

Pre-Reading Activities

A: What Do You Think?

Work alone and answer questions 1 - 3.

- Which things on the list below are usually signs and symptoms of a **cold** and which are signs and symptoms of **influenza (flu)**?
fever and chills, scratchy throat, sore throat, body aches, stuffy nose, upset stomach, runny nose.
- What kind of things do you do in your everyday life to try and avoid catching a cold?
- What do you do if you have a cold? Do you do anything special to try and make it go away faster?



Now work in pairs and compare your answers for questions 1 - 3.

B: Test Your Medical Knowledge

Work in pairs and decide whether these statements are **True** or **False**. (You will be able to check your answers later when you read the article.)

- There are vaccines available that can prevent people from catching flus and colds.
- There are more than two hundred viruses that can cause the flu.
- Washing your hands can lower your chances of catching a cold.
- It is easy to tell whether or not a small child has the flu.
- Aspirin will help take away any aches and pains and is suitable for everyone.
- Children with the flu usually have higher fevers than adults.

Reading Activities

A: Finding the Main Idea

Here is the headline of today's article but some of the words have been mixed up. Read the first paragraph of the article and then try to put the words in the headline into the correct order. Write your answer on the line provided. (The first two words are given to you as an example).

Headline: **Nose Stuffy? Flu if or to Tell It's Cold a How**
Your Answer: **Stuffy Nose?** _____

NEW YORK Monday January 14 (Reuters Health) - Scratchy throats, stuffy noses and body aches all spell misery, but being able to tell if the cause is a cold or flu may make a difference in how long the misery lasts. (Continued...)

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B: Scanning

Here is the list of symptoms from **Pre-Reading Activity A**. Read the next part of today's article. Which signs and symptoms does the article mention in connection with **colds** and **influenza**? Write them down under the appropriate heading. Are there any that **are not** usually symptoms of either a cold or flu? Write them down under the **Neither Cold nor Influenza** heading.

fever and chills, scratchy throat, sore throat, body aches, stuffy nose, upset stomach, runny nose

Cold	Influenza	Neither Cold nor Influenza

(Continued.../) The American Lung Association (ALA) has issued new guidelines on combating colds and influenza, and one of the keys is being able to quickly tell the two apart. That's because the prescription drugs available for the flu need to be taken soon after the illness sets in. As for colds, the sooner a person starts taking over-the-counter therapies, the sooner relief will come, according to the ALA.

The common cold and the flu are both caused by viruses. More than 200 viruses can trigger cold symptoms, while the flu is caused by three viruses--influenza A, B and C. There is no cure for either illness, but the flu can be prevented by the influenza vaccine--and is, for most people, the best way to fight the flu, according to the ALA.

But if the flu does strike, quick action can help. Although the flu and common cold have many similarities, there are some telltale signs to look for.

Cold symptoms such as stuffy nose, runny nose and scratchy throat typically develop gradually, and adults and teens often do not get a fever. On the other hand, fever is one of the hallmarks of the flu for all ages; children's fevers tend to be higher, ranging from 103 to 105 degrees Fahrenheit (39-40 degrees Centigrade), the ALA points out.

And in general, flu symptoms including fever and chills,

sore throat and body aches come on suddenly and are more severe than cold symptoms. Contrary to popular belief, upset stomach is rarely a symptom of the flu, according to the ALA.

The group notes that it may be particularly difficult to tell when infants and preschool age children have the flu. It advises parents to call the doctor if their small children have flu-like symptoms.

If patients see a doctor within 2 days of symptom onset, the flu can often be treated with one of four drugs that have been shown to shorten the duration of symptoms, the ALA adds. These drugs are: oseltamivir (Tamiflu), zanamivir (Relenza), amantadine (Symmetrel) and rimantadine (Flumadine). Some can be given to children older than one year.

Both cold and flu symptoms can be eased with over-the-counter medications as well. However, children and teens with a cold or flu should not take aspirin for pain relief because of the risk of Reye syndrome, a rare but serious condition of the liver and central nervous system.

There is, of course, no vaccine for the common cold. But frequent hand washing and avoiding close contact with people who have colds can reduce the likelihood of catching one.

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C: True or False

Now go back to **Pre-Reading Activity B** and do the following things:

1. Check to see if your answers are correct according to the article.
2. Change your answers if they are incorrect.
3. If a statement is false, change the false statement to make it true.

D: Check Your Understanding

Here is a paragraph summarizing the message of today's article. Fill the gaps in the sentences with information from the article. (Put one word only in each gap.)

