

How to talk about health problems

Orientation

Context
The Tanzanian laughing epidemic is a true story about a strange illness which occurred in 1964 in East Africa, in which the victims started laughing and could not stop. It describes how the epidemic started and spread, and gives some possible explanations. The captioned photographs show a girls' boarding school near Lake Victoria, where the epidemic began, and Bukavu, a town and the surrounding villages affected by the disease.

Disease gives topic-related vocabulary.
Glossary gives the meaning of some key words in the article.

Language

Focus grammar	ability: be (unable to) can/could, manage to, succeed in
Focus phrases	disease: an epidemic, an infected person, an infectious disease, be affected by, be immune to, catch a disease, have a heart attack, make a recovery, spread a virus, suffer from the symptoms
Recognition vocabulary	words: blame, case, concentrate, dominate, evidence, exhaustion, isolate, literally, metastasize, outbreak, plague, temporarily, weigh in phrases: boarding school, long-lasting, main hypothesis, town substitution
Recycled language	words: authorities, disappear, female, fever, investigation, laugh, make, rarely, reason, reduce, teenage phrases: join in, like to do sth, pass on two tenses
Personalization	statement or question intonation 6A.2
Discourse	ellipsis in informal speech: Couldn't stop coughing?, Taken anything for it?

Language note

We commonly teach students the intonation rule that in statements and wh- questions, the voice goes down at the end, while in yes/no questions the voice goes up. In fact, speakers may choose to do the opposite in certain contexts. The rules are still useful as sometimes intonation is the only clue to what the speaker means. A sentence with ellipsis such as *Couldn't stop coughing* may be a statement or a yes/no question and intonation is the only way to tell. Some students will be unable to perceive that the voice goes up at the end of *Couldn't you stop coughing?* but they will probably be able to identify the questioning intonation intuitively. In this case, ask: *Does it sound like a question?* rather than *Does the voice go up at the end?*

End product

In Put it all together, students do a role-play based on the conversation in the listening section. In pairs, each student imagines they have a health problem and complains about it.

Preparation

Think about classroom organization if you want to do exercise 15 as a pair, group, or class mingle. Take a few monolingual dictionaries to class, if necessary.

Warmer

In small groups, students discuss what sort of sense of humor they have. Ask: *What makes you laugh? Have you ever laughed when you shouldn't have? What was the last thing that made you laugh today? Do you think laughter is infectious? Could it be a health problem? Write How to talk about health problems on the board.*



A Vocabulary disease

1 Read the question and example and elicit ideas of things people go to the doctor for, e.g. broken arm, twisted ankle, etc. Put students into pairs to discuss the topic. Monitor and join in conversations, helping with vocabulary. Bring the class together and ask for volunteers to share information.

Extra help

In pairs, students take turns to say words related to the body and health and their partner says a word connected in some way, e.g. A *Headache* B *Aspirin*, *Toothache*, A *Dentist*.

2 Read the instructions and direct students to *Disease* on p. 66. Go through the example as a class and remind students to use their dictionaries if necessary. Explain that there may be more than one possibility for some gaps, and they will have to think about the tense. Monitor and help as necessary. Check answers as a class and give pronunciation practice as necessary.

1 *attack*, *recovery* 2 *spread* a virus 3 *symptoms* 4 *epidemic*; was affected by (or suffered from) 5 *suffered*, *immune*

Extra plus

Put students into pairs to explain the meaning of these metaphors: 1 *Tina's laughter was infectious*. (It gives the idea that laughter can spread like a virus.) 2 *Lisa was immune to Brad's good looks and charming personality*. 3 *Alan suffered from a broken heart*. 4 *Wall Street has made a recovery*. 5 *Bill opened an attachment which was infected*. See if students have metaphors using health-related vocabulary in their language.

B Read for detail

In this section, students read a magazine article for gist and detail.

3 Direct students to the article *The Tanzanian laughing epidemic* and the captioned photos on p. 66. Put students into pairs to guess the content of the article before eliciting suggestions around the class. Write key words on the board but do not give feedback at this stage.

4 Read the questions and set a short time limit for students to read the article. Advise them not to worry about new vocabulary for the moment. Put students into pairs to exchange ideas and ask for suggestions around the class.

Extra help

Students read the text again and match these headings with the paragraphs: a *Typical outbreak* b *A similar event* c *Why?* d *A strange story* e *The spread of the epidemic* f *Why?*

5 Go through the instructions and example to demonstrate the activity, explaining that *Doesn't say* means that there is no information explicitly stated in the text. Point out the glossary at the end of the text and encourage students to guess the meaning of other new words as they read. Read sentences 2-7 and check vocabulary before students complete the activity individually. Ask for volunteers to give answers and see if the class agrees before giving feedback. Check any new vocabulary as necessary.

