

Teacher's Guide: Health Problems Test

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Introduction

The following assessment was created for adult ESL students at a false beginning to high beginning proficiency level. The test described below is centered around the topic of health problems. Although it has been specifically designed as a unit test to follow Unit 4 of the primary class text, *Ventures I* (Bitterlin, Johnson, Price, & Ramirez, 2018), it would serve equally well as an assessment following a similar unit using a different text. The test contains three sections: Vocabulary, Speaking, and Listening, each with two to three sub-sections. The focus on oral language reflects the most urgent needs of this student population to develop speaking and listening skills that will help them to interact in practical, day-to-day situations.

The objective of this test is to assess students' ability to identify parts of the body, describe health problems, and understand spoken phrases and conversations related to health problems. The specific students and context for which this test was designed are described in detail below.

Student and Curriculum Profile

Class Description

This assessment is designed for a noncredit beginning level adult ESL class offered through a community college Continuing Education/Adult Education department. Students pay a small enrollment fee (\$35 per year) to participate in the program. The goal of the ESL program is to provide working adult immigrants in the community with the English skills necessary to successfully navigate work and daily tasks. Class size ranges from 10 to 20 students and classes meet two days per week for two hours per class session.

Student Description

This program offers open enrollment (students may register and start classes at any point during the year), and there is a low retention rate (approximately 30-40% of students will attend class from start to finish of the program year) due to changing work schedules, family responsibilities and other factors. As a result, class size and makeup can vary considerably throughout the course of the year.

Most students in this program fall within the 25-55 age range and classes are usually comprised of a slightly higher percentage of female students, typically 60-70%. The majority of students are Hispanic from Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Central America, with Spanish as their native language. Most have received the equivalent of a middle school education from their home country while a smaller number completed high school. Students are primarily employed in manufacturing and meat processing factory jobs or construction. Most students' long-term English goals center around obtaining a better job or gaining more independence in their daily lives (e.g. doctor's appointments, parent/teacher conferences, etc.). Few have higher education goals.

Curriculum Description

This class uses the *Ventures 1* student book. This assessment is designed to be used as a progress achievement test following completion of *Ventures 1*, Unit 4 (p. 44-55) which focuses on the topic of health problems. The purpose of the test is as a formative assessment to indicate to the teacher whether further instruction is warranted, and as a way for students to measure their mastery of the unit outcomes. This assessment follows Hughes' (2003) recommendation that progress achievement tests relate to "well-defined short-term objectives" in that the test measures

students' achievement of specific learning outcomes related to the content of this particular unit (loc. 242).

Techniques and Rationale

Vocabulary Test

This vocabulary sub-skill test addresses the unit learning outcome of *identifying common body parts and health problems/symptoms*. It includes two sections: a matching portion where students label body parts indicated on a picture using vocabulary options from a word bank, and a gap fill portion in which students complete the sentence with the health problem pictured. Using pictures to test vocabulary is one technique suggested by Hughes (2003) with the caveat that the technique be used only for “concrete nouns that can be unambiguously drawn” (loc. 2113), a requirement that is met in this case (i.e., parts of the body vocabulary). Hughes (2003) also recommends gap filling as a valuable technique since it provides structure and control over the response without requiring “significant productive skills” (loc. 1082). Both techniques are well-suited to beginning level students because of the substantial structure and support provided.

For the first section, an attempt has been made to clearly mark the body part being indicated and to avoid providing distractors that might be confused with the vocabulary item being elicited (neither *foot* nor *hand* are included as options since these might be mistaken for *ankle* and *wrist* in the picture; likewise, *throat* is not included since that could be an alternate correct answer in place of *neck*). The options are provided to avoid testing students on spelling as well as vocabulary, (Hughes, 2003, loc. 501) but an excess number of options are given to lessen the chances of guessing correctly. An attempt has been made to provide distractors which all represent slightly lesser-known vocabulary items, all of which were taught in this unit.

In the gap fill portion of the test, the first part of the sentence has been provided to avoid testing students on grammar. No distractors have been provided because most of the vocabulary items being elicited contain the part of the body concerned (e.g. *headache*, *backache*) so it would be too easy for students to rule out incorrect answers.

