

NEWS FLASH ROUNDUP - Issue 1 - January 2021

Schools across Kenya reopened for the first time since March -the last country in East Africa to fully open. The World Health Organization has warned that prolonged school closures pose risks for children, including higher rates of teenage pregnancy, poor nutrition, and permanent dropouts, although some parents fear that crowded classrooms could present a danger to their children.



European factories ended 2020 on a high, while Asian activity grew moderately thanks to demand in China. Germany was again the main engine of growth in Europe. In Asia, surveys showed manufacturing activity expanded in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. It's another sign that many manufacturers in Asia have bounced back from the damage

caused by the health crisis. But it wasn't all positive in the region. In China, factory activity slowed last month.

In the race to beat coronavirus, China is the latest country to approve a vaccine. It was developed by an affiliate of state-backed pharmaceutical giant Sinopharm making it the country's first approved shot for general public use. No detailed efficacy data of the vaccine has been publicly released, but its developer says it's 79.34% effective.





Bitcoin traded at close to \$33,400 in Asia, after soaring to a record high of \$34,800 on Sunday as investors continue to bet the digital currency is on its way to becoming a mainstream payment method. The latest milestone for the world's most popular cryptocurrency came less than three weeks after it crossed \$20,000 for the first time. Overall, since March 2020,

bitcoin has surged 800% in value.

Finally, Google has published its "Google's Year in Search 2020" providing a snapshot of the questions we asked the search engine. The company has analyzed the billions of Google search requests it processed every day and identified the terms that have had the highest spike. Not surprisingly, "coronavirus" topped the list with "election results" second while reflecting the trend in people embracing online resources, "zoom" the teleconferencing company, came in at 4 and "Google classroom" at no 10.



Images source: REUTERS



LESSON PLAN - WORK SHEET

Level: Intermediate Plus (CEFR B2/ IELTS 6.0-6.5)

A. LEAD-IN

GOOGLE SEARCHES

What do you think the top things people searched for on Google in 2020?
Put the following items in the order you think they appeared:

Zoom
Election results
Google classroom
Coronavirus

Read the last paragraph to check your answers. What do you think the other top ten items were?

B. LANGUAGE IN CONTEXT

Find the words or expressions which match the following definitions. The news item is indicated in brackets ().

1. going on for/ lasting a long time (para 1)
2. people leaving school at an earlier age (para 1)
3. idiom – an economy which is performing well and driving others forward (para 2)
4. phrasal verb – returned to a previous, better position (para 2)
5. company or organisation which is connected to another (usually larger) business or organisation (para 3)
6. synonym for an injection (jab) such as a vaccination (para 3)
7. going up very quickly to an extremely high level (para 4)
8. extremely important event or achievement in the history of something (para 4)
9. small, but illustrative sample (para 5)
10. sudden growth. (para 5)



C. WHAT DID YOU UNDERSTAND?

Are these statements true (T) or false (F) or it doesn't say (DS) according to the articles.

1. Kenyan schools have been closed since March 2020. (para 1)
2. The WHO believes that lengthy school closures could have a negative impact on children's diets. (para 1)
3. The German economy has driven the return to growth in Europe in 2020. (para 2)
4. China's economy has been successful all round in 2020. (para 2)
5. China has added the Sinopharm vaccine to a number of Coronavirus vaccines available to their health authorities. (para 3)
6. The Sinopharm vaccine is the most effective vaccine currently available. (para 3)
7. The rise in value of Bitcoin is due to a belief that it will soon become a mainstream payment method. (para 4)
8. Bitcoin has increased in value by 800% over the last three weeks. (para 4)
9. 'Google's Year in Search 2020' gives us a sample of the terms which were searched for most in 2020. (para 5)
10. 'Zoom' appeared in fewer Google searches than 'Google Classroom'. (para 5)

D. A LOOK AT LANGUAGE

COLLOCATIONS

1. Match the words (1-6) in the first column to the words (A-F) in the second column to make collocations from the text.

1. search	A. method
2. pharmaceutical	B. milestone
3. grew	C. pregnancy
4. teenage	D. requests
5. payment	E. giant
6. latest	F. moderately



2. Use the collocations above to complete these sentences.

1. Sales in the company's latest console only _____ this quarter, significantly less than what was forecast.
2. The government are concerned about the growth in _____ with increasing numbers of young girls having children.
3. The US _____ Pfizer has been one of the first to develop an effective Coronavirus vaccine.
4. What _____ do you normally use in a supermarket? Cash or credit card?
5. We are celebrating the company's _____ of \$2 billion in online sales.
6. Information gathered from _____ can be used to target advertising towards users.

E. DISCUSSION

1. Do you think that schools should be closed during the pandemic? Why/Why not?
2. What is the economic situation and forecast like in your country? Are you optimistic that the situation will improve?
3. What vaccines are being used in your country? Are you worried about being vaccinated?
4. Have you ever traded in Bitcoin? Do you think that Bitcoin will become a 'mainstream payment method'?
5. What did you search for in Google in 2020? What do you think will be the subjects of most Google searches in 2021?

AUDIO FILE



[Access the mp3 audio file online](#)



ABOUT NEWS FLASH ROUNDUP

Perfectly Spoken has teamed up with global news organization REUTERS to offer a perfect combination of the latest news and current affairs from around the world with special tasks created by Andy Nicoll, one of the expert teachers at Perfectly Spoken.

This News Flash Roundup is based on these articles created by international journalists from REUTERS:

- Kenyan schools reopen after 10-month shutdown
- Factories bounce back from COVID-19 hit
- China gives conditional approval to vaccine
- Bitcoin trades near Sunday record
- What was the most Googled word of 2020?

Video, podcast and full transcripts for each article are available for subscribers www.perfectlyspoken.com