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Scientists find a reason for itching

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0908/090808-itching.html>

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THE ARTICLE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0908/090808-itching.html>

Scientists in the USA have found a type of nerve cell may be the reason we itch. The team from Washington University suggested itchiness was from specific cells. They also believe itching is not a minor form of pain. For decades, many in the medical community have put itching in the pain category. The researchers said they think itching is a completely different and unique sensation. Their decades-long research was on mice. It focused on how the brain reacted to itching and pain. They discovered an "itch gene", called GRPR. The mice were injected with a chemical to kill this gene. The rodents were still able to feel pain, suggesting the two feelings are different.

The new research has great potential for cures and treatments of itches and itching-related diseases. There are over 50 illnesses in which itching leads to a poor quality of life. In some cases, the itching can be unbearable for the sufferer. Severe itching can lead to excessive scratching, which results in bleeding and infection. Lead researcher Dr. Zhou Feng Chen said: "This finding has very important therapeutic implications. We have shown that particular neurons are critical for the itching sensation but not for pain....[These] can be explored or identified as targets for future treatment or management of chronic itching." He said cures for humans are still many years away.

WARM-UPS

1. ITCHING: Walk around the class and talk to other students about itching. 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.

scientists / nerve cells / forms of pain / unique sensations / genes / rodents / treatments / illnesses / quality of life / unbearable / bleeding / infection / cures

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

3. PAIN: Complete this table about pain. Share your answers with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you heard.

Pain	How bad is this?	Your experiences	Remedies
Physical			
Mental			
Emotional			
Financial			
Muscle			
Back			

4. CURES: Students A **strongly** believe scientists will find cures for all our problems; Students B **strongly** believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. TREATMENTS: What treatments are most important to you? Place these in order – most important at the top. Talk about your list with your partner. Change partners and share what you heard.

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| _____ itching | _____ headache |
| _____ coughing | _____ hangover |
| _____ sleepiness | _____ diarrhea |
| _____ feeling blue | _____ sunburn |

6. ITCHING: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'itching'. 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/0908/090808-itching.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. American scientists now know exactly why people itch. | T / F |
| b. The researchers think that itching is not a kind of pain. | T / F |
| c. The research team said mice have made us itch for many decades. | T / F |
| d. A special chemical made mice itch so much that they died. | T / F |
| e. The research is good news for those who suffer from itching diseases. | T / F |
| f. There are many illnesses that make people's lives miserable. | T / F |
| g. The research is important because it focuses on itching and not pain. | T / F |
| h. New medicines to stop itching will be in pharmacies from next year. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1. type | a. indicated |
| 2. suggested | b. leads to |
| 3. minor | c. feeling |
| 4. unique | d. possibilities |
| 5. reacted | e. kind |
| 6. potential | f. one-of-a-kind |
| 7. unbearable | g. vital |
| 8. results in | h. small |
| 9. critical | i. responded |
| 10. sensation | j. intolerable |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Scientists in the USA have found | a. unique sensation |
| 2. itching is not a minor | b. implications |
| 3. a completely different and | c. and treatments |
| 4. how the brain reacted to | d. to feel pain |
| 5. The rodents were still able | e. many years away |
| 6. great potential for cures | f. a type of nerve |
| 7. itching leads to a poor | g. scratching |
| 8. Severe itching can lead to excessive | h. form of pain |
| 9. very important therapeutic | i. itching and pain |
| 10. cures for humans are still | j. quality of life |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0908/090808-itching.html>

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

Scientists in the USA have found a _____ of nerve cell may be the reason we itch. The team from Washington University suggested itchiness was from _____ cells. They also believe itching is not a _____ form of pain. For decades, many in the medical community have put itching in the pain category. The researchers said they think itching is a completely different and _____ sensation. Their decades-long research was on mice. It _____ on how the brain reacted to itching and pain. They discovered an "itch _____", called GRPR. The mice were injected with a _____ to kill this gene. The rodents were still able to feel pain, suggesting the two feelings are _____.

specific
different
type
gene
minor
focused
chemical
unique

The new research has great _____ for cures and treatments of itches and itching-related diseases. There are over 50 _____ in which itching leads to a poor _____ of life. In some cases, the itching can be unbearable for the sufferer. Severe itching can lead to excessive _____, which results in bleeding and infection. Lead researcher Dr. Zhou Feng Chen said: "This finding has very _____ therapeutic implications. We have shown that particular neurons are critical for the itching _____ but not for pain....[These] can be explored or identified as targets for _____ treatment or management of chronic itching." He said cures for humans are still many _____ away.

sensation
illnesses
future
scratching
potential
years
quality
important

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0908/090808-itching.html>

Scientists in the USA have found a type of nerve _____ reason we itch. The team from Washington University suggested itchiness was from specific cells. They also believe itching is _____ of pain. For decades, many in the medical community have put itching in the pain category. The researchers said they think itching is _____ and unique sensation. Their decades-long research was on mice. _____ brain reacted to itching and pain. They discovered an "itch gene", called GRPR. The mice _____ a chemical to kill this gene. The rodents were still able to feel pain, suggesting the two feelings are different.

The new research has _____ cures and treatments of itches and itching-related diseases. There are over 50 illnesses in which itching _____ quality of life. In some cases, the itching can be unbearable for the sufferer. Severe itching can lead to excessive scratching, _____ bleeding and infection. Lead researcher Dr. Zhou Feng Chen said: "This finding has very important therapeutic implications. We have shown that particular neurons _____ itching sensation but not for pain...[These] can be explored or identified as targets for future treatment or management of chronic itching." He said _____ are still many years away.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0908/090808-itching.html>

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

nerve	cell
--------------	-------------

- 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">• type• specific• minor• unique• focused• injected	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• great• poor• severe• finding• critical• humans
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STUDENT ITCHING SURVEY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0908/090808-itching.html>

Write five GOOD questions about itching 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.