Speaking Test

The speaking test addresses the unit learning outcome of *describing health problems*. It consists of three parts: a picture-cued description, an action description (“charades”) and a roleplay. All three sections of the speaking test are focused on this unit’s learning outcome of describing health problems.

The picture-cued description is one of the techniques recommended by O’Malley and Valdez Pierce (1996) for beginning and intermediate level students (p. 79-80) since it uses “predictable, familiar language and visual cues” (p. 59). Hughes (2003) also recognizes the usefulness of pictures to elicit descriptions (loc. 1459).

The “charades” technique is related to the picture description technique, except that students are given an action cue instead of a picture cue. This technique lends itself well to use with beginning level students and is also appropriate for the topic of health problems since the vocabulary items can be easily and clearly depicted with actions. Using a game-like technique for an assessment is consistent with Hughes’ (2003) recommendation to “avoid constantly reminding candidates that they are being assessed” and to “put candidates at their ease so that they can show what they are capable of” (loc. 1523). Charades is a familiar activity for this class and has been used to practice the vocabulary introduced in this unit, so anxiety will be minimal.

Roleplay is another technique recommended by O'Malley and Valdez Pierce (1996) for beginning and intermediate students (p. 77). O'Malley and Valdez Pierce (1996) further assert that "cooperative learning activities that present students with opportunities to use oral language to interact with others. . . are optimal for assessing oral language" (p. 61). The roleplay in this test is designed to be interesting and relevant to students' daily lives since it simulates calling in sick to work.

Listening Test

The listening assessment addresses the unit learning outcome of *understanding descriptions of health problems*. It utilizes three techniques: following directions, matching a picture to the listening text, and general comprehension questions.

For the first part, students will follow the teacher's directions to mark the pictures that correspond to the phrases they hear with distinct shapes. Ur (1984) asserts that "assessment of oral language is most effective when it is based on the performance of a task. This means that students are required to do something in response to what they hear" (in O'Malley and Valdez Pierce, 1996, p. 69).

For the second part of the test, students will select the picture that matches the recorded conversation they hear. This moves the test to a slightly higher level of difficulty since students will need to listen for the relevant information contained in a brief conversation, rather than simply recognizing the phrases they have learned in this unit, as in the previous test section.

For the third part of the assessment, students will watch a video clip and answer multiple choice questions to gauge their comprehension. O'Malley and Valdez Pierce (1996) encourage using video clips in oral assessments because this method "can be highly motivating to students"

(p. 81). The video used for this section of the test uses authentic, unscripted text and represents a real-life situation. Hughes (2003) advocates for the use of authentic listening texts whenever possible: “if we are interested in how candidates can cope with language intended for native speakers, then ideally we should use samples of authentic speech” (loc. 1893). The quality of the recording is good, so validity should not be diminished (Hughes, 2003, loc. 1893). Although using an authentic listening text such as this one greatly increases the level of difficulty for the students taking the test, an attempt has been made to create comprehension questions that students will be able to answer simply by understanding the “gist” of the story line. Additionally, a video format provides visual clues that will aid students’ understanding, much as visual cues aid comprehension in most conversational speaking contexts.

Sub-Skill Test: Vocabulary

Test Administration Instructions

The Vocabulary and Speaking portions of this test have been designed to be administered concurrently to minimize “down time” while students are individually assessed for the speaking portion. For this reason, the teacher should provide instructions for both parts of the vocabulary test and answer questions as needed before distributing the test and then allow students to work on their own as students are called one by one to a private area for the speaking test. If available, a proctor could remain in the main testing area to monitor the vocabulary test administration. If a proctor is not available, students should be seated with enough space between each student to discourage cheating.

Materials required.

- Printed vocabulary test
- Pens/pencils

Vocabulary Test: Health Problems

Part 1: Parts of the Body

Write the name of each body part in the picture. Use the words in the box. You will not use all the words.

