



## PICTURE OF HEALTH

**Level:** Elementary / Pre-intermediate (A1–B1)

**Age:** Teenagers / Adults

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Language summary:** Expressions related to health, language of description, language of comparison

**Image work:** Looking at an image from different perspectives; using an image as a stimulus for discussion

### PROCEDURE:

**1** Allow students some time to think about this question and feed the answers back to the group. *Picture of health = very healthy.* Other possible English expressions could be: *right as rain, fit as a fiddle, to feel on top of the world, in the best of health.*

**2** Students will probably guess that the man is a doctor as he is wearing a white coat. They may also focus on the other items around him such as the stethoscope around his neck.

**3** Accept a variety of answers here. Students may focus on the medical items but may also discuss the office, the computer and the idea of modern medicine being tied to developments in technology. In some countries, doctors add or change patient records directly onto computers. Students might think that this picture has been taken somewhere in a western country for this reason as doctors tend to be found in offices like this one nowadays. However, it is not possible to say exactly where the picture was taken so accept any reasonable answer.

**4** This question should stimulate a good discussion. Students will have knowledge of other types of doctors who work in the community – you could also mention Doctors Without Borders (see [www.doctorswithoutborders.org](http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org)) who do so much of their work in the field and in difficult circumstances that they tend to look like ordinary citizens rather than doctors.

**5** Give students plenty of time to discuss these questions and the issues they give rise to.

#### Key:

1. F (just over 100 years)
2. T
3. T (explain the difference between a doctor and a surgeon if necessary)
4. T (due to fears about infection and bacteria)
5. T (you may have to explain what a symbol is)
6. T (research shows that people feel reassured by white coats)

**6** Students may wish to refer to their own experience which may be a rich source of discussion providing they are not discussing issues that may upset them. Alternatively you can talk about cases of misdiagnosis which are quite commonly reported in the media. Ask students if the responsibility individual doctors have to take for diagnoses is fair or if they should work in teams all the time to ensure that diagnoses are group decisions.

**7** Allow students time to think this through and to talk about their own experiences. Monitor and help with vocabulary.

**8** Take some time to go through the suggestion with students before they begin their discussion. Help with any vocabulary at this stage and check the key words / concepts (tax, health care needs, earn). Circulate and help with discussion prompts whilst the groups are working together.

#### Key:

##### Arguments for a health tax might be:

- everyone will be treated equally
- this will ensure that there is enough money to fund a good health system
- as health is such a basic and fundamental need, everyone should take responsibility for it

##### Arguments against a health tax might be:

- people should have the right to choose what they pay tax for
- health care should be the responsibility of the government, not the individual tax payer
- everyone should have to save for their own health care no matter how much they earn



## PICTURE OF HEALTH

- 1 What do you think the expression *picture of health* means? Do you have a similar expression in your language? Can you think of any other expressions in English which mean the same thing?
- 2 In pairs, describe the man in the picture. What job do you think he does? Give reasons for your answer.
- 3 Looking at the picture again, what else can you see apart from the man? How do these items relate to his job? In which country do you think this picture was taken? Why?
- 4 In a different pair, describe in what ways doctors in your country are either the same or different from the one in the picture.
- 5 The man in the picture has a white coat on. In groups of three, discuss these statements about white coats and decide if they are true (T) or false (F). Give reasons for your answers.
  1. Doctors have worn white coats for over 300 years. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Doctors started wearing white coats to make themselves seem more scientific. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Surgeons do not wear white coats. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. In UK hospitals, doctors have stopped wearing white coats and now wear dark blue or green short sleeved uniforms. \_\_\_\_\_
  5. The white coat is a symbol of power. \_\_\_\_\_
  6. The white coat makes people feel less scared about being in hospital. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Some people say 'the doctor is always right'. Do you agree with that statement? Do doctors sometimes get it wrong? Why?
- 7 In your country, do people have to pay to see doctors or are their services free (provided by the state or the government)? Do you think medical services should be free for everyone?
- 8 In groups of four, read the suggestion below from the UK government to ensure that everyone has access to health care. Do you agree with this suggested policy? Why / Why not? What other methods could be used to pay for health care? Be prepared to discuss your ideas with the rest of the class.

The UK government is going to introduce a health tax. Anyone who earns over £40,000 per year will have to pay a special tax which will be used to support the health care needs of people who earn less than £15,000 per year. The more someone earns, the higher the tax will be. The aim is that every UK citizen will get exactly the same medical service, no matter how much they earn.