



APEX ENGLISH

Your voice. Global.

C1 · GENERAL ENGLISH

UNIT 8 · 8A

The best medicine?

Theme · Health & Travel



Unit 8 · 8A

The best medicine?

Theme: Health & Travel

Learning objectives

- Expand C1 vocabulary related to **health and medicine, similes**.
- Use **advanced gerunds and infinitives** accurately and idiomatically.
- Read a discursive text and discuss inferences beyond the literal.
- Speak fluently on the unit's theme with a partner or in a small group.

This booklet accompanies the digital lesson at

alunos.apexenglish.com.br/general-c1/8a. Interactive audio, video and drag-and-drop tasks live online; use this booklet in class and to review.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Class Book

Warm-up

In pairs, talk for about a minute on each prompt before feedback:

- 1 What comes to mind when you hear the theme **“Health & Travel”**?
- 2 How comfortable are you using vocabulary about **health and medicine, similes**? Give one recent example.
- 3 When did you last use — or misuse — **advanced gerunds and infinitives**?

Reading

The doctor at the end of the corridor

There is a particular sort of doctor — usually somewhere between forty and sixty — that patients describe, warmly and often unaccountably, as making them 'feel better just by being in the room'. This is not, on the whole, a compliment about medical expertise. Younger, technically brighter doctors are often listed by the same patients as competent but chilly. The one at the end of the corridor is the one they go back to.

For a long time this was regarded as a soft, unmeasurable fact of general practice — a matter of manner. What has changed in the last decade is the arrival of quiet, patient statistical work showing that this manner is not soft at all. Consultations with high-warmth doctors produce measurable improvements in blood pressure, in reported pain, in adherence to treatment, and — perhaps most awkwardly — in outcomes for illnesses in which the doctor did nothing but talk.

The awkwardness is what interests the researcher Ted Kaptchuk at Harvard. If the warm doctor is producing real biological effects, then a considerable amount of what medicine has been quietly attributing to its drugs may in fact belong to the ritual around them. The appointment itself is doing work. Being listened to for eleven minutes is doing work. The pill in a small paper cup, handed over with a nod, is doing work.

None of this argues for less medicine. It argues for a franker admission of what part of the medicine we are actually paying for. When patients say a doctor 'makes them feel better just by being there', we might, at last, believe them — and stop pretending that the good doctor at the end of the corridor is just a pleasant historical accident.

Comprehension — choose the best answer.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



1. The writer's central observation is that 'high-warmth' doctors:
 - (A) are technically less skilled
 - (B) produce measurable clinical improvements
 - (C) are always older than their patients
 - (D) prescribe more medicine
2. The researcher named in the piece is:
 - (A) Alva Noë
 - (B) Elizabeth Loftus
 - (C) Ted Kaptchuk
 - (D) Nir Eyal
3. 'Adherence to treatment' means:
 - (A) refusing treatment
 - (B) sticking to the prescribed treatment
 - (C) arguing with the doctor
 - (D) changing the treatment
4. The writer suggests that 'the ritual around' medicine is:
 - (A) irrelevant fluff
 - (B) actively doing measurable clinical work
 - (C) a fraud
 - (D) purely psychological, in a bad sense
5. The writer's tone about the 'warm doctor' is best described as:
 - (A) dismissive
 - (B) quietly vindicating
 - (C) sentimental
 - (D) openly outraged
6. The essay's implicit recommendation is that:
 - (A) we abandon modern medicine
 - (B) we prescribe more drugs
 - (C) we honestly credit the ritual as part of the medicine
 - (D) we replace GPs with therapists

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Vocabulary

Focus: **health and medicine, similes**

Study these C1 items and their meanings.

symptom — a physical or mental sign that indicates a condition

side effect — an unintended effect of a drug, usually unwanted

diagnosis — the identification of an illness from its signs

chronic (adj.) — long-lasting and often recurring

over-the-counter — sold without a prescription

GP — general practitioner; a family doctor

in remission — no longer showing signs of a chronic illness

self-medicate — treat oneself with medicine, without medical advice

as fit as a fiddle — in excellent physical condition

as pale as a ghost — very pale, usually from shock or illness

sleep like a log — sleep very deeply

as sick as a dog — very ill, especially with stomach illness

as right as rain — perfectly well again

run like clockwork — operate smoothly and predictably

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Grammar

Focus: **advanced gerunds and infinitives**

Study the online lesson notes, then complete the interactive tasks at **alunos.apexenglish.com.br/general-c1/8a**.

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Speaking

- 1 Tell a partner about a personal experience connected to **health & travel**. Aim for at least two minutes without pausing.
- 2 Compare cultures or generations on this topic. Use at least three items from the *health and medicine, similes* list.
- 3 Discuss: *Is it possible to be objective about health & travel?* Justify your view.

Writing

Write 220–260 words on: **“Health & Travel — what has changed in the last twenty years?”** Use at least four items from the vocabulary list and one structure from the grammar focus (*advanced gerunds and infinitives*).

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class



Workbook

Home practice

Complete on your own; check answers in class.