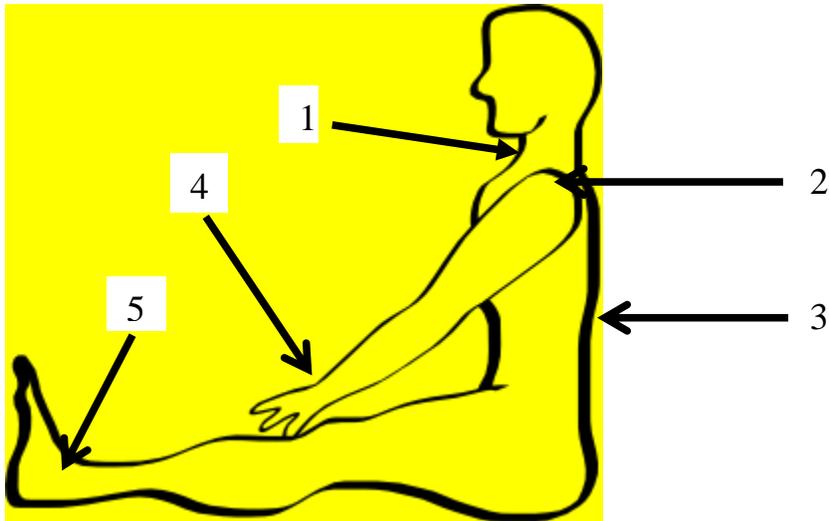


Image credit: Clcker.com

finger	neck	teeth	wrist	chin
shoulder	back	stomach	toe	ankle

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Part 2: Health Problems

Complete the sentence with the health problem of the person in the picture.

Example:



He has an earache.

Image credit: clipartquery.com



6. She has a _____.

Image credit: Classroomclipart.com



7. She has a _____.

Image credit: Classroomclipart.com



Image credit: Classroomclipart.com

8. He has a _____.



Image credit: istockphotot.com

9. He has a _____.



Image credit: Clker.com

10. She has a _____.

Scoring Guidelines**Answer key.*****Part 1: Parts of the Body***

1. Neck
2. Shoulder
3. Back
4. Wrist
5. Ankle

Part 2: Health Problems

6. Headache
7. Fever
8. Broken leg (or ankle, or foot)
9. Backache
10. Sore throat

Scoring.***Part 1: Parts of the Body***

One point for each correct answer with no points deducted for spelling. Assign the number correct out of the five total items (e.g., 3/5).

Part 2: Health Problems

One point for each correct answer with no points deducted for spelling. Assign the number correct out of the five total items (e.g., 3/5). Spelling mistakes should not count against students, provided it is clear what they intended to write.

Based on the vocabulary taught in this unit, students should have little cause for confusion with the pictures provided. It is possible, however, that some students may revert to structures they were previously familiar with such as *her head hurts*. These types of answers should be marked as **incorrect** since *head hurts* cannot be combined with *She has a* and the goal here is to elicit the symptoms typically used with *have* that were introduced in this unit. Alternative correct answers are *sore/hurt* as a substitute for the *-ache* suffix (*He has a sore back*), and these responses should be considered **correct**.

Language Production Test: Speaking

Test Administration Instructions

As previously mentioned, the Vocabulary and Speaking portions of this test have been designed to be administered concurrently to keep students busy while waiting for their turn to be individually assessed for the speaking portion. As students are working on the vocabulary portion of the test, the teacher will call students out of the room one by one to administer the following speaking assessment individually in a separate, quiet area (office, hallway, adjacent classroom, etc.). For maximum time efficiency, Part 2 should be administered to each student immediately following Part 1 before allowing student to return to the vocabulary test. Each individual turn should be limited to a total of 2-3 minutes (depending on class size) to expedite the testing process and prevent excessive down time.

For a class size of 10 students, allow 30 minutes for the individual assessment (Part 1 and 2) and 40 minutes for the role play (Part 3). More time will be required for larger classes as well as if scoring will be completed immediately following each individual assessment (rather than recording the students' responses and scoring at a later time). For class times under two hours, the vocabulary section and Part 1 and 2 of the speaking test may be administered during one class session, and the role play (Part 3) during the following class session.

Materials.

