

# Language for ...

## visiting the doctor

**Age:** Adult

**Level:** Pre-intermediate

**Time:** 45–60 minutes

**Language focus:** key vocabulary for registering as a patient and seeing a doctor

**Skills:** reading, listening

**Materials:** audio and worksheets, internet access

**Aims:** to provide students with language to help them deal with being ill



### What are red words?

Ninety per cent of the time, speakers of English use just 7,500 words in speech and writing. These words appear in the Macmillan Dictionary in red, and are graded with stars. One-star words are frequent, two-star words are more frequent, and three-star words are the most frequent. 'Language for' lessons are based on red words and encourage students to improve their English through communicative tasks using collocation and commonly used phrases.

- 1 As preparation for the lesson, ask students to look at one or two UK-based healthcare websites (e.g. [NHS choices](#), [Health.org](#)) note down any words they see repeatedly (e.g. *appointment*, *symptom*, *prescription*, *virus*), and check their meanings in the Macmillan Dictionary.



**Teaching Tip:** Encourage students to record new vocabulary in a systematic way, by noting down whether the words they find are nouns, verbs or adjectives. When they check the meanings in the Macmillan Dictionary, ask them to note down any words that are derived from the same root, e.g. *prescribe* / *prescription*; *virus* / *viral*, and any collocations they find, e.g. *make an appointment*.

- 2 Make a copy of the worksheet for each student.
- 3 Start the lesson by asking students to work in

pairs and ask and answer the three questions in the warmer exercise. Then get them to report their partner's answers to the whole class.

- 4 Explain that there are two ways of saying that something hurts. Some parts of the body are followed by 'ache', while for others we use 'a pain in my ...'. Ask students to work individually and complete the table. Have them compare their answers in pairs and then check the answers with the whole class. Note that *stomach ache* is written as two words.
- 5 Tell students that they're now going to listen to two conversations involving a woman called Jane. In the first part, Jane is registering as a new patient at the doctor's. Ask them to read the questions in exercise 2a in preparation. Play Track 1. Give students time to complete exercise 2a and compare their answers in pairs. Replay the recording so they can check their answers, then check the answers as a class.
- 6 Before completing exercise 2b, explain that you're going to play the second part of the recording and students will need to listen out for words to complete each of the sentences. Ask them to read the sentences and briefly think about what the words might be. Play Track 2, pausing if necessary to give students time to write in the answers. Once students have completed the exercise, check the answers as a class, showing how the sentences highlight typical phrases which occur in this situational context, e.g. *describe symptoms*, *have a temperature*, *a sore throat*, *write out a prescription*.
- 7 Ask students to carefully read the sentences in exercise 3a and then work in pairs to complete the exercise. Encourage them to first complete any answers they immediately know so that they can be eliminated. Check the answers as a class.

# Language for ...

## visiting the doctor

- 8** Exercise 3b uses words first encountered in the previous exercises and in the listening extracts. Ask students to work individually to complete the exercise and then compare their answers in pairs. Check answers with the whole class.
- 9** Exercise 3c focuses on some common collocations in this context. This exercise can be done individually. Check answers with the whole class.
- 10** Divide students into pairs for exercise 4. Tell them to read the questions and note down some ideas for the responses. Remind them to look back at the words and phrases featured in earlier exercises, as well as any suggestions given in exercise 4. Ask them to take turns in asking the doctor's questions and responding to them.
- 11** As a wind-up exercise, ask students to look at the discussion questions in exercise 5. Tell them they should talk about what they should and shouldn't do if they have flu symptoms (e.g. *should: drink plenty of liquid, get a lot of rest; shouldn't: go to work, ask the doctor for antibiotics*) and then discuss what is both good for and bad for their health. Finish off with whole class feedback.

### Answer key:

- 1** a pain in my foot, arm, shoulder, leg; headache, earache, backache, stomach ache
- 2a** 1 registration  
2 surname  
3 date  
4 permanent
- b** 1 symptoms  
2 headache  
3 sore  
4 temperature  
5 unwell
- 3a** 1 f  
2 h  
3 a  
4 g
- b** 1 symptoms  
2 sore  
3 temperature  
4 headache
- c** 1 e  
2 c  
3 f
- 4,5** students' own answers
- 5 allergies  
6 medication  
7 appointment  
8 surgery
- 6 several  
7 virus  
8 serious  
9 recommends  
10 prescription
- 5 c  
6 b  
7 e  
8 d
- 5 appointment  
6 water  
7 prescription  
8 virus
- 4 a  
5 b  
6 d