1. 'He seems _____ his pills this morning.' (past, before now)
(A) to take
(B) taking
(C) to have taken
(D) having taken
2. 'I'd prefer _____ by a specialist.' (present passive)
(A) being seen
(B) to be seen
(C) to see
(D) having seen
3. 'She admitted _____ the medication for a year.' (perfect gerund)
(A) taking
(B) having taken
(C) to take
(D) to have taken
4. 'The drug is thought _____ safer than the original.' (present passive inf.)
(A) to be
(B) being
(C) having been
(D) to have been
5. 'He objects to _____ in front of students.' (passive gerund)
(A) being examined
(B) to be examined
(C) examining
(D) to examine
6. 'I regret not _____ the doctor sooner.' (perfect gerund of a past inaction)
(A) seeing
(B) having seen
(C) to see
(D) to have seen

Ask the teacher — notes to bring to class

[← Back to C1 General contents](#)

Workbook · 8A. The best medicine?

Home practice · advanced gerunds & infinitives · health, similes · answer key included



Class Book

Full lesson · in-class material



Workbook

Home practice · with answer key

GRAMMAR

1 · Advanced gerund/infinitive — choose the best form

10 min

1. 'He seems _____ his pills this morning.' (past, before now)

a. to take

b. taking

c. to have taken ✓

d. having taken

2. 'I'd prefer _____ by a specialist.' (present passive)

a. being seen

b. to be seen ✓

c. to see

d. having seen

3. 'She admitted _____ the medication for a year.' (perfect gerund)

a. taking

b. having taken ✓

c. to take

d. to have taken

4. 'The drug is thought _____ safer than the original.' (present passive inf.)

a. to be ✓

b. being

c. having been

d. to have been

5. 'He objects to _____ in front of students.' (passive gerund)

a. being examined ✓

b. to be examined

c. examining

d. to examine

6. 'I regret not _____ the doctor sooner.' (perfect gerund of a past inaction)

a. seeing

b. having seen ✓

c. to see

d. to have seen

Score: 6 / 6

Try again

VOCABULARY

2 · Complete with a health term from the box

10 min

WORD BANK — DRAG OR TAP, THEN TAP A GAP

symptom

diagnosis

side-effect

chronic

over-the-counter

self-medicate

1. The rash is a known **side effect** **side effect** of the antibiotic.
2. You can buy this **over-the-counter** **over-the-counter** in any supermarket.
3. Insomnia has become a **chronic** **chronic** problem — I've lived with it for years.
4. Talk to your GP; don't just **self-medicate** **self-medicate**.
5. The tiredness is a **symptom** **symptom**, not the illness itself.
6. It took three visits before we finally had a proper **diagnosis** **diagnosis**.

Score: 6 / 6

Try again

GRAMMAR

10 min

3 · Rewrite using the structure in brackets

1. 'People think the drug is safe.' → (present passive infinitive)

Hide answer

The drug is thought to be safe.

2. 'People believe he took the wrong dose.' → (perfect passive infinitive)

Hide answer

He is believed to have taken the wrong dose.

3. 'She was pleased when she heard the news.' → (perfect infinitive)

Hide answer

She was pleased to have heard the news.

4. 'She stopped smoking three years ago.' → (perfect gerund after 'admitted')

Hide answer

She admitted having smoked for years.

VOCABULARY +

8 min

4 · Match the health simile to its meaning

DRAG THE MEANING ONTO THE WORD

Reset

sleep very deeply

perfectly well again

in excellent physical condition

very ill, especially stomach illness

very pale, usually from shock or illness

as fit as a fiddle

in excellent physical condition

Hide answer

in excellent physical condition

as pale as a ghost

very pale, usually from shock or illness

Hide answer

very pale, usually from shock or illness

sleep like a log

sleep very deeply

Hide answer

sleep very deeply

as sick as a dog

very ill, especially stomach illness

Hide answer

very ill, especially stomach illness

as right as rain

perfectly well again

Hide answer

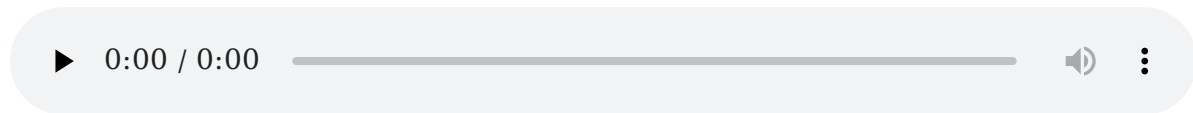
perfectly well again

LISTENING

10 min

5 · Podcast · The pill in the paper cup

Listen to a first-person podcast monologue from a British GP reflecting on the parts of her job that are not, strictly, on the prescription.



Audio recording coming soon — transcript-based questions still work with the answer key below.

1. What does she say she has stopped doing during the first four minutes of every appointment? [Hide answer](#)

Writing — she says she stopped writing so she could listen properly, and outcomes measurably improved.

2. Which perfect infinitive does she use about a patient? [Hide answer](#)

'He seemed to have been over-prescribed for about three years' — perfect passive infinitive.

3. Which health simile does she use about herself last winter?

[Hide answer](#)

'As sick as a dog' — she was, briefly, quite grateful to be a patient rather than a GP.

4. What does she say the pill in the small paper cup is doing? [Hide answer](#)

Real biological work — the appointment, the diagnosis and the pill are together producing measurable effects the drug has been getting credit for.

WRITING

20 min

6 · A short reflection (180–220 words)

Write a short first-person reflection titled: "*The medicine that wasn't the medicine*". Use at least three advanced gerund/infinitive forms (mixing perfect and passive), two health terms and one simile. End with an honest, unromantic conclusion.

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