- Picture from <http://seniorslifeinsurancefinder.com/life-insurance-for-sick-people/>
(shown on a laptop or tablet screen, or printed out)

- 10 index cards with vocabulary items from *Ventures I*, Unit 4 (as described in instructions for “Charades” portion (If there are more than 10 students in the class, make a duplicate set of index cards.)
- Recording device (if student responses will be recorded for later scoring)
- Notebook/scoring sheets/gradebook to record individual scores
- Quiet, private area for individual testing, separate from main testing area

Part 1: Picture Description (20 points)

1. Show the student the picture below and say, “Tell me about this person. What’s the matter?”
2. Allow the student to talk until they have run out of things to say about the picture, or for a **maximum of one minute.**



Image credit: <http://seniorslifeinsurancefinder.com/life-insurance-for-sick-people/>

Part 2: Charades (5 points)

Tell students, “Watch me and tell me what’s the matter.” Draw one of the previously prepared index cards with the following health problems from Unit 4:

- *Cold*
- *Headache*
- *Backache*
- *Fever*
- *Broken arm*
- *Stomachache*
- *Cough*
- *Sore throat*
- *Cut*
- *Broken leg/Sprained ankle*

Act out the health problem on the card with brief, clear actions and wait for the student to identify the problem using a complete sentence (e.g., *She has a cough/You have a cough*).

In order to provide a fair opportunity for students to demonstrate the vocabulary they know, provide each student with two health problems to guess, but score only their best answer. This will also minimize any negative impact from actions that are ambiguous or unclear. Drawing cards at random will minimize the possibility of subconsciously assigning easier or harder items to certain students.

If a student responds with the health problem alone (*cough*) rather than a complete sentence, provide the student with one additional chance to construct the complete sentence by prompting, “*And what’s the complete sentence?*”

Part 3: Role Play (10 points,)

Return to the main testing area after administering the individual assessments to all students for Part 1 and Part 2. Allow time for students to finish the vocabulary portion of the test, if needed.

Explain that for the next part of the test, they will be acting out a short conversation with another student in front of the class. Students should not be allowed to prepare for the role play ahead of time as this could result in simply memorizing lines and would not be an accurate gauge of students' abilities. Assign a partner to each student and provide the following instructions:

- *One of you is the supervisor. One of you is the employee. The employee is calling in sick to work.*
- *The supervisor asks what's the matter.*
- *The employee tells why they can't come to work.*
- *After the employee calls, you will switch roles so the supervisor will get a turn to be the employee.*

Call two students up to the front of the classroom to read this example role play:

Supervisor: Hello?

Employee: Hello, I'm sorry, I can't come to work today.

Supervisor: What's the matter?

Employee: I have the flu.

Supervisor: Ok, thank you for calling. I hope you feel better.

Hand out a card to each student with a health problem written on it (the same cards can be used from the previous Charades section). This will indicate the excuse each student will use when calling in sick. (This prevents all the students from using the same health problem without practicing the other vocabulary items.)

Provide five minutes for students to practice the roleplay with their partner. At the end of this time, call pairs to the front of the class (if you feel that some students will experience extreme anxiety if they are forced to come to the front of the class, you may allow students to remain seated for the roleplay) and present their role play. Have the partners sit or stand back to back to simulate the nonvisual phone call situation. After one student in the pair “calls in sick,” students switch roles so the other student can take a turn being the “sick employee.”

Scoring Guidelines

Part 1: Picture description scoring rubric.

The weighting of this rubric is based on O'Malley and Valdez Pierce's (1996) recommendation that, "beginners. . . be rated for overall communicative effect, with vocabulary and grammar being slightly less important and pronunciation and fluency being least important" (p. 65). In this rubric, "overall communicative effect" has been changed to "appropriacy," a category taken from the CCSE Test of Oral Interaction (in Hughes, 2003, loc. 1549). When scoring this category, administrators should consider the overall effectiveness of the candidate's communication, i.e., whether their intended meaning would be generally comprehensible to the average listener.

