



Five College Center for the Study of World Languages

### Conversation Preparation Guides

**Title: At the Doctor's Office**

**Topic: Health Care**

**Level: Intermediate**

### Practice on Your Own

Imagine that you have recently been suffering from several health problems, like headache, backache, earache, etc. Now you have planned to go to a doctor's office.

- List the name of body parts that have been bothering you.
- Figure out how you can explain to a doctor that X has been bothering you (hurting/aching). For instance, "I have a backache"/"my back is bothering me"/"I have pain in my back"/"I feel pain in my back." What is the main pattern in the target language to express pain in different body parts?
- You can think about times you have seen a doctor, and about your family members' or friends' visits to doctors. What was the reason for the visit? Try to say the problems in the target language.
- Think about how a doctor asks about the reason of your visit. "What is the problem?"/"How can I help you?"/"What is bothering you?" ...
- Prepare appropriate ways of greeting in this setting. Is there a more formal greeting you should use?
- Take note of difficulties with word combinations, forming questions or answering them. If you don't take notes, you might forget your questions.

### Practice in Conversation Session

Role play a visit to a doctor's office. Your conversation partner plays the role of the doctor.

- First greet each other. Pay attention to the greetings. Is there anything specific about greeting a doctor that is different from other settings? For instance, who initiates the conversation? Is it more of a friendly setting or very formal? Is there any use of first names?
- Now listen to the doctor (your conversation partner) carefully and answer his/her questions using the prepared explanations of how you are feeling. Be as thorough as possible. This will help your conversation partner to correct you or to help you express more nuances in explaining

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how you feel. The questions are mainly about what, when, how long, how much, what you have done, etc. For instance:

- *Doctor*: What is bothering you, Miss Smith? Since when/for how long? How much...
- *Miss Smith*: My back aches. It has been hurting since X/for a month. I cannot sleep...
- Now switch roles – you become a doctor, and your conversation partner is your patient. Repeat the same conversation.