial   | e) disease      |
| 6 infectious  | f) interference |

### Sentence completion

**T:** Complete the sentences with the words and expressions from the text in the correct form.

- 1) If we want to achieve \_\_\_ against the plague, more than 85% of the world population has to be vaccinated.
- 2) Vitamin C is key to keep a cold at \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3) The pharmaceutical company is thinking of \_\_\_\_\_ vaccines to the remoted places.

- 4) The government has failed to \_\_\_ to \_\_\_ with the issue.
- 5) The \_\_\_ of the project amounted to about \$ 1 billion.
- 6) Smallpox is thought to have occurred in Asia in the 7th century until it was \_\_\_\_\_ in the early 80s of the 20th century.
- 7) As the area had been hit hard, we were suffering from \_\_\_\_\_ effects of the hurricane.
- 8) The government \_\_\_\_\_ in the work of the organization can trigger a fierce reaction from society.
- 9) We can expect changes in the industry at \_\_\_\_\_ pace.
- 10) The \_\_\_ of a new disease has ravaged the entire area.

### 7. Watching video 2

**T:** Watch the video "Can we get rid of Covid-19 forever?". Guess the meanings of the words and expressions:

contract; claim; pop up; contagious; plague; vulnerable; ban.  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34oI0yd5YUc>)

### 8. Discussing video 2

**T:** If a person gets infected with the COVID-19 virus, what happens next? Why do we have to be worried? Do you agree that vaccination is the answer to the COVID-19 pandemic? How did we eradicate smallpox? What is 'ring vaccination'? Can we get rid of Covid-19 forever?

### 9. Summary

**T:** As you can see, the COVID-19 pandemic is underway, new variants continue to spread, there's a surge of cases – a new wave is impacting the globe. Do you think we clearly communicated the peril of COVID-19? Did we learn the lessons from previous pandemics? Give your answers.

**T:** The momentous fight occurs between humankind and viruses. If we lack unity and trust, rest on our laurels, it will be a triumph for the virus. But if we cooperate globally, not only coronavirus will be defeated but all future pathogens.

And I quote Pedro Sánchez, Prime Minister of Spain "COVID-19 has tested our societies against the great challenges we face and is a reminder of the importance of global action. None of us will be safe until everyone is safe."

(<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/global-citizen-live-world-leader-quotes/>)

## REFERENCES

- History.com Editors. (2020). *Spanish flu*. Retrieved from <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-i/1918-flu-pandemic>.
- The Spanish flu was deadlier than WWI? (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZD95Lp7ikU&t=143s>.
- Brilliant, L., Danzig, L., Openheimer, K., Mondal, A., Bright, R., Lipkin, W. (2021). *The Forever Virus: A strategy for the long fight against COVID-19*. Retrieved from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-06-08/coronavirus-strategy-forever-virus>.
- Can we get rid of Covid-19 forever? (2021). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34oI0yd5YUc>.
- May, C. (2021). 29 Inspiring Quotes From World Leaders in Support of Global Citizen Live. Retrieved from <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/global-citizen-live-world-leader-quotes/>.