2 *False* 3 *True* 4 *False* 5 *True* 6 *Doesn't say* 7 *False*

C Grammar ability

6 Go through the instructions and direct students to *The Tanzanian laughing epidemic* on p. 66 to find examples of the words and phrases for ability. Point out that the examples might be positive or negative. Ask students to compare in pairs before going through questions 1-3 as a class.

1 *Three no longer able, unable nobody has been able*
2 *manage + infinitive with to; succeed + in + gerund*
3 *be unable to avoid*

7 Direct students to the grammar box and point out that the first column describes how the word and phrases are used. Elicit an example of general and particular ability. Go through the activity as a class and check answers.

general ability: be (unable to) yes manage to/succeed in: no in perfect tenses: can/could: no

Extra help

To clarify the difference between general and particular ability, write the following pair of sentences on the board. *I can drive very well. I can drive for a while if you want.* Elicit which one refers to general ability (*the first*) and which to particular ability (*the second*). Read the following sentences for students to call out general or particular. *I can't open this bottle, I can't play the piano. (Can you speak German?) Can you speak up, please? I couldn't find my keys this morning. I couldn't write until I was six.*

8 Explain that one of the three options in each sentence is wrong according to the rules in the grammar box in exercise 7. Do the first item as an example. (*could* is wrong because it isn't used to talk about particular ability.) Monitor and help as students continue individually. Ask for volunteers to give answers and see if the class agrees before giving feedback.

Incorrect options are: 2 *managed to* 3 *didn't succeed in* 4 *could* 5 *could*

Extra activity

Write these sentences on the board for students to correct and explain why they are wrong. *I manage to speak five languages. The doctors could stop the disease from spreading. Have you can finish your homework?*

9 Ask students to read topics 1-4 and check vocabulary. In pairs, students discuss one or two topics. Monitor and join in. Ask for volunteers to report their discussions to the class. Make a note of any common problems to go over at the end.

Extra activity

Students work with a different partner to discuss another topic.

D Listen to an informal conversation

In this section, students listen to an informal conversation for gist and detail.

10 6A.1 Go through the instructions and ask students how people give clues about their feelings when they talk. (What they say, adjectives they use, their tone of voice.) Play the audio and ask for suggestions. Play the audio a second time if necessary.

Both are feeling unwell.

11 Go through questions 1-3 and play the audio again for students to listen and answer. Ask for suggestions around the class and see if students agree before giving feedback. If there is disagreement, play the audio a second time.

Alan: 1 He's got a cold. 2 He's taken some cough sweets.
3 Someone on a train. Brenda: 1 There's something wrong with her stomach. 2 No. 3 Seafood in a restaurant.

12 6A.2 Read the instructions and point out that the speakers have left out some words (ellipsis) and that this is quite common in informal speech. Point out that *Couldn't stop coughing* could be a statement (*I couldn't stop coughing*) or a question (*Couldn't you stop coughing?*), and that the only way to tell it is by intonation, if it sounds like a question or not. Ask students to listen to phrases 1-5 and put a full stop if it sounds like a statement or a question mark if it sounds like a question. Play the audio, pausing after each item to check answers. Play the audio a second time if necessary.

3 *Taken anything for it?* 5 *Any idea what caused it?*

Extra plus

Draw two intonation patterns on the board: ˩ and ˩˩. Ask students to say which intonation pattern goes with the statements (˩) and which with the questions (˩˩). However, be aware that for some students this will be difficult to perceive, even though they can 'hear' the question intonation intuitively (see Language note above).

13 Go through the instructions and do one or two examples as a class to demonstrate the activity. Monitor and help students get their ideas across before checking answers as a class.

11 2.1 3 Have you 4 There's 5 Have you

Extra help

Students role-play the conversation using audio script 6A.1 on p. 64. They swap roles.

Extra activity

In pairs, students take turns to say phrases 1-5 and respond appropriately.

ABCD Put it all together

14 Go through the instructions and check students understand the activity. Monitor and help with ideas if necessary.

15 Put students into pairs or ask them to stand up and move around the class to talk to several partners.

Student performance

Students should be able to respond appropriately in an informal conversation.

You can use this checklist to monitor and give feedback or to assess students' performance.

Interaction	Do students respond appropriately to statements and questions? exercise 12
Grammar	Do students mostly use ability phrases accurately? exercise 9
Vocabulary	Do students use a variety of words and phrases to talk about health? exercise 2

I can talk about health problems.

Students tick on my own if they have had conversations using their notes. They tick with some help if they have looked at the grammar box or vocabulary panel occasionally.

Early finishers

Students choose a different health problem and repeat exercises 14 and 15.

Additional material

www.oup.com/elt/result for extra practice activities.
www.oup.com/elt/teacher/result for extra teacher resources

DOWNLOAD: <https://bytly.com/28vslj>



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