ITCHING 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 'itching'?
- c) Do you itch a lot?
- d) What do you do to stop itching?
- e) What do you think of this new research?
- f) What do you think of the fact that doctors thought itching was a kind of pain?
- g) Do you think the results found in mice will be similar for humans?
- h) How would your life change if there was no more itching?
- i) Are you itching to do something at the moment?
- j) What do you think the idiom 'seven-year itch' means? Is it true?

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ITCHING DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What kind of illnesses do you know of that involves itching?
- c) How can itching lead to a poor quality of life?
- d) Can you remember a time when you had a really unbearable itch?
- e) What does Dr. Zhou Feng Chen say about the future?
- f) Would you like to be a researcher?
- g) How would you describe the sensation of itching?
- h) What do you think the idiom 'you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours' mean? Do you like this idiom?
- i) What do you think the idiom 'itchy feet' means? Have you ever had itchy feet?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Dr. Zhou Feng Chen?

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LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0908/090808-itching.html>

Scientists in the USA have found a (1) _____ of nerve cell may be the reason we itch. The team from Washington University suggested itchiness was from specific (2) _____. They also believe itching is not a minor form of pain. For decades, many in the medical community have put itching (3) _____ the pain category. The researchers said they think itching is a completely different and (4) _____ sensation. Their decades-long research was on mice. It (5) _____ on how the brain reacted to itching and pain. They discovered an "itch gene", called GRPR. The mice were injected with a chemical to kill this gene. The rodents were still (6) _____ to feel pain, suggesting the two feelings are different.

The new research has (7) _____ potential for cures and treatments of itches and itching-related diseases. There are over 50 illnesses in which itching leads to a poor quality of life. In some cases, the itching can be unbearable for the (8) _____. Severe itching can lead to excessive scratching, which results (9) _____ bleeding and infection. Lead researcher Dr. Zhou Feng Chen said: "This finding has very important therapeutic implications. We have (10) _____ that particular neurons are critical for the itching sensation but not for pain....[These] can be explored or identified (11) _____ targets for future treatment or management of chronic itching." He said cures for humans are still many years (12) _____.

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

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1. | (a) typo | (b) typed | (c) types | (d) type |
| 2. | (a) sells | (b) cells | (c) cell | (d) sell |
| 3. | (a) in | (b) up | (c) out | (d) on |
| 4. | (a) uniquely | (b) uniqueness | (c) unique | (d) unicity |
| 5. | (a) focus | (b) focal | (c) focused | (d) focusing |
| 6. | (a) ability | (b) able | (c) could | (d) capable |
| 7. | (a) great | (b) greatly | (c) greatness | (d) greats |
| 8. | (a) suffer | (b) suffering | (c) suffers | (d) sufferer |
| 9. | (a) on | (b) in | (c) to | (d) of |
| 10. | (a) showed | (b) shows | (c) showing | (d) shown |
| 11. | (a) was | (b) has | (c) as | (d) pas |
| 12. | (a) away | (b) about | (c) around | (d) always |

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 itching. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. ITCHING: Make a poster about itching. Include different types of itch and ways of stopping them. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. RESEARCHER: Write a magazine article about a medical researcher. Include an imaginary interview with him/her. What are their thoughts on medical science and the future?

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 Dr. Zhou Feng Chen. Ask him three questions about itching. Give him three suggestions on what he could research and find cures for next. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1. type | a. kind |
| 2. suggested | b. indicated |
| 3. minor | c. small |
| 4. unique | d. one-of-a-kind |
| 5. reacted | e. responded |
| 6. potential | f. possibilities |
| 7. unbearable | g. intolerable |
| 8. results in | h. leads to |
| 9. critical | i. vital |
| 10. sensation | j. feeling |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Scientists in the USA have found | a. a type of nerve |
| 2. itching is not a minor | b. form of pain |
| 3. a completely different and | c. unique sensation |
| 4. how the brain reacted to | d. itching and pain |
| 5. The rodents were still able | e. to feel pain |
| 6. great potential for cures | f. and treatments |
| 7. itching leads to a poor | g. quality of life |
| 8. Severe itching can lead to excessive | h. scratching |
| 9. very important therapeutic | i. implications |
| 10. cures for humans are still | j. many years away |

GAP FILL:

Scientists find a reason for itching

Scientists in the USA have found a **type** of nerve cell may be the reason we itch. The team from Washington University suggested itchiness was from **specific** cells. They also believe itching is not a **minor** form of pain. For decades, many in the medical community have put itching in the pain category. The researchers said they think itching is a completely different and **unique** sensation. Their decades-long research was on mice. It **focused** on how the brain reacted to itching and pain. They discovered an "itch **gene**", called GRPR. The mice were injected with a **chemical** to kill this gene. The rodents were still able to feel pain, suggesting the two feelings are **different**.

The new research has great **potential** for cures and treatments of itches and itching-related diseases. There are over 50 **illnesses** in which itching leads to a poor **quality** of life. In some cases, the itching can be unbearable for the sufferer. Severe itching can lead to excessive **scratching**, which results in bleeding and infection. Lead researcher Dr. Zhou Feng Chen said: "This finding has very **important** therapeutic implications. We have shown that particular neurons are critical for the itching **sensation** but not for pain...[These] can be explored or identified as targets for **future** treatment or management of chronic itching." He said cures for humans are still many **years** away.

LANGUAGE WORK

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