Appropriacy	7	5	3	0
	Student's overall meaning was totally clear	Student's overall meaning was partially clear	Student's overall meaning was minimally clear	Student's overall meaning was entirely unclear
Vocabulary	5	4	3	0
	Student adequately used target vocabulary to describe health problems (<i>cold, runny nose, fever, etc.</i>)	Student used a few target vocabulary terms to describe health problems	Student used at least one target vocabulary term to describe health problems	Student used no target vocabulary terms
Grammar	5	4	3	0
	Student used most target forms correctly: <i>She has a . . .</i>	Student used some target forms correctly	Student used at least one target form correctly	Student used no target forms correctly
Pronunciation	3	2	1	0
	Almost all words were easy to understand	Some words were easy to understand	Few words were easy to understand	No words were easy to understand

Part 2: “Charades.”

Each student is given two health problems to guess (acted), but only the best answer of the two is scored.

5 Points: Correct response (*She has a cough*)

3 Points: Partially correct response (*She have cough*)

1 Point: Incorrect response (*fever*)

0 Points: No response

Part 3: Role play.

This scoring rubric focuses on strategic and functional competence, accuracy of target forms, and fluency. An attempt has been made to set standards appropriate to the proficiency level of students in this class, and the highest score is achievable for at least some of the students in the class (Weber, 2018, slide 9).

	Strategic/Functional Competence
5	Was able to keep the conversation going and communicate meaning effectively
4	One or two stumbles and/or breakdowns in the conversation, but meaning remained clear
3	Meaning was sometimes unclear and/or occurrence of at least one unrepaired breakdown in the conversation
	Accuracy
3	Correct grammar and vocabulary usage when describing health problems
2	Mostly correct grammar and vocabulary when describing health problems
1	Several significant mistakes in grammar and/or vocabulary when describing health problems
	Fluency
2	Pace of conversation was smooth enough to be easily understood
1	Several pauses and/or stumbles that negatively impacted comprehensibility

Language Reception Test: Listening

Test Administration Instructions

This listening test may either be administered during the same class session as the Vocabulary and Speaking section if time permits or during the following class session. Allow 30 minutes to complete the entire listening test.

Materials.

- Printed listening test
- Pens/pencils
- Whiteboard or easel with paper
- Computer with speakers
- Audio files with Choose the Picture Conversations 1, 2, and 3
- Projector, connected computer, speakers, and internet connection for YouTube video

Part 1: Follow the directions.

Explain to students that they will mark the pictures on their test sheet by listening to your directions. Read the following directions and allow 30 seconds for students to mark each answer:

1. Circle "I have a *backache*." [Draw a circle on the whiteboard as you say "circle."]
2. Draw a square around "I have a *sore throat*." [Draw a square on the whiteboard as you say "square."]
3. Draw a triangle around "I have a *broken leg*." [Draw a triangle on the whiteboard as you say "triangle."]

Repeat all three instructions once more.

Part 2: Choose the picture.

Instruct students to listen to the recording and choose the picture that matches the conversation. Play the recorded conversations (Anderson, 2018). Pause the recording for one minute between each item. Repeat each recording one time if needed.

Transcript 1 (audio file “Choose the Picture, Conversation 1)

Mother: “You look sick, honey!”

Daughter: “Yeah, I don’t feel very well.”

Mother: “Let me check your forehead. Oh my! You feel hot. Let’s take your temperature.”

Daughter: “Do I have a fever?”

Mother: “Let me look at the thermometer. Hmm. It says. . . 101.3. Yes, you have a fever. I think you better stay home from school today.”

Daughter: “Oh, good! I didn’t feel well enough to go today.”

Mother. “Yes, I think it’s better if you rest in bed today.”

Transcript 2 (audio file “Choose the Picture, Conversation 2)

Son: “Mom, my ear really hurts!”

Mother: “Hm. I think you have an earache. Maybe we should take you to the doctor.”

Son: “Why?”

Mother: “Because if you have an ear infection you need to take antibiotics.”

Son: “What are antibiotics?”

Mother: “It’s a kind of medicine that helps your body get healthy again if you have an infection.”

Son: “Oh, okay. I guess I should go to the doctor then.”

Transcript 3 (audio file “Choose the Picture, Conversation 3)

Doctor: Hello, I’m Dr. Anderson. Why did you come to the clinic today?

Girl: “My throat really hurts.”

