

# 7 The Common Cold



Got the sniffles? You're not alone. The common cold will strike in the United States more than 61 million times this year. That's a lot of stuffy noses, sore throats, and coughs. You'd think scientists would have found a cure by now. For being so common, however, a cold is quite complex.

A cold is caused by a virus. And it's not just one type of virus. More than 200 viruses cause colds. A cold virus attacks healthy cells of the nose, throat, or lungs. The virus gets into the cells and takes control. A single virus makes hundreds or thousands of cold viruses inside each cell. Eventually, the cell bursts open and dies. The viruses, though, escape and attack other healthy cells. By now you're sneezing and coughing. Your throat is sore. The viruses keep infecting your healthy cells. Only your body can fight cold viruses. Billions of white blood cells travel in the blood. White blood cells make antibodies. These proteins attach themselves to viruses and destroy them. It's a slow process. Killing the viruses takes one to two weeks.

What can you do to fight a cold? There isn't much you can do. Antibiotic drugs don't work against viruses. Nose drops and cough medicines only relieve symptoms. Chicken soup seems to help. Vitamin C may help too. A dose of 1,000 milligrams of Vitamin C on the first day of a cold may quicken your recovery.

Be healthy and you may not catch a cold at all. Eat a well-balanced diet and get eight hours of sleep each day. Exercise regularly. The cold virus spreads through the air, so stay away from coughing, sneezing people. Also, the cold virus can live up to three hours outside the body. That means you can pick it up from touching money, doorknobs, and other people. So wash your hands often. Prevention is the best action!

Main Idea 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Answer	Score
Mark the <i>main idea</i>	
Mark the statement that is <i>too broad</i>	15
Mark the statement that is <i>too narrow</i>	5
	5

- a. A cold is a very common illness.
- b. The common cold is caused by a virus that antibodies will finally kill.
- c. More than 200 viruses can cause the common cold.

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

- Subject Matter 2 This passage is mainly concerned with
- a. antibodies.
  - b. viruses.
  - c. antibiotics.
  - d. common colds.
- Supporting Details 3 The common cold is started by
- a. a low white-blood cell count.
  - b. a virus.
  - c. a poor diet.
  - d. shaking hands with other people.
- Conclusion 4 We can conclude from this passage that the common cold
- a. will be curable in the near future.
  - b. causes fatigue and watery eyes.
  - c. is something people just have to live with.
  - d. can be prevented with nose drops.
- Clarifying Devices 5 In the second and third paragraphs, the author explains the workings of a cold virus through
- a. a step-by-step explanation.
  - b. scientific studies.
  - c. detailed word pictures.
  - d. a list of symptoms.
- Vocabulary in Context 6 Antibodies are
- a. proteins that attack viruses.
  - b. white blood cells.
  - c. drugs that fight viruses.
  - d. vitamins.

Add your scores for questions 1-6. Enter the total here Total  
and on the graph on page 214. Score