

Answer Key:

**Spelling**

- 1: supersede
- 2: irresistible
- 3: development
- 4: separate
- 5: recommend
- 6: minuscule
- 7: inoculate
- 8: accommodate
- 9: repetition
- 10: publicly

**Grammar**

- 1. I see a light at the end of the tunnel. It's probably a mirror.  
OR I see a light at the end of the tunnel; it's probably a mirror.
- 2: "I see a light at the end of the tunnel," Lincoln said. "It's probably a mirror."  
Or "I see a light at the end of the tunnel; it's probably a mirror," Lincoln said.
- 3: Correct
- 4: It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas at the Capitol, which has its dome all aglow.
- 5: It's a bird. It's a plane. No, it's a pterodactyl, which is neither a bird nor a plane.
- 6: Correct
- 7: Charles Julius Guiteau assassinated President Garfield. Giteau was an emotionally disturbed man who had failed to gain an appointment in Garfield's administration.  
OR President Garfield was assassinated by Charles Julius Guiteau, an emotionally disturbed man who had failed to gain an appointment in Garfield's administration.
- 8: Correct.
- 9: Congress authorized a memorial statue of Rear Admiral Samuel Francis duPont in 1882, in recognition of his Civil War service. At that point, duPont had been dead for 17 years.  
OR In 1882, Congress authorized a memorial statue of Rear Admiral Samuel Francis DuPont in recognition of his Civil War service. At that point, DuPont had been dead for 17 years.
- 10: This goofy grammar test has gone where no men have gone before.  
OR This goofy grammar test has gone where no man has gone before.

Congressional Minutiae:

1: Harry Reid, Mitch McConnell

2: Nancy Pelosi, John A. Boehner

3: 60. Invoking cloture.

4: Depends on the week

5: 10 in House; 12 in Senate

6: 2

7: Senate

8: House

9: Six, Two

10:

Energy Secretary Bodman,

Labor Secretary Chao,

Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff,

Defense Secretary Gates,

Attorney General Gonzales,

Commerce Secretary Gonzales,

HUD Secretary Jackson

Agriculture Secretary Johanns

Interior Secretary Kempthorne

HHS Secretary Leavitt

VA Secretary Nicholson

Treasury Secretary Paulson

Transportation Secretary Peters

State Secretary Rice

Education Secretary Spellings

### 1: Senate Finance Approves Health Nominations

The Senate committee unanimously approved the Health and Human Services Department nominations of Alex Azar II to be deputy secretary; Charles E. Johnson to be assistant secretary for budget, technology, and finance; and Suzanne C. DeFrancis to be assistant secretary for public affairs.

### 2: U.S. Chamber Gets New, Old Digs on the Hill

Chamber of Commerce lobbyists will now operate out of a 115-year-old rowhouse in Southeast Washington – after a substantial yearlong renovation.

### 3: Predict Inflation Now

The Fed's latest implies that inflation may be on the way, even if few of the regular warning signs are flashing.

## STORIES:

### #1

#### Senate Votes to Expand Unemployment, Other Benefits for Hurricane Katrina Victims

The Senate passed a bill late Feb. 15 that would expand government relief for victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The legislation (S 1777) would extend disaster unemployment benefits from the current maximum of 26 weeks to 39 weeks, and would lengthen the period in which jobless workers could apply for assistance.

It also would allow communities to be reimbursed for supplies such as toiletries and cots distributed to Katrina victims, rather than reimbursing only expenses incurred by the victims themselves.

The bill was sponsored by Susan Collins, R-Maine, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs chairwoman, and Joseph I. Lieberman of Connecticut, the ranking Democrat on the panel.

Senators passed the bill by voice vote after adopting a substitute amendment removing a provision to waive the \$26,200 cap on federal assistance per individual or household. Also removed was a provision that would have allowed the president to waive a 75 percent cap on the federal share of assistance to individuals and households and provide up to a 90 percent federal match.

A Senate aide said dropping those provisions allowed the bill to move forward. The committee had approved the bill last September.

“Our legislation ensures that federal aid for families devastated by Hurricane Katrina is commensurate with the magnitude of the disaster,” Collins said in a statement. “It provides increased flexibility in disaster assistance while ensuring accountability.”

A spokesman for the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, a panel that has jurisdiction over disaster issues, said Chairman Don Young, R-Alaska, favored extending the unemployment benefits, but was still reviewing the legislation.

The legislation also includes a non-binding provision saying that foreign students who could not meet the terms of their visa requirements because of the storm should not be deported.

#2

## United States Lags in Ordering Protective Masks, Manufacturers Warn

The industry that makes disposable protective masks says the United States is not doing enough to stockpile the devices in the event of what many consider to be an inevitable pandemic flu virus.

Pointing to France, which has ordered 200 million such masks for its 60 million citizens, manufacturers attending a Jan. 23 public meeting sponsored by the Institute of Medicine (IoM) said the Department of Health and Human Services should sharply increase its orders of “N-95 respirators,” a type of mask that significantly reduces the odds of inhaling a flu virus.

“If the United States determines that N-95s are the right way to go, to wait for the time of an actual emergency is too late,” said Jeffrey Birkner, an official with Moldex, a supplier of N-95 masks.