Doctor: “Does it hurt all the time, or mostly when you swallow?”

Girl: “All the time, but it hurts even more when I swallow.”

Doctor: “Okay, let me feel your neck. Your lymph nodes do feel swollen. We’re going to do a little test to see if you have strep throat. If you do, you will need to take some medicine. But it might just be a virus.”

Girl: “What can I do if it’s a virus?”

Doctor: “Unfortunately, if it’s a virus, medicine will not help. So you can just drink some warm tea with honey and lemon and that should help your throat feel more comfortable.”

Girl: “Okay. Well, I hope it’s strep throat then, so I can take medicine and get better!”

Doctor: “Let’s see what the test says and we can go from there.”

Girl: “Okay.”

Part 3: Video comprehension.

Play the video “Getting a Cast on Broken Arm” from the *Meet the Millers* YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNXHvmlqyz0>. Start the video at minute 3:20 and play to 8:11. If the link provided doesn’t work, the video can be located on YouTube by finding the *Meet the Millers* channel and searching for “Getting a Cast on Broken Arm.” This video follows a “day-in-the-life” format and depicts a father taking his young son to the doctor’s office to get a cast on his broken arm.

Before starting the video, tell students not to worry if they don’t understand everything the people are saying, just to listen to try to understand the general idea. After playing the video, read each test question along with the multiple-choice options, then allow students about one minute to answer. Tell students that if they aren’t sure about the answer, they should leave it blank and time will be provided at the end to go back and finish unanswered items.

For number 4, replay the video segment from 5:54 to 6:29. Read question 4 and the multiple-choice options. Allow one minute for students to answer.

For number 5, replay the video segment from 7:26-7:53. Read question 5 and the multiple-choice options. Allow one minute for students to answer.

Listening Test: Health Problems

Part 1: Follow the Directions

Listen to your teacher and follow the directions with the pictures below.



Image credits: See Vocabulary Test, Part 2

Part 2: Choose the Picture

Listen to the recording and write the letter of the picture that matches what you hear.



Image credits: See Vocabulary Test, Part 2

A B C D E

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Part 3: Video Comprehension

Watch the video, then answer the questions.

4. Why does Bode (the boy in the video) need to go to the doctor?
 - a. He has a fever.
 - b. He has a broken shoulder.
 - c. He has a broken arm.
 - d. He has a broken ankle.

5. How does Bode feel about getting a cast?
 - a. He feels nervous.
 - b. He feels excited.
 - c. He feels sad.
 - d. He feels scared.

6. What color did Bode choose for his cast?
 - a. Green
 - b. Yellow
 - c. Red
 - d. Orange

Watch the segment again and answer this question:

7. What surprises Bode's dad about his injury?
 - a. It's a bad break.
 - b. It's not too bad.
 - c. He needs a cast.
 - d. He needed an X-ray.

Watch the next segment again and answer this question:

8. What does Bode say about his cast?
 - a. I hate it.
 - b. I like it.
 - c. I don't like it.
 - d. I love it.

Scoring Guidelines**Answer key.****Part 1: Follow the Directions****Part 2: Choose the Picture**1. B 2. E 3. A **Part 3: Video Comprehension**

4. C

5. B

6. D

7. A

8. B

Scoring.

One point per correct response (11 points possible).

Final Scoring

After scoring each section, follow the weighting calculation below to obtain the student's overall percentage grade for the test. Without weighting the sections, the speaking portion will have an artificially high impact on the overall grade. The speaking and listening portions are assigned more weight than the vocabulary portion because there is more opportunity for students to demonstrate what they know in the context of listening and speaking tasks.

Weighting

Vocabulary: 20% (10 points possible)

Speaking: 40% (35 points possible)

Listening: 40% (11 points possible)

(56 total points possible)

Example Test Weighting (See O'Malley and Valdez Pierce, 1996, p. 30-31)

	Score		Percent		Weight		Weighted Score
Vocabulary:	8/10	=	80% / .8	*	.2	=	.16
Speaking:	30/35	=	86% / .86	*	.4	=	.34
Listening:	9/11	=	82% / .82	*	.4	=	.33
							Total Grade
							83%

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