Cold and flu symptoms are similar but _____ symptoms are more serious and develop faster. If you are able to tell that you have the _____, and see a doctor, you may be treated with one of _____ drugs which will _____ the length of the symptoms. These medications, however, must be taken within _____ days of the flu starting, so it is important that you try to work out which illness you have and then go and see a _____ if you have the flu.

Post-Reading Activities

You may do one or more of these.

A: Language

1. The article contains a lot of information written in the **present simple tense**. For example, "*upset stomach is rarely a symptom of the flu, according to the ALA.*"
Why are sentences like this one in the **present simple**?
2. Students sometimes confuse **present active** with **present passive** sentences (*Subject + be verb + past participle of the main verb*). Look at these sentences from today's article. Change the verbs in brackets (*which are in the infinitive form*) into the correct form - **present active** or **present passive** sentences.
 - a. Scratchy throats, stuffy noses and body aches all _____ (**to spell**) misery.
 - b. The common cold and the flu _____ (**to cause**) by viruses.
 - c. The flu _____ (**to cause**) by three viruses--influenza A, B and C.
 - d. There _____ (**to be**) no cure for either illness.
 - e. Cold symptoms such as stuffy nose, runny nose and scratchy throat typically _____ (**to develop**) gradually, and adults and teens often do not _____ (**to get**) a fever.
 - f. On the other hand, fever _____ (**to be**) one of the hallmarks of the flu for all ages.
 - g. There _____ (**to be**), of course, no vaccine for the common cold.
 - h. But frequent hand washing and avoiding close contact with people who _____ (**to have**) colds reduces the likelihood of catching one.

B: Remedies

Part One: In pairs, try and match the words and the pictures below.

garlic, lemon and honey drink, aspirin, vaccination, throat lozenges, cough syrup, someone washing their hands, cough, sneeze, nose drops



Part Two: In a conditional sentence, the result or main clause is dependent on the first event happening (*if*). The zero conditional uses **if + present simple, + present simple**. We can use the zero conditional when we are talking about something that is generally true or a fact. For example: ***If I have a bloody nose, I lie on my back.***

Match the problem with the remedy by drawing a line.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. If I have a cold, | a. I wash my hands a lot. |
| 2. If I have a cough, | b. I eat garlic. |
| 3. If I have a headache, | c. people usually say "Bless you." |
| 4. If I don't want to catch the flu, | d. I drink lemon and honey drinks. |
| 5. If I have a sore throat, | e. I take some aspirin. |
| 6. If I have a blocked nose, | f. I can get a vaccination. |
| 7. If I have a high fever, | g. I suck throat lozenges. |
| 8. If I don't want to catch a cold, | h. I have a warm shower to cool down. |
| 9. If I sneeze, | i. I take some cough syrup. |
| 10. If I want to get over a cold quickly, | j. I use drops. |

C: Complaints

- Isn't it horrible when everybody around you is sick and won't stop complaining? Today you are at a party at your teacher's house. Everybody is sick and grumpy and complaining. Each of your classmates has two complaints. You must talk to everybody and remember their complaints, but you can not write anything down. You will be told when to stop. Then in groups, try and remember everyone's complaints. (Note: One person in your group should write down the complaints.) The team who can remember the most complaints, wins! You will have 5 minutes to remember. Your teacher will tell you when to start. Good luck!
- What were your complaints? Write them both down on a piece of paper and give them to another student. (Be sure to include your name on the pieces of paper.) They will write down some advice or suggest a remedy for you.
For example: *I have a headache. You **should** take some aspirin*

TEACHERS' NOTES AND ANSWER KEY

Pre-Reading Activities

A: What Do You Think? - Notes

Make sure students have a clear understanding of what the words 'flu', 'cold', and 'symptoms' mean.

This activity gives students an opportunity to pool their knowledge about colds and flus. They can also use their dictionaries, if necessary, to check the meanings of some of the symptoms that are listed. Try to avoid becoming involved in the discussion and allow students plenty of opportunities to compare and share their ideas. Today's article gives answers for questions 1 and 2. Students will be given an opportunity to see if their answers were correct in the Reading Activities. In a one to one situation, spend some time discussing the topic with the student.

A: What Do You Think? - Answers

1. - 3. Answers will vary.

B: Test Your Medical Knowledge - Notes

The points raised in these questions are covered in today's article. Do not let them look at the article yet and avoid giving them the answers. They will be able to check whether or not they were correct when they read the article.

