

Topics: Health by Adrian Tennant

LEVEL: Pre-intermediate
AGE: Teenagers / Adults
TIME NEEDED: 90 minutes + project
LANGUAGE FOCUS: Countable and uncountable nouns, understanding vocabulary in context, topic words

LEAD-IN

Ask students to look at the pictures and elicit ideas from them about the topic. Write some of the ideas on the board.

Key a _____
 1. a doctor; 2. a thermometer; 3. pills; 4. an ill child being given medicine

Next, put the students in pairs and ask them to match the words to the correct pictures. Check the answers as a class.

Key b _____
 pills – 3; thermometer – 2; medicine – 4; stethoscope – 1

READING: LETTERS

Ask students to read through the four letters and decide what the health issues are and what advice they think the doctor will give in each case. Get them to discuss their ideas in pairs. Elicit a few ideas but only confirm the health issues at this stage.

Key a _____
 A. a breathing problem, probably asthma; B. spots;
 C. a rash; D. fear of needles / needs injections

Ask students to read the questions that follow. Again, get pairs to check their answers together before checking as a class.

Key b _____
 1. C; 2. A; 3. D; 4. B

Next, get the students to read the three replies and match each one to the correct letter. Again, encourage the students to discuss their ideas with a partner. Check if the advice suggested by the students matched that given by Dr Amy before checking the answers as a class.

Key c _____
 1. C; 2. A; 3. B

WORKING WITH THE LANGUAGE

Ask the students to look at the words and decide if each one is countable or uncountable. Next, get them to look back at the letters and replies, circle the words and see if this helps them decide. Get them to discuss their ideas in pairs, then check the answers as a class.

Key _____
 1. U; 2. C; 3. U; 4. C; 5. C; 6. C

WORKING WITH VOCABULARY

Tell the students to look back at the letters and replies and find words that match the definitions. Encourage them to work in pairs and discuss their ideas as they look at the texts. You might want to point out that the words are in the order that they appear in the letters and replies. Check the answers as a class.

Key _____
 1. concerned; 2. serious; 3. lotion; 4. slip; 5. sore; 6. terrify;
 7. clear up; 8. develop; 9. recommend

LISTENING

Ask students to listen to a short extract from a radio show and decide which of the four letters from the Reading: Letters exercise it is most closely related to.

Transcript:

Host: On the show today we have Dr Amy to answer all your health questions. Good afternoon, Dr Amy.
Dr Amy: Good afternoon.
Host: OK, here's our first caller.
Mike: Hello, my name is Mike Dawson and I'm phoning about my son.
Dr Amy: What seems to be the problem, Mike?
Mike: Well, he's had asthma since he was very little but now he wants to play football with his friends.
Dr Amy: Does he have an inhaler?
Mike: Yes, he does.
Dr Amy: That's good. So, it's fine for him to play but make sure he takes his inhaler.
Mike: But he's never wanted to play before.
Dr Amy: Yes, but he's growing up and probably wants to do what his friends are doing.
Mike: But, will he be ok?
Dr Amy: Yes, I'm sure he will. He might be a bit out of breath, but there won't be any problems.

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Mike: Oh, that's good news! Thank you very much.
Host: OK, let's go to our second caller ...

Key _____
letter A

Ask students to read letter A and circle any differences between the letter and the radio show. Put students in pairs and ask them to discuss their answers together. Play the recording again, if necessary. Check the answers as a class.

Key _____
Mr / Mrs Dawson; son / daughter; had asthma since he was young / just started having breathing problems; has an inhaler / Dr Amy recommends one; not previously interested in / loves playing sports

SPEAKING

Put students in small groups and ask them to discuss the questions together.

Afterwards, ask a few groups to report back on their discussion. You might want to open this out to the whole class.

WRITING

Ask students to write a short reply to Samantha (letter D) in the style of Dr Amy. Give them around ten minutes to do this and monitor and help if necessary. You could display the letters on the classroom walls and then vote for the best one.

