

## medical emergencies

**Age:** Young adult / adult



**Level:** Pre-Intermediate – Intermediate

**Length:** 90 minutes (approx.)

**Language Focus:** vocabulary related to health and the human body, key expressions for phoning the emergency services, focus on Past Simple and Past Continuous for describing medical emergencies

**Skills:** speaking, reading

**Materials:** one copy of the worksheet per student

**Aims:** to equip students with common vocabulary and grammar related to medical problems, to allow students to effectively understand and use common expressions for phoning the emergency services

### 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 Begin the lesson by showing the class an image of a sports injury. Ask them to brainstorm who they would call to report it and what they would say. Write up some of the students' suggestions. Tell the class that in this lesson, they'll study useful language in case they ever need to deal with a medical emergency in English.
- 2 Put the students into teams of 3 or 4 and give them the worksheets. Read aloud the instructions for Task 1a. Draw attention to the sample words already included in the table, and check that students understand them. Tell students that each group must work together to come up with words for parts of the body, and all members should make a note of these words. However, at the end of the activity, there will only be one set of words per group.
- 3 Allow the students to start writing words. Once the 2 minutes are up, ask each group to share their answers with a different group for correction. Students may now use a dictionary to check unfamiliar words. Monitor the class closely as they correct, taking note of good suggestions. Share the suggestions with the class and elicit definitions for them. To ensure understanding for later tasks, make sure that you have focused on the following words: *neck, skin, chest, blood, brain* (if these haven't been suggested by any groups, simply write them up and elicit definitions). Finally, decide which group has the most words and let the winners know.
- 4 Now refer students to Task 1b. Ask them to work in the same groups to complete the missing words. Then elicit the correct answers, focusing on the correct pronunciation. Next, ask students to tell you the Past Simple form of each. If they get stuck with any verb, allow them to look at a list of irregular verbs.
- 5 Refer students to Task 1c. Give them a certain time limit (e.g. 5 minutes) to discuss the questions in pairs. Monitor the class as they do this and make notes. Finally, give feedback on some errors you heard, but moreover on good 'medical' language that you heard being used.
- 6 Read aloud the instructions for Task 2a. Ask students to work individually and set a time limit of about 3-4 minutes for them to do this task. Remind students that they are reading

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for gist, so they shouldn't worry if they don't understand all the words at this stage. Allow them to do the task and then elicit the correct answers.

- 7 Refer students to Task 2b. Before they begin, ask them to look at the words in the table and to work in pairs to practise saying the words aloud according to the phonetic script. Listen as they do this and drill any problematic words. Now, allow students to complete the definitions in pairs. Then check answers. Next, as in Task 1b, ask students to tell you the Past Simple form of each of the 5 verbs in the table. If they get stuck, allow them to look at a list of irregular verbs.
- 8 Refer students to Task 3a. Ask students to work individually and complete the sentences using the correct word. Check answers.
- 9 Read aloud the instructions for Task 3b. Ask them to complete the first part of the task in pairs by completing the rules. Elicit the answers. Next, ask students to work individually to complete the sentences in the second part of the task. When they're ready, ask them to compare their suggested answers. Finally, elicit correct answers.
- 10 For Task 4, put the students in new pairs of Student A and Student B. Read the instructions aloud. To introduce the task, write up the following phrases: *unconscious, heart attack, CPR*. Tell students that in the sample conversation, you will be the caller. Ask for a volunteer to be the operator (ideally, this would be a relatively strong student). Begin the roleplay. You should describe an imaginary medical emergency which includes the 3 phrases you said

at the beginning. The operator should ask you questions and direct you, as per the role-card. Add an element of drama to your performance to remind students of the urgency of the conversations in this roleplay (and if it's possible, add some humour!). Once you've completed the example, ask students if they have any doubts. Then allow them to begin, reminding them that they must alternate roles after each conversation. Allow the class a certain amount of time to have all 4 conversations (e.g. 5-10 minutes). Monitor them as they do this and make notes. When the time is up, ask individual students to retell some of their conversations to the class (e.g. *Alessandra, what was the toxic substance that your caller ate?*). Finally, give feedback.

- 11 Students remain in the same pairs. Refer them to Task 5. Give students a few minutes to discuss the questions, encouraging them to incorporate new language from this lesson. Finally, provide feedback on both good language and errors which may have come up.

### Key

#### 1. Warmer

Task a:

Suggestions for Parts of the Body  
(appropriate to this level)

External – hair, head, arm, back, ear, eye, leg,  
teeth, neck, finger, nose, feet, skin, chest

Internal – blood, brain, throat, muscle, bone

Task b:

1. burn, 2. cut, 3. breathe, 4. have, 5. fall, 6. injure  
(past simple forms = burned/burnt, cut, breathed,  
had, fell, injured)

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### 2. Text

Task a:

i. False, ii. True, iii. True, iv. False, v. False, vi. False, vii. False, ix. True

Task b:

1. wound, 2. swollen, 3. vomit, 4. conscious, 5. symptom, 6. pale, 7. bleed, 8. unconscious, 9. hit, 10. heart attack, 11. faint, 12. swallow (verbs and their Past Simple forms = vomit → vomited; bleed → bled; hit → hit; faint → fainted; swallow → swallowed)

### 3. Language in Use

Task a:

1. skin, 2. chest, 3. breathe, 4. swollen, 5. wound, 6. unconscious, 7. symptom, 8. allergic

Task b:

1. structures in the Past Continuous = I was cutting; We were eating; My child was playing  
verbs in the Past Simple = cut, stopped, fell, swallowed

Rules:

- The **Past Continuous** describes an action or situation which was in progress in the past.
  - The **Past Simple** describes an action in the past which interrupted another action or situation.
2. i. was running, fell, injured  
ii. cut, was making, started  
iii. was doing, started, fainted