

www.**Breaking News English**.com

Ready-to-use ESL/EFL Lessons by Sean Banville

"1,000 IDEAS & ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS"

The Breaking News English.com Resource Book

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/book.html>

Hospital bills pneumonia patient \$44 million

17th January, 2012

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1201/120117-hospital_bill.html

Contents

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| The Article | 2 |
| Warm-ups | 3 |
| Before Reading / Listening | 4 |
| While Reading / Listening | 5 |
| Listening Gap Fill | 6 |
| After Reading / Listening | 7 |
| Student Survey | 8 |
| Discussion | 9 |
| Language Work | 10 |
| Writing | 11 |
| Homework | 12 |
| Answers | 13 |

Follow Sean Banville on

Twitter



twitter.com/SeanBanville

Facebook



www.facebook.com/pages/BreakingNewsEnglish/155625444452176

Google +



plus.google.com/110990608764591804698/posts

THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1201/120117-hospital_bill.html

Medical bills in the USA are known to be quite high, but one patient got the shock of his life when he received a bill for over \$44 million. New Yorker Alex Rodriguez, 28, visited the Bronx-Lebanon Hospital after suffering a bout of pneumonia. All he did was see some doctors and get a prescription for drugs to treat his condition. The total cost of his treatment was under \$300. When the bill arrived on his doorstep for \$44,776,587, Rodriguez said he almost had an asthma attack. He immediately thought the bill was real and panicked. Thoughts went through his mind of how he was going to find the millions when he was unemployed. He thought the bill was related to three weeks he spent in hospital 9 months earlier.

It turned out that Mr Rodriguez was not the only patient to be billed tens of millions of dollars for coughs and colds. A computer error in the accounts department of the company that processes the invoices has sent dozens more people the heart-stopping bills. The company admitted that someone put the 8-digit invoice number in the box for the billed amount. Mr Rodriguez told journalists from "The Daily News" that he was angry the company's mistake caused him so much worry and anguish. He said: "I think they should have somebody look over the bills before they send them out...I understand manpower may be down, but to send out a lot of bills with numbers that big - someone could have had a heart attack."

WARM-UPS

1. BILLS: Walk around the class and talk to other students about bills. 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.

medical bills / shock / suffering / prescription / treatment / asthma attack / hospital / patient / coughs and colds / heart-stopping / mistakes / worry and anguish

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

3. BILLS: Complete this table and share what you wrote with your partner(s). Change partners and share again.

| Bills | Reasonable? | Why (not)? | What should change? |
|----------|-------------|------------|---------------------|
| Medical | | | |
| School | | | |
| Internet | | | |
| Phone | | | |
| Water | | | |
| Repair | | | |

4. ERROR: Students A **strongly** believe humans make more mistakes than computers and are therefore more dangerous; Students B **strongly** believe computers are more dangerous. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. MISTAKES: Which are the most serious? Rank them and share your rankings with your partner. Put the most serious at the top. Change partners and share again.

- hospital
- English
- driving
- computer password
- with people's names
- flight bookings
- banking
- marriage

6. SHOCK: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'shock'. 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/1201/120117-hospital_bill.html

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

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. An American man had a lot of expensive medical treatment. | T / F |
| b. The bill for the treatment gave the man pneumonia. | T / F |
| c. The real cost of the treatment was actually less than \$300. | T / F |
| d. The man was worried about how he would find \$44 million. | T / F |
| e. Tens of millions of patients were also billed too much by the hospital. | T / F |
| f. Hospital employees were responsible for the billing errors. | T / F |
| g. The man in the story said someone should check everything carefully. | T / F |
| h. He suggested such mistakes could be risky for those with weak hearts. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. quite | a. straight away |
| 2. drugs | b. confessed |
| 3. condition | c. linked |
| 4. immediately | d. emerged |
| 5. related | e. appreciate |
| 6. error | f. pretty |
| 7. turned out | g. illness |
| 8. admitted | h. suffering |
| 9. anguish | i. medicine |
| 10. understand | j. mistake |

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

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Medical bills in the USA are known | a. of pneumonia |
| 2. one patient got the shock | b. him so much worry |
| 3. suffering a bout | c. on his doorstep |
| 4. the bill arrived | d. of millions of dollars |
| 5. Thoughts went | e. digit invoice number |
| 6. billed tens | f. to be quite high |
| 7. the company that processes | g. over the bills |
| 8. the 8- | h. of his life |
| 9. the company's mistake caused | i. through his mind |
| 10. have somebody look | j. the invoices |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1201/120117-hospital_bill.html

