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# Breaking News English

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/>

**Highlights from English Now! Professional Development Zoom session  
April 21, 2020**

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# Breaking News English - background information

## About Breaking News English, developed by Sean Banville

(see <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/about.html> )

- 7 levels (0-3="easier" and 4-6= "harder")
- Lessons have up to 26 pages of printable activities / handouts. (But check out the 2-page mini-lessons)
- There is a new lesson every two days.
- All lessons are based on stories currently in the news.
- There are 30+ online quizzes for each lesson.
- Listening files, mostly in British English, can be downloaded in mp3 format or subscribed to via a [podcast](#).
- There are graded listenings with each lesson (5 speeds).

# Breaking News English - skill areas and levels

Breaking News English offers practice in reading, listening, speaking, vocabulary development, grammar and writing. Here is some Information from Breaking News English about the levels of the articles.

- The lowest level is Level 0 and the highest is Level 6. The "easier" lesson has four levels (0, 1, 2 and 3). The "harder lesson has 3 levels (4, 5 and 6).
- If Level 3 is difficult, try Level 2, 1 or 0. If Level 6 is difficult, try Level 5 or 4.
- Levels 3 and 6 are BIG lessons - a 27-Page PDF, a 2-page mini handout, more online activities, dictation, vocabulary quizzes, etc.

# Breaking News English - Choosing a story

## Easier (0-3) and Harder (4-6) News Lessons

[Level 0](#)   [Level 1](#)   [Level 2](#)   [Level 3](#)

[Level 4](#)   [Level 5](#)   [Level 6](#)

[MINI NEWS LESSONS](#)

The site is a little tricky to navigate at first because there are a lot of options for how to access the content and activities. I like to look at the “mini news lessons” as shown in the menu above. These are 2-page lessons that have many additional online and offline activities available.

## News Lessons on These Themes

[Business English](#)

[Environment](#)

[Education](#)

[Health](#)

[Issues](#)

[Lifestyle](#)

[People / Gossip](#)

[Technology](#)

[World News](#)

# Breaking News English - Navigating the site

Stories are labeled “harder” or “Easier” depending on the number of words and difficulty of the vocabulary.

These were some of the stories list the week of April 15, 2020.

## [People want a different life after lockdown](#)

21st April - "Easier"

Only nine per cent of Britons want life to return to normal after the coronavirus outbreak is over.

## [99-year-old man raises \\$25 million for health service](#)

19th April - "Harder"

A 99-year-old war veteran in the UK has raised over \$25 million for the country's health service.

## [50,000-year-old piece of string found](#)

17th April - "Easier"

Archaeologists have discovered the oldest piece of string ever found.

## [U.K. leader thanks nurses for saving his life](#)

15th April - "Harder"

The leader of the U.K. has thanked his country's National Health Service for saving his life.

# Breaking News English - Navigating the site

This story on Boris Johnson is from April 15, 2020.

Here you can see part of the article and some of the menu options to access activities.

Note that there are different listening and reading speed options.

## U.K. leader thanks nurses for saving his life (15th April, 2020)

### PRINT

- [27-page lesson](#) (40 exercises)
- [2-page MINI lesson](#)
- [All 3 graded readings](#)

### LISTEN

- [North American & British English](#)
- [20 questions](#)
- [5-speeds](#)
- [Listen & spell](#)
- [Dictation](#)

### READ

- [4-speed reading](#)
- [Jumble 1](#)
- [Jumble 2](#)
- [No spaces](#)
- [Text jumble](#)
- [Quiz](#)

### GRAMMAR

- [Gap fill](#)
- [The / An / A](#)
- [Prepositions](#)
- [Word order](#)

## The Reading / Listening - Boris Johnson - Level 6

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Boris Johnson, has thanked his country's National Health Service for saving his life. Mr Johnson, 55, tested positive for COVID-19 on March the 27th. He self-isolated in his apartment in Downing Street, London and continued to lead the country and its response to the coronavirus pandemic. However, his symptoms persisted and his condition took a turn for the worse. On April the 5th, he was admitted to a London hospital for tests. A day later he was moved to the hospital's intensive care unit as his condition worsened. Downing Street said this was a "precautionary move". He remained conscious and was able to breathe without needing a ventilator.

# Breaking News English - sample pre-reading activity

## Before reading / listening

### 1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if 1-8 below are true (T) or false (F).

1. Mr Johnson contracted COVID-19 in early April. T / F
2. Mr Johnson stopped leading the coronavirus task force immediately. T / F
3. Mr Johnson was taken to an intensive care unit a day after he had tests. T / F
4. Mr Johnson spent a day on a ventilator. T / F
5. Mr Johnson said the care he received from nurses was exemplary. T / F
6. Mr Johnson said he owes his life to the National Health Service. T / F
7. A biographer said Mr Johnson didn't use to believe in illness. T / F
8. A biographer said Mr Johnson liked to put his feet up. T / F

# Breaking News English - sample synonym match

## 2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

1. apartment
2. persisted
3. condition
4. conscious
5. needing
6. exemplary
7. owe
8. admitted to
9. inclination
10. put one's feet up

- a. perfect
- b. tendency
- c. requiring
- d. be indebted to
- e. flat
- f. health
- g. acknowledged
- h. awake
- i. relax
- j. continued



# Breaking News English - sample vocabulary gap fill

## Gap Fill - Boris Johnson - Level 6

### HOW TO PLAY:

- Choose the **correct word** from the drop-down menus below.
- Click the button at the bottom to check your answers.
- Press the "refresh" button on your browser to play again.
- After this paragraph, go to [Paragraph 2](#).

apartment condition country's life positive response symptoms tests  
ventilator worse

### Paragraph 1

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Boris Johnson, has thanked his **country's** National Health Service for saving his **life**. Mr Johnson, 55, tested **positive** for COVID-19 on March the 27th. He self-isolated in his **apartment** in Downing Street, London and continued to lead the country and its **condition** to the coronavirus pandemic.

# Breaking News English - sample discussion questions

## STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. What did you think when you read the headline?
2. What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'nurse'?
3. What do you know about Boris Johnson?
4. What do you think of a world leading getting COVID-19?
5. How is your leader dealing with COVID-19?
6. How good is your country's health service?
7. What do you think of nurses in hospitals right now?
8. What do you know about the symptoms of COVID-19?
9. What can you do to stay safe in this pandemic?
10. What advice do you have for nurses?

## STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

11. Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
12. What do you think of when you hear the word 'leader'?
13. What do you think about what you read?
14. What work does a nurse do?
15. Do you have what it takes to be a nurse?
16. How strong are you in fighting disease?
17. What three adjectives best describe nurses?
18. Should governments increase spending on health after the pandemic?
19. Will your outlook change after the pandemic is over?
20. What questions would you like to ask nurses on the front line?

# Share more ideas

Thank you to all the teachers who contributed ideas for this presentation. If you have questions, please email Jennifer at [jennifer.kagan@english-now.com](mailto:jennifer.kagan@english-now.com)

If you have a teaching resource that you would like to recommend, remember to send it to [info@english-now.com](mailto:info@english-now.com) with subject line - Resources for Our Team.

Check the [Resources for Our Team](#) web page weekly for updates.