

Starting up

- Have you ever received a delivery by drone to your home or place of work? Was it a good experience?
- If you haven't received a drone delivery, would you like to? Why or why not?
- What are the advantages of drone deliveries? What are the disadvantages?

Vocabulary 1 – delivering emergency medical supplies

Match each word in bold (1–8) with the correct meaning (a–h).

- 1 **Unmanned aircraft** can be smaller than traditional planes and helicopters because they don't carry a pilot.
 - 2 Medical professionals need **personal protective equipment** to keep them safe and well while working with coronavirus patients.
 - 3 **Frontline teams** need a regular supply of supplies to work safely and effectively.
 - 4 The pandemic has put a **strain** on healthcare systems everywhere because so many people have needed treatment at the same time.
 - 5 The global pandemic is an **unprecedented** situation that presents new challenges.
 - 6 Drone deliveries are an **innovative** solution, but many other new ideas are needed.
 - 7 The **national-scale** service delivers to every part of the country.
 - 8 The service is **on-demand**, which means that orders are filled very quickly.
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- a gloves, masks and glasses that prevent the spread of disease
 - b a difficulty or problem that is caused when a person, relationship, organization, or system has too much to do or too many problems to deal with
 - c drones
 - d new and creative
 - e never before seen
 - f available when it's needed
 - g people working directly with sick patients
 - h large enough to serve an entire country

Reading 1

Read through the article quickly. Are the sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 The company Zipline was started to deal with the Coronavirus.
- 2 It has recently begun medical deliveries in the US.
- 3 Zipline is the most successful company among its rivals.
- 4 Zipline plans to start business in Africa soon.

US drone delivery service takes flight to battle coronavirus

Zipline, the world's largest drone delivery service, has launched the US's first emergency unmanned aircraft system in a pandemic to distribute medical supplies to healthcare workers battling coronavirus.

The US Federal Aviation Administration has ¹**given a waiver** to Novant Health, a partner of Zipline, to use its drones to deliver personal protective equipment and supplies to frontline teams in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Zipline, a California start-up that has spent years running long-distance medicine delivery services in Africa, said it made its first delivery last Friday by completing a 51km round-trip journey to Huntersville Medical Center.

"It's the longest drone delivery flight in US history," Keller Rinaudo, Zipline chief executive, told the Financial Times.

The company expects to expand the partnership from emergency operations to regular deliveries into health facilities and patients' homes within the next two years.

Such plans were already ²**in the works** but the timeline was ³**"expedited"** to ease the strain on the medical supply chain owing to coronavirus, said Angela Yochem, chief digital and technology officer at Novant Health.

The move ⁴**mirrors** rival programmes that have also advanced their plans ⁵**in light of** the health crisis.

"We're living through an unprecedented situation, and we're going to need innovative solutions like this to get us through it," added Eric Boyette, North Carolina's secretary of transportation.

Zipline's launch of US deliveries represents a ⁶**vindication** for its strategy at a time when bigger rivals, including Amazon's Prime Air unit and Alphabet's Wing division, are struggling to ⁷**commercialise** their operations.

In 2013, Jeff Bezos, Amazon chief executive, predicted the company would be delivering consumer packages within five years. But owing to strict regulations and technological challenges, it ⁸**has yet to launch** the service despite promising last June that it would reach consumers "within months."

Wing focused its early efforts on delivering burritos with Chipotle, the Mexican food chain, and other food items from coffee group Starbucks.

Zipline has built its business around delivering over distances of 160km to rural hospitals in Africa, where governments have been more willing to support a framework that could save lives.

In 2016, the company signed a contract to deliver blood to 21 hospitals in Rwanda. It has since flown 36,000 missions to transport 160 different products to 1,500 hospitals in Ghana and Rwanda, making it the world's only national-scale, on-demand drone logistics service. ⁹**Headcount** has grown tenfold to about 300.

