

## Charities for deaf people call for more see-through face masks

### Level 1 • Pre-intermediate / Intermediate

#### 1 Warmer

During the coronavirus pandemic, many activities have been banned in order to protect people from the virus. Which of these did you miss (or do you still miss) the most? Rank them in order from 1 (most missed) to 6 (least missed).

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| 1. _____ | a. travelling abroad                        |
| 2. _____ | b. going to class as a teacher or a student |
| 3. _____ | c. eating in restaurants                    |
| 4. _____ | d. meeting friends and family               |
| 5. _____ | e. travelling to work each day              |
| 6. _____ | f. shopping in department stores            |

#### 2 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text. The paragraph numbers will help you.

gesture

mask

obligation

lip-reading

transparent

- If something is \_\_\_\_\_, you can see through it. (para 1)
- A \_\_\_\_\_ is something that you wear to cover your face in order to protect it from something harmful. (para 1)
- A \_\_\_\_\_ is a movement that communicates a feeling or instruction. (para 3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ is the technique of looking at someone's lips in order to understand what they are saying because you cannot hear them. (para 3)
- An \_\_\_\_\_ is something that you must do for legal or moral reasons. (para 5)

setting

anxious

prototype

guidance

tip

- \_\_\_\_\_ is advice about what you should do or how you should behave. (para 5)
- A \_\_\_\_\_ is the place where something is or where something happens. (para 5)
- If you feel \_\_\_\_\_, you feel worried because you think something bad might happen. (para 6)
- A \_\_\_\_\_ is the first form of something new. It is made before it is produced in large quantities. (para 7)
- A \_\_\_\_\_ is a useful suggestion. (para 8)

#### 3 Find the information

Find the following information in the text as quickly as possible.

- How many people in the UK are deaf or have hearing loss?
- At the time the article was written, where did face coverings have to be worn in England?
- What does BSL stand for?
- What percentage of people over 70 have hearing loss?
- How old is Holly Parker, and where is she from?
- What three deaf-awareness tips are mentioned in the article?

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Nicola Davis

16 June, 2020

- 1 Deaf charities in the UK have said that transparent face masks should be available to everyone. More and more people are using face coverings. The charities say this is causing communication difficulties for the 12 million people in the UK who are deaf or have hearing loss.
- 2 People in England must wear face masks on public transport and in hospitals, and all hospital staff must wear masks. People should also wear face coverings in situations where social distancing is difficult.
- 3 “The main problem is that people who are deaf need visual clues for effective communication – that includes body language, gestures, facial expression and lip-reading,” said Ayla Ozmen, of Action on Hearing Loss. “British Sign Language (BSL) users also need to see lip patterns as well as facial expressions to understand BSL.”
- 4 People who are travelling on public transport in England with someone who uses lip-reading do not have to wear face coverings. But Ozmen said not many people know about this. This means that other travellers can become angry with people not wearing masks for a good reason.
- 5 Ozmen added that the rules for face coverings in hospitals go against the obligation for health and social care providers to meet people’s communications needs. “There has been no guidance from the government on how to deal with that in both hospitals and social-care settings,” she said. More than 70% of people over 70 having hearing loss, so many people in hospital with coronavirus may have difficulties in communication. “We absolutely understand the public health need for wearing masks, but there is also a safety problem, if people aren’t able to communicate,” said Ozmen.
- 6 Holly Parker is an 18-year-old from Essex who is very deaf and mainly uses lip reading. She has had problems as a result of face coverings. “My main method of communication is taken away. In shops, I can’t understand shopkeepers now, and this makes me very anxious,” she said. She also said that she was very worried about going to university if face masks had to be used during practical lessons.
- 7 Deaf charities, including Action on Hearing Loss, said they welcomed the development of transparent masks. Philip Gerrard, chief executive at Deaf Action, said the charity is testing several prototypes of transparent face masks and hoped it would soon give these to members of staff, clients and other people.
- 8 “We would also like to see the government support the development of transparent face masks in hospitals and social-care settings in the UK,” he said. Ian Noon, of the National Deaf Children’s Society, agreed. He added: “There are also some tips you can follow if you’re communicating with a deaf person: be patient, write things down or use gestures if a deaf person needs you to.”
- 9 The Deafness Research Centre at University College London also says that transparent face shields are a better solution because they allow deaf people to see a person’s whole face. But, it added, dialogue with deaf communities was very important: “Deaf people should advise on the design to make sure the shields work properly for them.”

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#### 4 Comprehension check

Match the beginnings and endings to make statements about the text.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Face masks are a problem for many deaf people because ...    | a. ... she can't understand shopkeepers who are wearing face masks. |
| 2. People travelling with a deaf person on public transport ... | b. ... in all situations where social distancing is difficult.      |
| 3. Transparent face masks would ...                             | c. ... they need visual clues for effective communication.          |
| 4. Holly Parker gets anxious because ...                        | d. ... do not have to wear face coverings.                          |
| 5. Transparent shields are a good idea because ...              | e. ... make life easier for deaf people.                            |
| 6. People should wear face coverings ...                        | f. ... they allow deaf people to see the person's whole face.       |

#### 5 Chunks

Rearrange the words to make phrases from the text.

- everyone to be available should
- effective for clues communication visual
- have in difficulties communication may
- of coverings a result face as
- method communication my of main
- public on people travelling who transport are

#### 6 Two-word phrases

Match the words in the left-hand column with the words in the right-hand column to make expressions from the text.

- |            |               |
|------------|---------------|
| 1. face    | a. expression |
| 2. hearing | b. reading    |
| 3. social  | c. loss       |
| 4. facial  | d. health     |
| 5. lip-    | e. mask       |
| 6. public  | f. distancing |

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### 7 Word-building

Complete the table using words from the text.

	adjective	noun
1.	deaf	
2.	safe	
3.		society
4.		practice
5.		anxiety
6.		face

### 8 Discussion

Should everyone have to wear a face mask in public places? Why? Why not?