

Neil

Before we get into this, we need to explain some terms. The Covid which people around the world have been suffering from is the 'outbreak virus'. But if you go backwards there's an intermediary _____ as the 'progenitor virus' between this and the 'ancestral virus', which is decades or centuries older.

Sam

Ninety-nine percent of scientists would agree that the 'ancestral virus' of Covid 19 came from bats. But it's the go-between 'progenitor virus' that _____ is searching for now.

Neil

One of the scientists leading this search is Linfa Wang, a professor at Duke Medical School who is known as the 'Batman of Singapore'. Here he is explaining his _____ to BBC World Service's, The Documentary:

Prof Linfa Wang

Of course the **holy grail** right now for Covid-19 is to discover where is that progenitor virus and also in which kind of animals or humans, right? And usually, the progenitor _____ has to be 99.9% identical to the outbreak virus and so our study was set up to do that. If you can catch that virus and you demonstrate the genomic sequence is 99.9% [identical] then **that's brilliant**.

Sam

Professor Wang thinks that finding the _____ of Covid-19's 'progenitor virus' would be like finding the **holy grail**. This expression - the holy grail - is associated with the cup believed to have been used by Jesus Christ at his last meal. It means something extremely difficult to find or get.

Neil

If you can discover the 'progenitor virus' then, in the words of Professor Wang – **that's brilliant!** – an exclamation _____ 'that's very good!' or '_____!'

Sam

So although bats are sometimes, wrongly, blamed for causing Covid, they are good friends to farmers, environmentalists, and scientists – as well as vampires! Are bats friend or foe? You decide. So anyway, what was the answer to your quiz question, Neil

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Neil

Ah yes, I asked Sam: How many different species of bat are there around the world? What did you say?

Sam

I said there were, b) two and a half thousand different species of bats. ____ I right?

Neil

You were ____, Sam, but the correct answer was… a) there are one and a half thousand different species of bats around the world. With so many I guess some of them might be _____ than others.

Sam

Let's recap the vocabulary from this programme about the relationship between humans and bats, starting with **carnivores** which are animals that eat meat…

Neil

Insectivores, meanwhile, are animals, like most bats, that eat only insects.

Sam

A **pest** is an insect or small animal that is _____ or damages crops.

Neil

Bats eat pests **voraciously**, or very eagerly.

Sam

The **holy grail** refers to something that's extremely difficult to find or get.

Neil

And finally, you can ___ the phrase, **that's brilliant!** to say, 'that's great!' or 'amazing!'

Sam

Once again our six minutes are up. See you again soon for more topical chats and trending vocabulary here at 6 Minute English.

Neil

And don't _____ you can download our app to find programmes on many more topics, from African animals to zodiac signs and zombies, all here on the BBC Learning English website. Bye for now!

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