

What and why

Our aim is to help you in your approach and understanding of academic material in any subject and gain more confidence.

All of the words used will appear on GCSE exam papers.

Last time we learned about the word Corona, so it seemed only natural to follow it up with...

This week's word is...

Virus

[vahy-ruh s]

Virus

Synonyms

ailment

disease

germ

illness

infection

microbe

microorganism

pathogen

sickness

bacillus

Origin of the word

First recorded in use around the 16th century.

It comes from the Latin *vīrus*, which had the meaning of slime or poisonous liquid.

It is related to the Old English word *wāse* meaning marsh and the Greek word *ios* meaning poison.

Virus

noun, plural **vi·rus·es**.

an ultramicroscopic (20 to 300 nm in diameter), metabolically inert, infectious agent that replicates only within the cells of living hosts, mainly bacteria, plants, and animals: composed of an RNA or DNA core, a protein coat, and, in more complex types, a surrounding envelope.

Informal. a viral disease.

a corrupting influence on morals or the intellect; poison.

a segment of self-replicating code planted illegally in a computer program, often to damage or shut down a system or network.

A virus by any other name...

A virus is an extremely tiny infectious agent made up of an RNA or DNA core, a protein coat, and, in some species, an envelope. Coronaviruses contain RNA and are spherical in form.

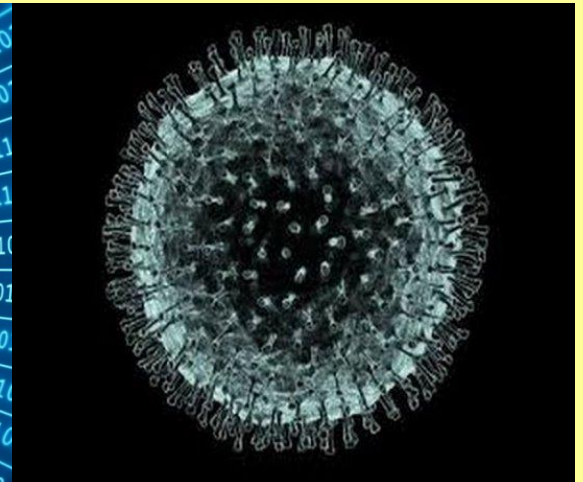
They have an envelope from which project club-like spikes all over its surface. When they discovered the virus group in the 1960s, scientists originally thought the array of these spikes resembled the solar *corona*, and so named this family of viruses *coronavirus*.

What is a virus?

We have already learned that a virus can be of the infection disease kind, but there are other uses for the word.

Can you identify them from the images below?

- 1.
- 2.
3. A viral disease. Covid-19



Answers

Number 3 was easy, but did you get numbers 1 and 2?

1. When a video, meme etc goes viral, it has spread like a virus, much like a disease. It infects us by entering our minds.
2. A computer can get a virus and malfunction or stop working altogether. It has spread from one contact (computer) to another in the same way as a biological virus

Review

To cement what you have learned about both the words Corona and Virus, you now need to tell someone in your house 3 things you have remembered.

Consider using the word corona or virus in your next piece of writing in a context not related to disease.

E.g. The sun spewed its majestic corona of light into space with wild abandon and awe-inspiring power.

His ideas spread like a virus infecting the gullible.

Hopefully you now have a deeper understanding of the word 'Virus' and where its roots lie.
Stay safe and keep learning!