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

Medical bills in the USA are (1) _____ to be quite high, but one patient got the shock of his life when he received a bill for over \$44 million. New Yorker Alex Rodriguez, 28, visited the Bronx-Lebanon Hospital after (2) _____ a bout of pneumonia. All he did was see some doctors and get a prescription for drugs to (3) _____ his condition. The total cost of his treatment was under \$300. When the bill arrived on his (4) _____ for \$44,776,587, Rodriguez said he almost had an asthma (5) _____. He immediately thought the bill was real and panicked. Thoughts went through his (6) _____ of how he was going to find the (7) _____ when he was unemployed. He thought the bill was related to three weeks he spent in hospital 9 months (8) _____.

mind
doorstep
suffering
earlier
attack
known
millions
treat

It (9) _____ out that Mr Rodriguez was not the only patient to be billed tens of millions of dollars for (10) _____ and colds. A computer error in the accounts department of the company that (11) _____ the invoices has sent dozens more people the heart-stopping bills. The company admitted that someone put the 8- (12) _____ invoice number in the box for the billed (13) _____. Mr Rodriguez told journalists from "The Daily News" that he was angry the company's mistake caused him so much worry and (14) _____. He said: "I think they should have somebody look over the bills before they send them out...I understand (15) _____ may be down, but to send out a lot of bills with numbers that big - someone could have had a (16) _____ attack."

processes
amount
coughs
heart
anguish
turned
digit
manpower

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1201/120117-hospital_bill.html

Medical bills in the USA are _____ high, but one patient got the shock of his life when he _____ over \$44 million. New Yorker Alex Rodriguez, 28, visited the Bronx-Lebanon Hospital after suffering a bout of pneumonia. All he did was see some doctors and get a prescription for drugs _____. The total cost of his treatment was under \$300. When the bill arrived _____ \$44,776,587, Rodriguez said he almost had an asthma attack. He immediately thought the bill was _____. Thoughts went through his mind of how he was going to find the millions when he was unemployed. He thought the bill _____ three weeks he spent in hospital 9 months earlier.

It turned out that Mr Rodriguez was not the only patient to be billed _____ dollars for coughs and colds. A computer error in the accounts department of the company that _____ has sent dozens more people the heart-stopping bills. The company admitted that someone put the _____ number in the box for the billed amount. Mr Rodriguez told journalists from "The Daily News" that he was angry the company's mistake caused him so _____. He said: "I think they should have somebody look over the bills before they send them out...I understand _____ down, but to send out a lot of bills with _____ - someone could have had a heart attack."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1201/120117-hospital_bill.html

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

| | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| hospital | bill |
|-----------------|-------------|

- 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">• known• visited• prescription• cost• real• three | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• tens• dozens• 8• angry• look• heart |
|--|--|

BILLS SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1201/120117-hospital_bill.html

Write five GOOD questions about bills 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.

BILLS 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 'bill'?
- c) What do you think when you have to pay bills?
- d) What do you think about what you read?
- e) Have you ever been overcharged for something?
- f) What would you think if a hospital (or anyone else) sent you a bill for \$44 million?
- g) Do you think healthcare should be free, like it is in many countries?
- h) Have you ever panicked because of something you had to pay for?
- i) What do you do to keep your bills low?

Hospital bills pneumonia patient \$44 million – 17th January, 2012
More free lessons at www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com

BILLS DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) How do you think the person responsible for this mistake feels?
- c) Have you ever been shocked after opening a bill?
- d) What was your last heart-stopping experience?
- e) Should the invoice company do something to repay patients for their anguish?
- f) What happens if you forget to pay a bill?
- g) Should Alex Rodriguez sue the hospital for damages?
- h) Has a company ever made a mistake with one of your bills?
- i) What questions would you like to ask Alex Rodriguez?

Hospital bills pneumonia patient \$44 million – 17th January, 2012
More free lessons at www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com - Copyright Sean Banville 2012

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1201/120117-hospital_bill.html

Medical bills in the USA are (1) _____ to be quite high, but one patient got the shock of his (2) _____ when he received a bill for over \$44 million. New Yorker Alex Rodriguez, 28, visited the Bronx-Lebanon Hospital after suffering a (3) _____ of pneumonia. All he did was see some doctors and get a prescription for drugs to treat his condition. The total cost (4) _____ his treatment was under \$300. When the bill arrived on his doorstep for \$44,776,587, Rodriguez said he almost had an asthma attack. He immediately thought the bill was real and panicked. Thoughts went (5) _____ his mind of how he was going to find the millions when he was unemployed. He thought the bill was related (6) _____ three weeks he spent in hospital 9 months earlier.