Reading Activities

A: Finding the Main Idea - Notes

Students should look at the words in the headline and see which ones are repeated in the first paragraph (*stuffy noses, to tell, if, a cold or flu*). They should ask themselves what the main idea of the first paragraph is. If they do these two things, they should be able to put the words into the correct order without much difficulty.

A: Finding the Main Idea - Answer

Stuffy Nose? How to Tell if It's a Cold or Flu

B: Scanning - Notes

This list may not satisfy those students who want a complete list of symptoms for colds and flu. If students query the list, you may like to give them this information: **Usual Signs and Symptoms of Colds:** runny nose, sore throat and hoarseness, watery eyes, cough, mild fever.

Usual Signs and Symptoms of Influenza: chills and high fever, weakness and feeling tired, aches and pains (muscles, head, eyes), dry cough, sore throat.

B: Scanning - Answers

Cold	Influenza	Neither Cold nor Influenza
scratchy throat	fever and chills*	upset stomach
stuffy nose	sore throat**	
runny nose	body aches	

*Fever and chills are not common symptoms for a cold.

**The article says with flu, a sore throat is usually more severe.

C: True or False - Notes

The purpose of this activity is for students to see how well they did at testing their medical knowledge in Pre-Reading Activity B. Make sure that students change their answers if they were incorrect. Also, false statements need to be changed to make them true.

C: True or False - Answers

- False** (There are no vaccines available for colds.)
- False** (This figure applies to colds, not the flu.)
- True**
- False** (The article says that it is particularly difficult to tell.)
- False** (Aspirin should not be taken by children and teens because of the risk of Reye syndrome.)
- True**

D: Check Your Understanding - Answers

Cold and **flu** symptoms are similar but flu symptoms are more serious and develop faster. If you are able to tell that you have the **flu**, and see a doctor, you may be treated with one of **four** drugs which will **shorten** the length of the symptoms. These medications, however, must be taken within **2** days of the flu starting, so it is important that you try to work out which illness you have and then go and see a **doctor** if you have the flu.

Post-Reading Activities

A: Language - Notes

2. If you want to put some pressure on students and give them a chance to practice working quickly and accurately, set a time limit which will allow most to finish, but only if they hurry. (A few of the sentences have been altered slightly for this activity.)

A: Language - Answers

- Present simple is used for sentences that contain factual information that doesn't change and is always true.
- Scratchy throats, stuffy noses and body aches all **spell** misery.
 - The common cold and the flu **are caused** by viruses.
 - The flu **is caused** by three viruses—Influenza A, B and C.
 - There **is** no cure for either illness.
 - Cold symptoms such as stuffy nose, runny nose and scratchy throat typically **develop** gradually, and adults and teens often do not **get** a fever.
 - On the other hand, **fever is** one of the hallmarks of the flu for all ages.
 - There **is**, of course, no vaccine for the common cold.
 - But frequent hand washing and avoiding close contact with people who **have** colds reduces the likelihood of catching one.

B: Remedies - Answers

Part Two: 1. d, 2. i, 3. e, 4. f, 5. g, 6. j, 7. h, 8. a, 9. c, 10. b

C: Complaints - Notes

1. Below are 20 complaints. Cut them out onto strips of paper and give each student two each. If you have more than ten students, you could divide them into two groups.

Text to be copied and cut up for students:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| I have a cold. | I have a headache. |
| My stomach hurts. | My nose is blocked. |
| I have a sore, scratchy throat. | I have a runny nose. |
| I can't stop sneezing. | |
| My nose is sore from blowing it too much. | |
| My ears are blocked. | I have a sore neck. |
| I have the flu. | I have a bad cough. |
| I have a temperature. | I'm very tired. |
| My whole body aches. | I feel dizzy. |
| My eyes are dry and sore. | My lips are dry and cracked. |
| The light hurts my eyes. | I have fever and chills. |

Allow students about five minutes to talk to everybody in the room, but be sure they don't write anything down. When they have finished, put students into groups of three or four. Write the following headings on the board for the designated writer for each group to use.

Student's Name:	Complaint:

When you say "**GO**" they try to tell the group's designated writer as many complaints as they can. (Note: This could get rather noisy.) Allow them 5 minutes and then say "**STOP**". The group who has remembered the most complaints wins.

2. These sentences can be written using "**should**". (In a one to one situation you may like to focus on this part of the activity and skip Number 1.)

Please Note: The Anna Grammar page - **Countables - Colds and Flu** may be useful. We also have another Upper-Intermediate Instant lesson about the flu called **Influenza 2000**. Parts of this lesson could be used as a follow up or for homework. (vaccines, epidemics, viruses, discourse markers)