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Blood test predicts when you'll die

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1105/110519-blood_tests.html

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THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1105/110519-blood_tests.html

Would you like to know when you'll die? It's a scary question for many, but one which could be answered using a new blood test. Spanish scientists have invented such a test that they say will estimate how much longer you will live. The \$700 test measures the length of telomeres in our DNA. Telomeres control how often our cells divide to make new ones and are thus responsible for aging. They limit the length of our lifespan. The company behind the project, Life Length, says the test will give people an idea of the speed at which they are ageing and a prediction of when the end might come. Critics have been quick to attack the test. They say it is unethical, unreliable, and could lead to insurance firms demanding people take the test before issuing policies.

Researchers say the test could lead to breakthroughs in age-related illnesses such as Alzheimer's and heart disease. Professor Jerry Shay, a consultant for Life Length, admitted people are right to be wary of the new test. He said: "People might say, 'If I know I'm going to die in 10 years, I'll spend all my money now', or 'If I'm going to live for 40 years, I'll be more conservative in my lifestyle'. He added: "The worrying thing is that if this information ever got to a point where it is believable, insurance companies would start requiring it in terms of insuring people." Maria Blasco, inventor of the test, believes it is important, saying: "It will be useful for you to know your biological age. Maybe you would change your lifestyle habits if you find you have short telomeres."

WARM-UPS

1. LIFESPAN: Walk around the class and talk to other students about lifespan. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

when you'll die / scary question / tests / cells / lifespan / predictions / unethical / breakthroughs / heart disease / consultants / lifestyle / insurance companies / habits

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. BEFORE YOU DIE: What do you want to do? Complete this table and share it with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

	What you want to do	Why?
English		
Family		
Money		
Love		
Travel		
The world		

4. LONGEVITY: Students A **strongly** believe science will one day tell us exactly when we'll die; Students B **strongly** believe this won't happen. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the one you most want to know at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- when you'll die
- where you'll be in XX years
- how much money you'll have
- who will be in power
- what you'll look like when you're older
- how good your English will be
- what the world will be like in 2100
- what kind of technology will exist

6. DNA: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'DNA'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1105/110519-blood_tests.html

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

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. A new blood test may answer a question that scares many of us. | T / F |
| b. The cost of the test will be around \$7,000. | T / F |
| c. Telomeres in our body kill potentially deadly bacteria and cancer. | T / F |
| d. The new blood test will be of great interest to insurance companies. | T / F |
| e. The test could lead to developments that will fight heart disease. | T / F |
| f. A consultant said people should not be concerned about the test. | T / F |
| g. The consultant said we would change our lifestyle if they took the test. | T / F |
| h. The test inventor believes it's not useful to know your biological age. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. scary | a. untrustworthy |
| 2. estimate | b. suspicious |
| 3. measures | c. needing |
| 4. limit | d. guess |
| 5. unreliable | e. restrict |
| 6. breakthroughs | f. conventional |
| 7. wary | g. frightening |
| 8. conservative | h. advances |
| 9. requiring | i. gauges |
| 10. change | j. amend |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. It's a scary | a. divide |
| 2. estimate how much | b. habits |
| 3. how often our cells | c. to breakthroughs |
| 4. the speed at which | d. longer you will live |
| 5. Critics have been quick | e. to be wary |
| 6. the test could lead | f. in my lifestyle |
| 7. people are right | g. question for many |
| 8. I'll be more conservative | h. people |
| 9. insuring | i. they are ageing |
| 10. change your lifestyle | j. to attack the test |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1105/110519-blood_tests.html

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Would you like to know when you'll die? It's a (1) _____ question for many, but one which could be (2) _____ using a new blood test. Spanish scientists have invented such a test that they say will (3) _____ how much longer you will live. The \$700 test measures the length of telomeres in our DNA. Telomeres control how often our cells divide to make new ones and are thus (4) _____ for aging. They limit the length of our (5) _____. The company behind the project, Life Length, says the test will give people an idea of the speed at which they are ageing and a (6) _____ of when the end might come. Critics have been quick to attack the test. They say it is unethical, (7) _____, and could lead to insurance firms demanding people take the test before (8) _____ policies.

