Starting up

- How many times a day do you use the internet? What do you use it for?
- Do you connect mostly using wi-fi, a telephone network, or some other way?

Vocabulary 1 – covid-19

Match the words in bold (1-8) with the correct definition (a-h).

Covid-19 is a type of [1]**coronavirus**. The illness is a now a [2]**pandemic**. The [3]**outbreak** of the disease began in December 2019. Since then, Covid-19 has [4]**spread** to all parts of the world. People and governments are working to [5]**mitigate** the effects of the illness and deal with the [6]**disruptions** that it's causing. [7]**Healthcare systems** around the world are preparing to treat large numbers of sick people. [8]**Connectivity** is very important for getting information to people when they need it.

a an illness that affects the whole world

b sudden start

c a disease that causes coughing and fever

d moved and grown

e problems

f reduce

g the ability to join communication networks

h services that help people who are ill

Reading 1

Read the article. Match each summary (a–h) with the correct paragraph (1–8).

a Kenya's president said the internet balloons are one part of a bigger plan to fight the pandemic.

b The government in Kenya will allow the use of a new network of balloons high in the air to provide internet service that may help the Covid-19 situation.

c The project will bring the internet to small towns and villages far away from cities. A Google company called Loon and Telkom Kenya have been waiting for nearly two years for the government to say yes.

d The balloons will be put very high in the air in the coming month and will make it easier for people in Kenya to communicate with each other.

e Kenya doesn't have very many cases now, but if a lot of people become ill, it may become a problem for hospitals and doctors.

f Alastair Westgarth said that the pandemic has affected its work in the US, but that it can still start the service in Kenya.

g Alastair Westgarth said the service in Kenya will begin very soon.

h Alastair Westgarth says that the government's approval is important because it will allow the company to provide continuing internet service in Kenya.

Kenya finally approves Loon internet balloons

1   High speed, internet balloons developed by Google's parent company, Alphabet, have finally been approved for use in Kenya, after president Uhuru Kenyatta fast-tracked regulatory approval to [1]**boost** communications capabilities to help fight the spread of the coronavirus.

2   The ambitious project, a joint venture between Alphabet's Loon and the country's third-biggest telecoms operator, Telkom Kenya, planned to use giant balloons to beam 4G data services to [2]**remote** parts of the country but had been held up for almost two years pending approvals from the aviation authority and the Ministry of Transport.

3   On Monday, Mr Kenyatta said those approvals had been granted as part of a "raft of measures to mitigate the disruptions to our life arising from the pandemic".

4   Cases of the coronavirus in Africa have so far [3]**lagged behind** many other parts of the world, but experts fear that fragile healthcare systems and crowded informal settlements in countries like Kenya could be overrun if the disease spreads. Kenya has so far recorded 15 confirmed cases of Covid-19, according to the Health Ministry.

5   Telkom Kenya said the global coronavirus outbreak had provided a need for "[4]**enhanced** connectivity", adding that the balloons, which will be launched from sites in the US to a height of 20km above the earth's surface and then remotely piloted to Kenya, should arrive in the "next few weeks".

6   Alastair Westgarth, Loon chief executive, described the regulatory approvals as "a [5]**critical** step in our efforts to provide service in Kenya on a sustained basis".

7   Mr Westgarth added that the coronavirus outbreak had reduced Loon's operational capacity at its launch sites in the US but that [6]**groundwork** already completed in Kenya meant the company was still able to deliver the service.

8   "We're confident that we can address these challenges and begin providing meaningful service to Kenyans in the near future," said Mr Westgarth.

Reading 2

Choose the best answer to each question.

1 Who made the approval process go more quickly?

   a) Google   c) Kenya's president

   b) Alphabet

2 Who was the project waiting for approval from?

   a) The aviation authority and Ministry of Transport   c) Telkom Kenya

   b) Alphabet's Loon

3 Compared with other countries, how many people in Kenya now have Covid-19?

   a) a lot more   c) about the same number

   b) fewer

4 How will the balloons get from the US to Kenya?

   a) by airplane   c) by ship

   b) by flying there

5 How much has the pandemic affected Loon?

   a) It has forced the company to stop work.   c) It has slowed down work.

   b) It hasn't affected the company at all.

Vocabulary 2 – vocabulary in context

Choose the best meaning of the words in bold in the article.

1 a) increase   b) decrease

2 a) very crowded   b) far from big cities

3 a) been faster than   b) been slower than

4 a) improved   b) low quality

5 a) very important   b) unimportant

6 a) sales   b) preparation

Grammar – *will, going to*

Choose the correct form of the words in italics.

1   Kenya *has approved* / *is going to approve* the Loon internet balloon network.

2   The system *has reached* / *will reach* remote parts of the country.

3   At this time, there *are* / *will be* 15 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Kenya.

4   The balloons *were* / *are going to be* launched from the US.

5   In Kenya, the preparations *have been* / *are soon going to be* made.

6   This system *is providing* / *will provide* a very useful service to Kenyans.

Further discussion

Work together to answer these questions.

1   Internet access will be useful in the pandemic. What other ways could it be useful for
    remote communities?

2   Are there any ways in which internet access can cause problems?

3   The service Loon provides will help people in the pandemic. What other businesses provide
    a product or service that people especially need now?

ANSWER KEY

Starting up
Students' own answers

Vocabulary 1

1	c	5	f
2	a	6	e
3	b	7	h
4	d	8	g

Reading 1

1	b	5	d
2	c	6	h
3	a	7	f
4	e	8	g

Reading 2

1	c	4	b
2	a	5	c
3	b		

Vocabulary 2

1	a	4	a
2	b	5	a
3	b	6	b

Grammar

1	has approved	4	are going to be
2	will reach	5	have been
3	are	6	will provide

Further discussion (possible answers)
1 It could bring a lot of opportunities for education, information about how to do things, and even jobs online. It can provide practical information like weather forecasts as well. It can bring entertainment and the ability to connect more easily with the outside world.
2 Possible problems include the spread of fake news and the way being online can take too much time and attention from people.
3 Medical supplies and medicines, food, delivery services.