But HHS officials say the N-95 respirators may not be the way to go for the public.

“There is not enough science-based evidence at this time to warrant the use of N-95 respirators for the general population,” HHS spokeswoman Christina Pearson said in a Feb. 1 follow-up e-mail. She said HHS recommends those masks only for certain types of health care workers.

“For use in a pandemic, this year we will be stockpiling around 50 million N-95 respirators and 50 million surgical masks for the use of health care workers,” she wrote.

HHS also has expressed doubts that the industry can make enough of the disposable N-95 masks to meet the full needs of the nation. It’s asking the IoM to study whether existing N-95 respirator masks can be modified so that they can be reused.

HHS policy stresses the importance of staying away from work, school and other public areas as the key to avoiding infection during a pandemic. But venturing out of the home may be inevitable should such a crisis occur, because multiple waves of infection, with each lasting several weeks, should be expected.

Manufacturers representing health and first-response providers say HHS should be doing more than simply its reuse strategy — and should be ordering disposable masks in the meantime.

## Surgical Masks vs. Respirator Masks

Though they come in different designs, many N-95 respirators look very much like surgical masks and are not bulky contraptions comparable to a gas mask. N-95s last for about eight hours and are meant to be disposed of after a single use. They cost about a dollar, compared with about 15 cents for a surgical mask, industry officials said.

Though the HHS pandemic flu plan calls for doctors and nurses and other health care workers to wear surgical masks to control infection, those masks do not protect the wearer except in very limited circumstances, said Bradley and Richard Weber, an executive with Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing (3M). Rather, they protect those in the vicinity from becoming infected if the wearer has the flu virus, they explained.

Surgical masks might offer some protection in that they might keep a wearer from getting the flu virus by putting his or her hands in the mouth, Weber said. A surgical mask might help “if you are not infected, but if you actually put a surgical mask on someone in your family or in whatever community you are in that is infected,” said Lily Engstrom, a senior HHS policy adviser on public health emergency preparedness.

But, “if you are afraid something is going to get in your lungs, you need a respirator,” Weber said.

Respirator designs that do not have a valve also protect not only the wearer but also those in the vicinity of the wearer, he added.

#### Jumping on N-95s

Industry officials said other nations and multinational corporations are far ahead of the United States in their stockpiling programs. In addition to buying roughly three N-95 respirators for every one of its citizens, France “wants nearly three to four hundred [million] more,” Bradley said.

McDonald’s and other large corporations are buying the devices for their employees, the industry reps added. “We are . . . seeing a lot with multinational companies, not only U.S. ones, but in Japan, Korea . . . and in Europe,” 3M’s Weber said.

His own company, the largest U.S. supplier of the devices, is giving respirators to employees and their families in some parts of the world. A family of four usually gets a supply of 10 respirators. Two and a half uses apiece “is all you get,” Weber said.

HHS, meanwhile, has maintained a low profile when it comes to stockpiling N-95s, and needs to act well in advance of an emergency, industry officials said.

Engstrom maintains that HHS has made its plans known for an initial order. “The department wants to purchase, for the time being, 50 million N-95s, and 50 million surgical masks,” Engstrom said. “That is no secret. It is out there. It is public information.”

But HHS has not called attention to the order — issuing no press release on the matter, for example.

“I don’t know how many N-95s or other respirators are in the national stockpile, in caches or in other places,” said Janice Comer Bradley, technical director for the International Safety Equipment Association, which represents some six dozen safety equipment suppliers. “I have absolutely no idea how many the U.S. government currently possesses. I don’t know if they plan to order more.”

Given the short amount of time many N-95 respirators can be used, 50 million is peanuts anyway, health analysts say. “France has ordered 200 million and we have six times the population of France,” said Alan Hack, a respirator expert retired from Los Alamos National Laboratory who serves on the IoM panel that convened the meeting.

### HHS Strategy

Manufacturers’ reps said they were unable to give an estimate of the U.S. or global capacity to produce N-95 masks. But 3M has privately shared data on its manufacturing capacity with senior HHS officials.

While not relating its assessment directly to its knowledge of 3M data, the department has reached the conclusion that not enough surgical or N-95 masks will be available to meet demand, even if manufacturers ramp up capacity.

That’s why HHS is asking the IoM to advise it on whether existing technology could be adapted for reuse to alleviate the expected shortage of respirators and masks for both the health care community and the public.

The Jan. 23 meeting gave no great cause for optimism on that score. “If there was such a thing as a reusable disposable respirator that fit everybody, it would already be on the market,” Bradley said.

Designing more reusable respirators would take considerable time and drive up the unit cost of the devices, manufacturers said.

Unions, meanwhile, say the emphasis of the IoM study is misplaced. The focus should first be on determining what the level of protection should be and then on how to provide it, said James August, safety director for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. August said he was “appalled and, in fact, I am quite angry” about the questions HHS is putting to the IoM panel.

August said it is unclear whether the N-95 respirator offers the needed level of protection. Regardless, he said, protection must go beyond respirators to include other workplace methods of controlling exposure by health care workers to pandemic flu virus.

“We don’t think that an N-95 is going to protect our members enough,” said Ron McGraw, an official with the International Association of Fire Fighters.