# Language for ...

## visiting the doctor

### Transcript: Track 1

**Receptionist:** Good morning.  
**Jane:** Good morning.  
**Receptionist:** How can I help?  
**Jane:** My name's Jane. I called earlier about registering as a patient at this surgery.  
**Receptionist:** (taking out a form) Oh, yes. I'll have to fill in this registration form for you.  
**Jane:** OK.  
**Receptionist:** What's your surname, Jane?  
**Jane:** It's Stephens. S-T-E-P-H-E-N-S.  
**Receptionist:** OK. And what's your date of birth?  
**Jane:** The 1st of November, 1987.  
**Receptionist:** And your address?  
**Jane:** 15 Hill Street.  
**Receptionist:** Is that a permanent address?  
**Jane:** Yes.  
**Receptionist:** Do you have any allergies?  
**Jane:** No.  
**Receptionist:** Are you on any medication at the moment?  
**Jane:** No. Can I make an appointment to see the doctor on Wednesday afternoon?  
**Receptionist:** I'm afraid the surgery is closed on Wednesday afternoons. How about Thursday morning at 10 o'clock?  
**Jane:** Yes, that's fine.

### Transcript: Track 2

**Doctor:** Sit down. What can I do for you?  
**Jane:** I'm feeling unwell.  
**Doctor:** Can you describe your symptoms?  
**Jane:** Yes. I have a terrible headache and I've got a sore throat.  
**Doctor:** Have you got a temperature?  
**Jane:** I think so, but it's not very high.  
**Doctor:** And when did you start feeling unwell?  
**Jane:** Well, actually, I've been feeling ill for several days.  
**Doctor:** Hmm, I think you've probably got a virus. I don't think it's anything serious. You should stay at home, and I recommend plenty of rest and lots of hot drinks.  
**Jane:** OK. Do I need to take anything?  
**Doctor:** I'll write you out a prescription for some painkillers to help with your headache.

# Language for ...

## visiting the doctor

### 1 Warmer

Ask and answer the following questions with a partner:

- When was the last time you were ill?
- What was wrong with you?
- What did you do?

Complete the medical conditions using these words.

head      foot      arm      back      ear  
stomach      shoulder      leg

a <b>pain</b> in my _____	_____ <b>ache</b>
a pain in my _____	_____ ache
a pain in my _____	_____ ache
a pain in my _____	_____ ache



### 2 Listening

**a** ▶ Listen to conversation 1 and choose the correct word.

- 1 The receptionist tells Jane she has to fill in a **registration** / **enrolment** form.
- 2 She asks Jane what her **surname** / **first name** is.
- 3 She asks Jane for her **day** / **date** of birth.
- 4 She asks her whether her address is a **permanent** / **temporary** one.
- 5 She asks Jane if she has any **symptoms** / **allergies**.
- 6 She asks her if she is on any **medicine** / **medication**.
- 7 Jane asks the receptionist if she can make an **arrangement** / **appointment** to see the doctor on Wednesday afternoon.
- 8 The receptionist says that the **surgery** / **health centre** is closed on Wednesday afternoons.



**b** ▶ Listen to conversation 2 and fill in the missing information.

- 1 The doctor asks Jane to describe her \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Jane tells him that she has a terrible \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 She also says she has a \_\_\_\_\_ throat.
- 4 The doctor asks her if she has a \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 He asks her when she started feeling \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6 Jane says that she has been feeling ill for \_\_\_\_\_ days.
- 7 The doctor says that Jane probably has a \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8 He says he doesn't think it is anything \_\_\_\_\_.
- 9 He \_\_\_\_\_ plenty of rest and lots of hot drinks.
- 10 He writes out a \_\_\_\_\_ for some painkillers.

# Language for ...

## visiting the doctor

### 3 Language in use

**a** Read the sentences. Look at the words in bold and match them with their meanings a-h.

- 1 Describe your **symptoms** carefully.
- 2 Tell the doctor if you have any **allergies**.
- 3 The doctor may take your **temperature**.
- 4 The doctor will use your symptoms to make a **diagnosis**.
- 5 He or she will then write out a **prescription**.
- 6 You should take your prescription to a **pharmacy**.
- 7 Make sure you take the correct **dose** each day.
- 8 If your symptoms persist, make an **appointment** to see your doctor again.