PROJECT

Encourage students to research their chosen medical condition on the internet or at their local library to complete the project for homework.

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LEAD-IN

a. Look at these photos. What does each one show?

1.



4.



2.



b. Now match the words to the correct picture.

- pills
- thermometer
- medicine
- stethoscope

3.



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READING: LETTERS

a. Read the letters sent to a doctor who provides advice in a magazine column. What are the health issues specified in each one? What advice do you think the doctor will give?

Dear Dr Amy



A. Dear Dr Amy,

I'm worried about my ten-year-old daughter. After she plays in the garden she's out of breath. She is usually very healthy and loves playing sports, so I'm very concerned about this. Do you think it's serious and can you give us some advice?

Mrs M Dawson

B. Dear Dr Amy,

I'm fifteen years old and I've got lots of spots! Some of my friends don't have any spots, but mine are really bad! I use creams and lotions and wash my face regularly, but the spots are just getting worse. My mum says I shouldn't worry as all teenagers get spots but it's making me feel depressed. What can I do?

J

C. Dear Dr Amy,

In February, I broke my arm when I slipped on some ice. Last week, I had the plaster removed but now there's a very bad rash. Before I left the hospital, I was given some cream but it isn't helping and my arm is sore. Do you think I need to go back to the hospital or will it get better with the cream?

Frances DeWitt

D. Dear Dr Amy,

In a few weeks I'm moving abroad with my family because my husband has got a new job. The problem is that I need lots of injections but I don't like needles – in fact, they terrify me! Is there any alternative?

Samantha

b. Read the letters again and choose the correct answer for each question.

1. Who has already spoken to a doctor or nurse?

A / B / C / D

2. Who doesn't know what the problem is?

A / B / C / D

3. Who needs something to stop them becoming ill in the future?

A / B / C / D

4. Who feels very upset because of their problem?

A / B / C / D

c. Now read Dr Amy's replies and match each one to the correct letter. Be careful! There are four letters but only three replies.

1. Dear _____
Don't worry too much. It's usual for this to happen and if you use the cream it should clear up. Wait a few more days and, if there is no change, then go and show it to a doctor.

2. Dear _____
It sounds like she has asthma. Many children develop it as they get older but it's nothing to worry about. Go and see the doctor and they will give her an inhaler to use, which will make a big difference. As long as it isn't too bad, she will still be able to play sports.

3. Dear _____
Yes, your mother is right, but I understand it's still upsetting. There's not much more you can do other than keep your skin clean and dry. It's a good idea to ask your doctor to recommend the best cream for you.

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WORKING WITH THE LANGUAGE

Are these nouns countable (C) or uncountable (U) when they appear in the letters?

1. advice
2. rash
3. ice
4. spot
5. injection
6. sport

WORKING WITH VOCABULARY

Focus 1: Meaning

Find words or phrases in the text that match the definitions below.

1. worried about something
2. bad or dangerous enough to make you worried
3. a thick liquid that you put on your skin
4. lose your balance and fall
5. painful and uncomfortable, usually as a result of an injury or infection
6. to make someone very frightened
7. make a problem go away or disappear
8. to start to exist, or to start to be noticed
9. to give advice about what is good

LISTENING

Listen to the radio show and answer the questions below.

1. Which letter is the radio show most closely related to?
2. What are the differences between the letter and the radio show?

SPEAKING

Discuss these questions in groups.

1. What advice would you give to Samantha (letter D)?
2. Are you scared of needles? If yes, why? If no, can you understand why somebody would be?
3. Have you ever needed injections for anything? If so, what for?

WRITING

Write a reply to Samantha's letter. Look back at Dr Amy's three replies in the Reading: Letters exercise to help you.

PROJECT

Choose one of the medical conditions from the box below. Find out details about the causes, symptoms and possible cures and design a leaflet providing information about the condition.

asthma

acne

the flu