The service allows doctors to order supplies via text message, prompting a drone to be dispatched within three minutes that flies directly to the destination at 100km/hr. More than 50 per cent of the emergency blood deliveries have been for mothers suffering from ¹⁰**post-partum haemorrhaging**, the company said.



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Vocabulary 2 – vocabulary in context

Choose the correct alternative below to give the meaning of the bold words and expressions in the article.

- 1 *allowed / not allowed*
- 2 *being made / cancelled*
- 3 *slowed down / speeded up*
- 4 *is very different from / similar to*
- 5 *in spite / because of*
- 6 *proof that something is right / wrong*
- 7 *make money from / advertise*
- 8 *has / hasn't launched*
- 9 *the number of employees / drones*
- 10 *a medical problem / solution*

Reading 2

Choose the best answer to each question.

- 1 When did Zipline start doing drone deliveries in the US?
 - a) Several years ago.
 - b) Very recently.
 - c) It hasn't yet started.
- 2 What additional service does Zipline hope to add in the next two years?
 - a) Deliveries in Africa.
 - b) Military deliveries.
 - c) Non-emergency deliveries.
- 3 What have larger drone delivery companies struggled with?
 - a) Making a profit.
 - b) Finding reliable drones.
 - c) Locating customers.
- 4 Why do governments in Africa support drone delivery?
 - a) It reduces crime.
 - b) It makes fast food available.
 - c) It saves lives.
- 5 How soon after an order does a drone take off?
 - a) In three minutes or less.
 - b) Immediately.
 - c) Within an hour.

Grammar – past simple and present perfect

Complete the text with the correct form (past simple or present perfect) of the verb in brackets.

In 2013, Jeff Bezos ¹..... (predict) that Amazon Prime drone would be in service by 2018. The company ²..... (complete) a successful delivery test flight in 2016, but the actual service ³..... (not start) yet. The company ⁴..... (figure out) how to make their drones follow all of the laws that apply to aircraft in the US. In 2019, Wing ⁵..... (be) the first drone delivery company to receive US government approval. In addition, Wing ⁶..... (receive) approval to offer limited services in Australia and Finland. Zipline, which ⁷..... (do) deliveries in Africa since 2016, ⁸..... (get) approval for certain US deliveries during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Further discussion

Eric Boyette said we need innovative solutions to get through this unprecedented situation.

What challenges has the pandemic created in your workplace and what solutions have you found?

Group work

Work together to answer these questions.

- 1 Covid-19 has shut most shops and moved most shopping online. How do you think shopping is going to change in the next few years?
- 2 In addition to medical supplies and shopping, can you think of other possible uses for drones?
- 3 Could drones be useful in your own work situation? How?

ANSWER KEY**Starting up:**

Possible advantages: Reduce road traffic; reduce delivery time; consume less energy

Possible disadvantages: Drones could crash into things; the parcel could be damaged; the delivery might go to the wrong place

Vocabulary 1

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

Reading 1

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| 1 F | 3 T |
| 2 T | 4 F |

Vocabulary 2

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1 allowed | 6 right |
| 2 being made | 7 make money from |
| 3 speeded up | 8 hasn't |
| 4 similar to | 9 employees |
| 5 because | 10 problem |

Reading 2

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| 1 b | 4 c |
| 2 c | 5 a |
| 3 a | |

Grammar

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 1 predicted | 5 was |
| 2 completed | 6 has received |
| 3 hasn't started | 7 has done |
| 4 hasn't figured out | 8 got |

Further discussion

Students' own ideas and answers

Group work (possible answers)

- Students' own answers. Possible answers: Fewer people may visit shops in town. Shops may do more delivery. More people may shop in small, local shops.
- Students' own answers. Possible answers: Taking films and videos from the air. Doing work on farms, for example planting seeds. Doing police work, for example watching and following criminals. Monitoring air quality. Monitoring traffic. Larger drones may carry people, like flying taxis.
- Students' own answers

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