- a the measurement of how hot your body is
- b a shop where medicines are prepared and sold
- c a piece of paper that a doctor gives you that says what type of medicine you need
- d an arrangement to see someone at a particular time
- e an amount of a drug that has been measured so that you can take it
- f signs that someone has an illness
- g a statement about what disease someone has, based on examining them
- h medical conditions in which you become sick or your skin becomes red as a reaction to something you eat, breathe or touch

**b** Complete the information on this health advice leaflet using the words in the box

temperature    prescription    symptoms    virus    appointment    headache    water    sore

#### HELP TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF FLU THIS WINTER

- 1 Do you have any of these (1) \_\_\_\_\_ ?
- 2 A (2) \_\_\_\_\_ throat, a high (3) \_\_\_\_\_ and a (4) \_\_\_\_\_ ?
- 3 If you think you have flu, you don't need to make an (5) \_\_\_\_\_ to see your doctor.
- 4 Stay at home, keep warm and drink a lot of (6) \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 Don't go to work or school.
- 6 Don't ask your doctor for a (7) \_\_\_\_\_ for antibiotics. Flu is a (8) \_\_\_\_\_ and antibiotics won't work.

**c** Match the verbs in the left-hand column with the nouns or noun phrases in the right-hand column.

- |             |                       |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1 make      | a a prescription      |
| 2 fill in   | b the correct dose    |
| 3 describe  | c a registration form |
| 4 write out | d a temperature       |
| 5 take      | e an appointment      |
| 6 have      | f symptoms            |

# Language for ...

## visiting the doctor

### 4 Communicate

You don't feel well. You contact an online healthcare service. Answer the doctor's questions.

Doctor: How long have you been feeling unwell?

You: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor: Can you describe your symptoms?

You: *(sore throat/headache/temperature)*

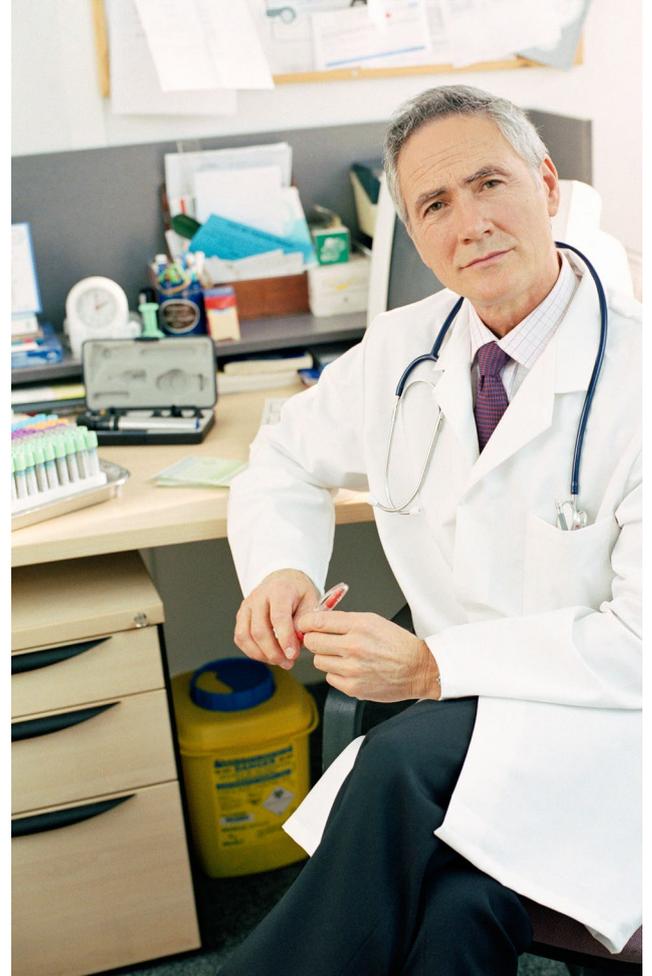
Doctor: Are you on any medication at the moment?

You: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor: Do you have any allergies?

You: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor: I think you just have a cold. Take some aspirin, keep warm and drink lots of liquids.



### 5 Discussion

Discuss the following questions with a partner and share your answers with the class:

What should/shouldn't you do when **you are in poor health**?

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What kinds of things are **good for your health**?

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What kinds of things are **bad for your health**?

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### Red Words

'Red Words' in this lesson are indicated in **red** in the above exercises.