

## Getting medicine for the poor

Level 1 | Elementary

### 1 Key Verbs

Fill the gaps using one of these words from the text:

**suffer treat publish allow(ed) afford  
agree protect develop save receive(d)**

- 1• Scientists are trying to \_\_\_\_\_ a new drug against AIDS.
- 2• Special drugs are used to \_\_\_\_\_ malaria.
- 3• Millions of people \_\_\_\_\_ from malaria in poor countries.
- 4• Poor people cannot \_\_\_\_\_ to buy expensive drugs.
- 5• Drugs can \_\_\_\_\_ people from diseases.
- 6• Cheaper drugs could \_\_\_\_\_ lives in poor countries.
- 7• You are right! I \_\_\_\_\_ with you.
- 8• You are not \_\_\_\_\_ to smoke in here.
- 9• I \_\_\_\_\_ an important letter this morning.
- 10• They are going to \_\_\_\_\_ the report next week.

### 2 Vocabulary: Find the Word

- 1• Find a word which means the opposite of 'poor'.
- 2• Find a word which means 'illnesses'.
- 3• Find a word which means 'a special licence for a product'.
- 4• Find a word which means a serious disease caused by mosquitoes.
- 5• Find a word which means the opposite of 'cheap'.
- 6• Find a word which means 'the detailed study of a subject in order to find out new information'.
- 7• Find a word which means 'someone with special knowledge of a subject'.
- 8• Find a word which means 'someone who writes a book or a report'.

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Most of the news in the newspapers is bad but sometimes there is a story with good news. This is one of those stories. Millions of people around the world suffer from AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other serious diseases. There are medicines to treat these diseases but, for people in poor countries, these medicines are too expensive to buy. When a pharmaceutical company produces a new medicine, they receive a special licence called a patent. This licence means that the new medicine or drug is protected for a period of 20

years. The company that produced the drug can fix the price of the drug and no other company is allowed to produce the same drug or a copy of the drug for 20 years. At the moment, these patents operate all over the world, both in rich countries and in poor countries. The drugs companies say that they need patents so that they can get the money to pay for research to find new drugs and medicines. In rich countries people usually have enough money to pay for these drugs, but in poor countries people cannot afford to buy them and cannot treat diseases like AIDS and malaria.

Last month, however, a group of experts published a report which says that patents are very bad for poor countries. The report says that drug companies do not want to find new medicines for diseases of poor people in poor

countries. It says that poor countries should be allowed to make copies of drugs and that if they cannot produce these copies themselves, they should be allowed to buy cheap drugs without patents from other countries.

The authors of the report were lawyers, scientists and a senior director from the drug company Pfizer. Of course, the pharmaceuticals industry does not agree with the report. "We need patents so that we can develop new medicines to fight disease both in the developed and the developing world", said a spokesman. But the report is the first sign that there might be a change in the patent system. This change could save millions of lives in the world's poorest countries. This really is good news!

The Guardian Weekly 3-10-2002, page 24

### 3 Comprehension check

#### 1• Why are medicines expensive for people in poor countries?

- a• Because they are protected by patents.
- b• Because they are produced in rich countries.
- c• Because they are imported.

#### 1• How long do patents last?

- a• 5 years.
- b• 10 years.
- c• 20 years.

#### 3• Why do drugs companies need patents?

- a• To get money to produce new drugs.
- b• To sell drugs in poor countries.
- c• To sell drugs in rich countries.

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4. What does the report say?
  - a. Poor countries should spend more money on drugs.
  - b. Poor countries should be allowed to make copies of drugs.
  - c. Poor countries should import drugs.
5. What might happen if the patent system is changed?
  - a. Drugs companies will stop producing drugs.
  - b. Millions of lives will be saved in poor countries.
  - c. Drugs companies will make more money.

### 4 Word Building

Complete the table. Use a dictionary to help.

	VERB	NOUN
1.	treat	_____
2.	produce	_____
3.	agree	_____
4.	develop	_____
5.	protect	_____
6.	operate	_____
7.	change	_____

### 5 Prepositions

Fill the gaps using a preposition. Check your answers in the text.

1. Millions of people suffer \_\_\_\_\_ AIDS.
2. Many people have no money to pay \_\_\_\_\_ expensive drugs.
3. People \_\_\_\_\_ poor countries cannot afford expensive drugs.
4. The pharmaceuticals industry does not agree \_\_\_\_\_ the report.
5. Patents are bad \_\_\_\_\_ poor countries.
6. Millions \_\_\_\_\_ lives could be saved.
7. Drugs are protected by patents \_\_\_\_\_ a period of 20 years.
8. These patents operate all \_\_\_\_\_ the world.

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### Key

#### 1 Key Verbs

- 1 develop
- 2 treat
- 3 suffer
- 4 afford
- 5 protect
- 6 save
- 7 agree
- 8 allowed
- 9 received
- 10 publish

#### 2 Find the Word

- 1 rich
- 2 diseases
- 3 patent
- 4 malaria
- 5 expensive
- 6 research
- 7 expert
- 8 author

#### 3 Comprehension Check

1 a; 2 c; 3a; 4 b; 5 b

#### 4 Word Building

- 1 treatment
- 2 production
- 3 agreement
- 4 development
- 5 protection
- 6 operation
- 7 change

#### 5 Prepositions

- 1 from
- 2 for
- 3 in
- 4 with
- 5 for
- 6 of
- 7 for
- 8 over