

Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

STORY

Swine Flu Sweeps Across Globe, Raising Fears of Flu Pandemic, 04/28/2009

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/health/jan-june09/swineflu_04-28.html

Estimated Time: One 45-minute class period with possible extension

[Student Worksheet](#) (reading comprehension and discussion questions without answers)

PROCEDURE

1. WARM UP

Use initiating questions to introduce the topic and find out how much your students know.

2. MAIN ACTIVITY

Have students read NewsHour Extra's feature story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions on the student handout.

3. DISCUSSION

Use discussion questions to encourage students to think about how the issues outlined in the story affect their lives and express and debate different opinions.]

INITIATING QUESTIONS

1. What is an epidemic? What is a pandemic?

2. What is an infectious disease? Can you name some?

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – [Student Worksheet](#)

1. How many people have died in Mexico?

ANSWER

Swine flu has killed more than 150 people in Mexico and has spread to Europe, Asia and the United States.

2. Name 3 states where swine flu has been confirmed in the United States.

ANSWER

At least 60 cases were confirmed in the United States in New York, Kansas, California, Texas and Ohio with no deaths reported.

3. What are the symptoms of the swine flu?

ANSWER

Symptoms are similar to that of the seasonal flu: fever, cough, sore throat, and nausea and can range from mild to deadly.

4. When was the outbreak of the Spanish flu?

ANSWER

The most deadly flu outbreak in history was the influenza or spanish flu outbreak of 1918 just after World War I.

5. What percentage of the world population died of influenza?

ANSWER

The world wide pandemic killed 50 million people or about 1% of the global population and spread to all continents.

6. Why was there an emergency vaccination program in 1976?

ANSWER

There was an outbreak of swine flu in 1976 that led to one death and an emergency prevention program that vaccinated approximately 40 million people.

7. Name a few actions the Mexican government has done to curb the spread of swine flu.

ANSWER

All schools are closed throughout Mexico until May 6th. Many other public gathering spaces have been closed indefinitely including churches in the heavily Catholic nation. Mexico City, the national capital and a mega-city of almost 20 million people, has closed many public spaces like movie theaters, bars, and clubs and the federal government is considering shutting down to slow the spread of the disease.

8. What happened at St Francis Preparatory?

ANSWER

In possibly the largest outbreak in the United States, St. Francis Preparatory, has over two dozen students test positive for the swine flu. Several students became infected while travelling in Cancun, Mexico, for spring break and subsequently infected their peers at school.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

1. Mexico has shut down schools and other public spaces; do you think that your school should do the same thing? Why or why not?

2. More people die from the regular flu than from swine flu, why do you think this is a big news story now?

3. Does reading about the flu make you want to study epidemiology or diseases? Why or why not?

4. Would you visit Mexico right now? Do you think the fear of the disease is justified?

Extension Activity

Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra (extra@newshour.org). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.