



Lesson Plan: Dysphagia

Teacher Guide

Topic: dysphagia
Timing: 40–60 minutes
Lesson type/focus: speaking, reading and listening

Aims:

- **Speaking:** discuss dysphagia; its causes, symptoms and treatment
- **Reading:** read for gist and detail
- **Listening:** listen for specific information

Overview

The focus of the lesson is dysphagia and problems swallowing. The speaking activity introduces the topic and gives students the opportunity to share their ideas and experience. The reading activity practises reading for gist and specific information. The listening activity practises listening for specific information. There is an option extension activity where students research the topic in more detail.

Note: This lesson supports the language introduced in the following:

- Course, '[English for Doctors](#)'
- Unit: 'Post-operative Care'
- Module: 'The body: the senses' pages 10 and 11

Teaching notes and answer key

Part 1: speaking

Put students into pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss questions 1–3 on the student worksheet. Encourage them to share examples from their own experience.

Do whole class feedback to discuss and share answers. Don't give the correct answers at this stage as students are going to read and check their ideas in the next activity.

Suggested answers

1. What is dysphagia?
difficulty swallowing
2. What are the causes of dysphagia?
stroke, brain injuries



3. How can dysphagia be treated?

swallow therapy, exercises for the tongue, lips and throat

Part 2: reading

A. Have students read the text individually. Bring the group back together and have them compare their ideas from the speaking section.

B. Have students work individually to complete the activity and then compare their ideas with a partner.

Go through the answers as a class. Deal with any vocabulary queries.

Answers

1. *difficulty* 2. *pain* 3. *feeling a lump* 4. *fear of swallowing* 5. *normal swallowing*
6. *entering the trachea* 7. *into the lungs* 8. *lip and tongue*

Part 3: listening

🔊 Play the video all the way through. Have students work individually to complete the activity as they watch the video and then compare their ideas with a partner.

Go through the answers as a class. You could do this by playing the video and pausing before the answers are given to elicit the answers.

[Problems with swallowing An introduction to the Water Test](#)

Answers

1. How long should a water test be done after someone has had a stroke?

Within four hours for stroke, within 12 hours for dementia

2. What are possible signs of aspiration?

coughing, gurgling voice, shortness of breath

3. If you suspect aspiration, what should you do?

stop the test, put patient on nil by mouth and refer to speech and language therapist (SALT)

4. During the test, how long should the patient take to drink a glass of water?

two minutes

5. What food can the patient eat if the test is successful?

soft, fork-mashable foods

6. How long should you supervise patients for?

24 hours



7. If there are concerns, what should you do?

put patient on nil by mouth and refer to speech and language therapist (SALT)

8. If there are no concerns, what can you do?

allow patient to revert to normal diet

Extension activity

You could have students watch the video again and elicit the meaning of these words and phrases. Alternatively, you could pre-teach these if your students need more support.

gurgling voice: a voice that sounds like there is liquid in the throat

fork-mashable: able to be broken up using a fork until it is soft

nil by mouth: a medical order that the patient mustn't be given anything to eat or drink

revert: go back to

SALT: speech and language therapist/therapy, also called SP (Speech Pathologist) in Australia or SLP (Speech Language Pathologist) in the US

Extension activity

You could have students do online research to find out more about the causes, diagnosis, symptoms and treatments for dysphagia. Have them work in pairs or small groups and either set a time limit in class or set the activity for homework.

You could ask the pairs or groups to prepare a mini-presentation for the next lesson. Alternatively, do whole class feedback where students share and compare their findings.

You could provide the links below or have them find their own information.

[NHS: dysphagia](#)

[Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists: dysphagia](#)

[Can a Speech Pathologist Help Treat Dysphagia? | Therapy Focus](#)

**THIS LESSON PLAN COMES FROM SLC'S ENGLISH FOR
DOCTORS COURSE:**

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