

Teacher Notes

Topic: describing the respiratory system, associated conditions and their symptoms

Timing: 30-45 minutes

Lesson Type/Focus: vocabulary development

Aim:

To consolidate and extend a student's understanding and use of vocabulary associated with the respiratory system, associated conditions, and their symptoms

Overview

The focus of this lesson is developing the vocabulary used to describe the respiratory system, associated conditions and their symptoms. The first vocabulary task introduces the topic and familiarises students with common terms related to the respiratory system and breathing terms. The following vocabulary exercise focuses on common respiratory conditions and their definitions. The final activity asks students to make notes on symptoms and their possible causes.

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

- Course: [English for Doctors: Advanced Communication Skills](#)
- Unit: Interviewing a Patient
- Module: Describing respiratory symptoms and conditions

Teaching Guide & Answer Key

Part 1: respiratory terms – categorisation

- Put students into pairs.
- Ask them to categorise the terms from the box into the correct category in the table.
- Whole class feedback.

Answers

- **The respiratory system:** alveoli, bronchus, bronchiole, diaphragm, trachea
- **Breathing terms:** breathing, breaths, respirations, breathe in, breathe out
- **Abnormal breathing terms:** chesty cough, shortness of breath, shallow breathing, laboured breathing, difficulty breathing

Part 2: respiratory conditions – matching

- Students continue to work with their partner and match the conditions 1-6 with their definitions a-f.
- Whole class feedback.

Answers

1.c

2.f

3.e

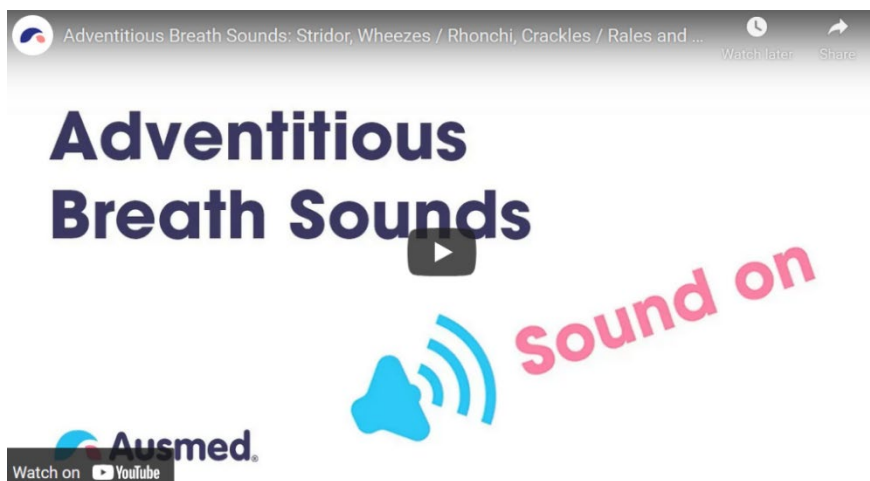
4.d

5.a

6.b

Part 3: respiratory symptoms and causes – writing notes

- Check students know the terms stridor, wheeze, crackles, pleural rub. If they don't, request them to look the terms up.
- In their pairs, ask students to complete the table of common respiratory symptoms and their possible causes by pooling their existing knowledge.
- Play the video. Students watch it and compare the information given with their answers. They can then make any necessary additions or edits to their writing.



Extension work

- Ask students to take their notes and, in their pairs, expand them to form a simple and clear explanation of the respiratory symptoms.
- Elicit examples from the class.