It turned out that Mr Rodriguez was not the only patient to be (7) _____ tens of millions of dollars for coughs and colds. A computer error in the accounts department of the company that (8) _____ the invoices has sent dozens more people the heart-stopping bills. The company admitted that someone put the 8-(9) _____ invoice number in the box for the billed amount. Mr Rodriguez told journalists from "The Daily News" that he was angry the company's mistake (10) _____ him so much worry and anguish. He said: "I think they should have somebody look (11) _____ the bills before they send them out...I understand manpower may be down, but to send (12) _____ a lot of bills with numbers that big - someone could have had a heart attack."

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

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) knowledge | (b) knowing | (c) knew | (d) known |
| 2. | (a) living | (b) life | (c) lives | (d) lifestyle |
| 3. | (a) bout | (b) boat | (c) boot | (d) bait |
| 4. | (a) by | (b) at | (c) of | (d) as |
| 5. | (a) thought | (b) under | (c) through | (d) by |
| 6. | (a) on | (b) to | (c) as | (d) from |
| 7. | (a) billed | (b) bills | (c) bill | (d) billing |
| 8. | (a) packages | (b) manufactures | (c) designs | (d) processes |
| 9. | (a) digital | (b) digit | (c) digits | (d) dig it |
| 10. | (a) affected | (b) mistook | (c) processed | (d) caused |
| 11. | (a) under | (b) around | (c) over | (d) up |
| 12. | (a) out | (b) in | (c) up | (d) as |

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

3. BILLS: Make a poster about bills. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. SHOCK: Write a magazine article about Mr Rodriguez and his shocking experience. Include imaginary interviews with him, the hospital and the invoice company.

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 shock expert. Ask him/her three questions about shock. Give him/her three examples of shock in your life. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. quite | a. pretty |
| 2. drugs | b. medicine |
| 3. condition | c. illness |
| 4. immediately | d. straight away |
| 5. related | e. linked |
| 6. error | f. mistake |
| 7. turned out | g. emerged |
| 8. admitted | h. confessed |
| 9. anguish | i. suffering |
| 10. understand | j. appreciate |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Medical bills in the USA are known | a. to be quite high |
| 2. one patient got the shock | b. of his life |
| 3. suffering a bout | c. of pneumonia |
| 4. the bill arrived | d. on his doorstep |
| 5. Thoughts went | e. through his mind |
| 6. billed tens | f. of millions of dollars |
| 7. the company that processes | g. the invoices |
| 8. the 8- | h. digit invoice number |
| 9. the company's mistake caused | i. him so much worry |
| 10. have somebody look | j. over the bills |

GAP FILL:

Hospital bills pneumonia patient \$44 million

Medical bills in the USA are (1) **known** to be quite high, but one patient got the shock of his life when he received a bill for over \$44 million. New Yorker Alex Rodriguez, 28, visited the Bronx-Lebanon Hospital after (2) **suffering** a bout of pneumonia. All he did was see some doctors and get a prescription for drugs to (3) **treat** his condition. The total cost of his treatment was under \$300. When the bill arrived on his (4) **doorstep** for \$44,776,587, Rodriguez said he almost had an asthma (5) **attack**. He immediately thought the bill was real and panicked. Thoughts went through his (6) **mind** of how he was going to find the (7) **millions** when he was unemployed. He thought the bill was related to three weeks he spent in hospital 9 months (8) **earlier**.

It (9) **turned** out that Mr Rodriguez was not the only patient to be billed tens of millions of dollars for (10) **coughs** and colds. A computer error in the accounts department of the company that (11) **processes** the invoices has sent dozens more people the heart-stopping bills. The company admitted that someone put the 8- (12) **digit** invoice number in the box for the billed (13) **amount**. Mr Rodriguez told journalists from "The Daily News" that he was angry the company's mistake caused him so much worry and (14) **anguish**. He said: "I think they should have somebody look over the bills before they send them out...I understand (15) **manpower** may be down, but to send out a lot of bills with numbers that big - someone could have had a (16) **heart** attack."

LANGUAGE WORK

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

Hospital bills pneumonia patient \$44 million – 17th January, 2012

More free lessons at www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com - Copyright Sean Banville 2012