lifespan
estimate
issuing
prediction
scary
responsible
unreliable
answered

Researchers say the test could (9) _____ to breakthroughs in age-related illnesses such as Alzheimer's and heart disease. Professor Jerry Shay, a consultant for Life Length, (10) _____ people are right to be (11) _____ of the new test. He said: "People might say, 'If I know I'm going to die in 10 years, I'll spend all my money now', or 'If I'm going to live for 40 years, I'll be more conservative in my lifestyle'. He added: "The (12) _____ thing is that if this information ever got to a point where it is (13) _____, insurance companies would start requiring it in terms of insuring people." Maria Blasco, (14) _____ of the test, believes it is important, saying: "It will be useful for you to know your (15) _____ age. Maybe you would change your lifestyle (16) _____ if you find you have short telomeres."

biological
admitted
believable
worrying
lead
habits
inventor
wary

Blood test predicts when you'll die – 19th May, 2011

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

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Would you like to _____? It's a scary question for many, but one which could _____ new blood test. Spanish scientists have invented such a test that they say will estimate how much longer you will live. The \$700 _____ of telomeres in our DNA. Telomeres control how often our cells divide to make new ones and are thus _____. They limit the length of our lifespan. The company behind the project, Life Length, says the test will give people an idea of the speed at which they are ageing and a prediction of when the end might come. Critics have been _____ test. They say it is unethical, unreliable, and could lead to insurance firms demanding people take the test _____.

Researchers say the _____ breakthroughs in age-related illnesses such as Alzheimer's and heart disease. Professor Jerry Shay, a consultant for Life Length, _____ right to be wary of the new test. He said: "People might say, 'If I know I'm going to die in 10 years, I'll _____ now', or 'If I'm going to live for 40 years, I'll be more conservative in my lifestyle'. He added: "The worrying thing is that if this information _____ where it is believable, insurance companies would start requiring it in terms of insuring people." Maria Blasco, _____, believes it is important, saying: "It will be useful for you to know your biological age. Maybe you would change _____ if you find you have short telomeres."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1105/110519-blood_tests.html

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'scary' and 'question'.

scary	question
--------------	-----------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• scary• estimate• length• limit• speed• issuing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• breakthroughs• consultant• 10• point• terms• habits
---	--

STUDENT LIFESPAN SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1105/110519-blood_tests.html

Write five GOOD questions about lifespan 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.

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LIFESPAN DISCUSSION

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

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'longevity'?
- c) Would you like to know when you will die?
- d) Do you have a scary question that you would hate to answer?
- e) Do you think it's OK to make this test available to the public?
- f) Is \$700 a reasonable price for this kind of test?
- g) How reliable do you think this test is?
- h) Would you take this test if it was free?
- i) What can we do to live longer?
- j) Do you think insurance companies would take advantage of this test?

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LIFESPAN DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Is this test OK if it leads to other medical breakthroughs?
- c) What would you do differently now if you knew you would live to be 120?
- d) What would you do differently now if you knew you would die sooner than expected?
- e) How long do you want to live?
- f) Would you take drugs that ensured you lived twice as long?
- g) What's the difference between your real age and your biological age?
- h) Would you change your lifestyle habits if you discovered you had short telomeres?
- i) Do you live life for today and not worry about tomorrow?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Dr Maria Blasco?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

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Would you like to know when you'll die? It's a (1) _____ question for many, but one which could be answered using a new blood test. Spanish scientists have invented (2) _____ a test that they say will estimate how much longer you will live. The \$700 test measures the length of telomeres in our DNA. Telomeres control how often our cells divide to make new ones and are (3) _____ responsible for aging. They limit the length of our lifespan. The company (4) _____ the project, Life Length, says the test will give people an idea of the speed (5) _____ which they are ageing and a prediction of when the end might come. Critics have been quick to attack the test. They say it is unethical, unreliable, and could lead to insurance firms demanding people take the test before (6) _____ policies.