Suggested answers

1. Notes

	Descript ion of sound	Inspiration or exhalation	Possible cause	Indicative of which conditions
Stridor	<i>High pitched, crowing sound</i>	<i>Inspiration</i>	<i>Partial obstruction of larynx or trachea</i>	<i>Croup, foreign body obstruction</i>
Wheeze	<i>High-pitched, continuous musical sound</i>	<i>Expiration</i>	<i>Presence of mucus or respiratory secretions</i>	<i>Asthma, emphysema, chronic bronchitis</i>
Crackles	<i>Fine, high-pitched, intermittent crackling sounds</i>	<i>Inspiration</i>	<i>Air passing through fluid, pus or mucus</i>	<i>Coarse Crackles - Pulmonary oedema, bronchitis</i> <i>Fine crackles – congestive heart failure, pulmonary fibrosis</i>
	<i>Harsh grating or</i>	<i>Both inspiration and expiration</i>	<i>Movement of inflamed pleural surfaces</i>	<i>Tuberculosis, pneumonia</i>

Pleural Rub	<i>creaking</i>		<i>against one another during chest wall movement</i>	
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2. Explanations

Example given in student worksheet:

Stridor is a high-pitched crowing sound you hear when a patient breathes in. It may be indicative of either croup, an infection of the upper airway, or the partial obstruction of the patient's larynx (voice box) or trachea (windpipe).

Student Worksheet

Describing the respiratory system, associated conditions and their symptoms



Part 1: respiratory terms

Put the terms from the box into the correct category in the table below.

alveoli	chesty cough	shallow breathing	breathe out
trachea	bronchiole	difficulty breathing	breathing
breathe in	shortness of breath	breaths	bronchus
diaphragm	laboured breathing	respirations	

The respiratory system	Breathing terms	Abnormal breathing terms

Part 2: respiratory conditions

Match the conditions from 1 - 6 with the descriptions a - f

1. pleurisy
 2. pneumonia
 3. bronchitis
 4. chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
 5. pharyngitis
 6. influenza (the flu)
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- a. inflammation of the throat, also called a sore throat
 - b. infectious disease causing respiratory symptoms, fevers and generalised aching
 - c. inflammation of the membrane which covers the lungs
 - d. chronic lung inflammation
 - e. inflammation of the airways also called a chest infection
 - f. lung infection caused by bacteria, viruses or fungi

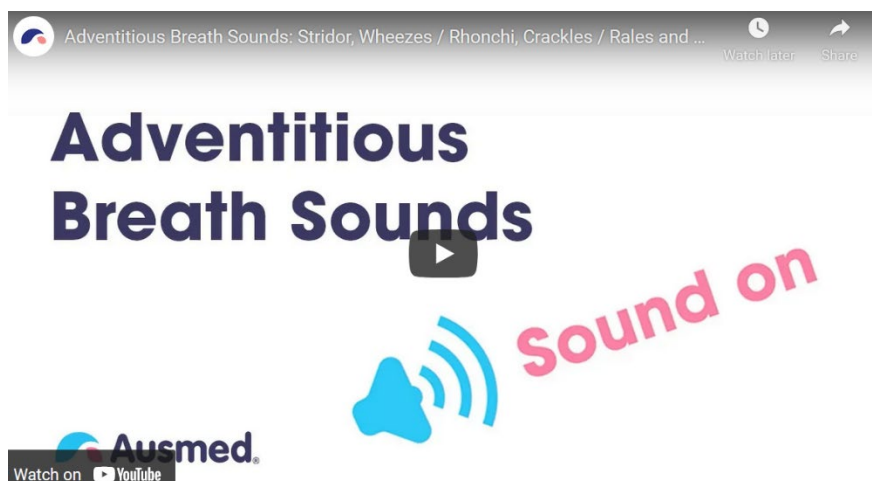
Part 3: respiratory symptoms and causes

A. Work with your partner and make notes in the table below.

	Descrip tion of sound	Inspirati on or exhalati on	Possibl e cause	Indicati ve of which conditio ns
Stridor				
Wheeze				
Crackles				

Pleural Rub				
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B. Watch the video and check your answers.



C. Make any appropriate additions or edits to your symptom descriptions.

Extension work

Expand your notes into full sentences to give a simple definition of the respiratory symptom and its potential causes.

Example:

Stridor is a high-pitched crowing sound you hear when a patient breathes in. It may be indicative of either croup, an infection of the upper airway, or the partial obstruction of the patient's larynx (voice box) or trachea (windpipe).