

Variants of Concern

This lesson was written in August 2021 and reflects information available, and guidance issued at the time.



Objectives:

- To recognise that a virus changes and learn the term 'mutation'.
- To recognise the term 'Variant of Concern' (VoC) (ext. To explain in simple terms what it means).
- To know the actions we need to take to slow the spread of COVID-19, including the importance of testing.

Curriculum Links:

- **Communication & Language:** respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions
- **Understanding of the world:** children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things

Key Vocabulary:

- Mutate/mutation
- Variant of Concern
- Virus
- Infect

Resources:

- Lego - 3 identical pieces per child plus about 6 different colour pieces

FAQs:

Will new variants continue to appear?

As long as the virus continues to pass from one person to another (people get infected), there is a chance it may change/mutate; higher numbers of cases means a higher chance of new variants appearing.

Are new variants always stronger/more infectious?

You will learn from this lesson, that sometimes the virus changes and becomes weaker, and sometimes it changes and it makes no difference to how the virus works, so while new variants can be stronger/more infectious this is not always the case.

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Introduction:

5 mins



Give each child 3 pieces of Lego and ask them to put them together in any way they want. This could be done in pairs or groups depending on resources. Give 6 children a different colour piece as part of their three pieces.

Ask them to hide their models to come back to later.

Watch the COVID-19 Warrior introduction video.

Main Activity:

15 mins



Revisit what the children know about Coronavirus and ask them whether they feel they still need to be careful not to catch the virus.

Talk through the PowerPoint slides with the children and give them a chance to ask questions.

Ask them to look at their Lego models and compare:

- How are their models the same?
- How are they different?

Point out the mutations (the different ways they are formed) and compare the strength of the different models - some variants are stronger, but some are weaker. **Mutations are changes in the virus which can make it stronger (more harmful) or weaker (less harmful).**

Plenary:

5 mins



- Go over key vocabulary – check understanding of the term mutation (change)
- See if the children can list the ways we can limit the spread of Coronavirus.



Possible Extension Activities:

- **Word ladder activity** (see PowerPoint) - can be done as a class or individually. See how quickly a 'rug' can change into a 'car' if it is allowed to mutate.