Researchers say the test could lead to breakthroughs in age-(7) _____ illnesses such as Alzheimer's and heart disease. Professor Jerry Shay, a consultant for Life Length, admitted people are right to be (8) _____ of the new test. He said: "People might say, 'If I know I'm going to die in 10 years, I'll spend all my money now', or 'If I'm going to live for 40 years, I'll be more conservative (9) _____ my lifestyle'. He added: "The worrying thing is that if this information ever got to a (10) _____ where it is believable, insurance companies would start requiring it in (11) _____ of insuring people." Maria Blasco, inventor of the test, believes it is important, saying: "It will be useful for you to know your biological age. Maybe you would change your lifestyle (12) _____ if you find you have short telomeres."

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1. | (a) scary | (b) scared | (c) scarce | (d) scares |
| 2. | (a) so | (b) some | (c) such | (d) search |
| 3. | (a) this | (b) thus | (c) that | (d) there's |
| 4. | (a) being | (b) belong | (c) before | (d) behind |
| 5. | (a) that | (b) as | (c) at | (d) to |
| 6. | (a) issuing | (b) issues | (c) issued | (d) issue |
| 7. | (a) relates | (b) relative | (c) relations | (d) related |
| 8. | (a) scary | (b) wary | (c) teary | (d) eerie |
| 9. | (a) on | (b) by | (c) in | (d) at |
| 10. | (a) point | (b) angle | (c) shade | (d) size |
| 11. | (a) tames | (b) terms | (c) tomes | (d) teams |
| 12. | (a) efforts | (b) speeds | (c) sizes | (d) habits |

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HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about lifespan. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. KNOWING HOW LONG: Make a poster about the test that shows you how long you have left to live. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. THE TEST: Write a magazine article about the test. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against it.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to a top scientist. Ask him/her three questions about the lifespan test. Give him/her three reasons to be wary about it. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. F c. F d. T e. T f. F g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. scary | a. frightening |
| 2. estimate | b. guess |
| 3. measures | c. gauges |
| 4. limit | d. restrict |
| 5. unreliable | e. untrustworthy |
| 6. breakthroughs | f. advances |
| 7. wary | g. suspicious |
| 8. conservative | h. conventional |
| 9. requiring | i. needing |
| 10. change | j. amend |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. It's a scary | a. question for many |
| 2. estimate how much | b. longer you will live |
| 3. how often our cells | c. divide |
| 4. the speed at which | d. they are ageing |
| 5. Critics have been quick | e. to attack the test |
| 6. the test could lead | f. to breakthroughs |
| 7. people are right | g. to be wary |
| 8. I'll be more conservative | h. in my lifestyle |
| 9. insuring | i. people |
| 10. change your lifestyle | j. habits |

GAP FILL:

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Would you like to know when you'll die? It's a (1) **scary** question for many, but one which could be (2) **answered** using a new blood test. Spanish scientists have invented such a test that they say will (3) **estimate** how much longer you will live. The \$700 test measures the length of telomeres in our DNA. Telomeres control how often our cells divide to make new ones and are thus (4) **responsible** for aging. They limit the length of our (5) **lifespan**. The company behind the project, Life Length, says the test will give people an idea of the speed at which they are ageing and a (6) **prediction** of when the end might come. Critics have been quick to attack the test. They say it is unethical, (7) **unreliable**, and could lead to insurance firms demanding people take the test before (8) **issuing** policies.

Researchers say the test could (9) **lead** to breakthroughs in age-related illnesses such as Alzheimer's and heart disease. Professor Jerry Shay, a consultant for Life Length, (10) **admitted** people are right to be (11) **wary** of the new test. He said: "People might say, 'If I know I'm going to die in 10 years, I'll spend all my money now', or 'If I'm going to live for 40 years, I'll be more conservative in my lifestyle'. He added: "The (12) **worrying** thing is that if this information ever got to a point where it is (13) **believable**, insurance companies would start requiring it in terms of insuring people." Maria Blasco, (14) **inventor** of the test, believes it is important, saying: "It will be useful for you to know your (15) **biological** age. Maybe you would change your lifestyle (16) **habits** if you find you have short telomeres."

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - a 2 - c 3 - b 4 - d 5 - c 6 - a 7 - d 8 - b 9 - c 10 - a 11 - b 12 - d

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