



## Section VI. Reading Comprehension

**Introduction:** You use your reading skills when you read texts, notes, and reports. These skills help you understand the medical information these documents present.

**Objectives:** When you complete this section, you should be able to

- ★ State the main points presented in a medical document
- ★ Understand medical terms and words presented in texts, notes, and reports



**Time:** You should be able to read the medical article, answer questions, and check your answers with the Answer Key in about two hours.

### Reading Comprehension

The following three strategies help you read and use medical information in your practice. Use these strategies to understand what you read in medical texts, articles, and notes.

#### **Strategy 1. Find Main Ideas**

Look at titles, introductions, and topic names to find the main ideas. These writing elements help you learn the purpose, position, and main points in your reading.

For example:

*A medical book you read has a chapter titled Lung. The chapter topics include Lung Disease, Approach to the Patient, Airway Disorders, and Lung Infections.*

#### **Strategy 2. Find Facts**

Look for repeated words and statements to find the main ideas presented. Take time to identify terms, data, acronyms, and details.

Focus on the words and statements you do not understand. Relate them to things you already know. Use facts you already understand to learn new facts.

For example:

*A medical book you read has a chapter titled Kidney. You find the words renal, nephron, acute, chronic, urine, and filtration many times. And you find the phrase renal disease and urine sample many times.*

### **Strategy 3. Find Word Tools**

Find word tools, such as metaphors, similes, and allegories that present ideas. Patients also use these tools when they talk to you about their illnesses. They often use word pictures to compare symptoms to things they think you understand. Frequently, this is how they tell you about themselves and how they feel. Look for metaphors, similes, and allegories to understand the word pictures authors and patients create.

For example:

*Mrs. J. complains that her chest pain came like a “bolt out of the blue.”*

She uses this simile (comparison) to say that her chest pain is acute and severe. This is how she describes her symptoms.

As you read medical writing, find these word tools to understand what written text means.

### **Activity VI A. Medical Article Reading**

**Directions:** Follow the steps to print the online medical article. Read it and answer the questions in this activity. Then check your answers with the Answer Key.

Step 1. Log onto a computer and connect to the Internet.

Step 2. Enter the following Internet address to access the online MSN Health Library:

[http://www.msnbc.com/news/healthlibrary\\_front.asp](http://www.msnbc.com/news/healthlibrary_front.asp)

Step 3. Click *Longevity* in the “Select a Topic” menu.

Step 4. Click the link to the article “U.S. life expectancy hits new high.”

Step 5. Click “COMPLETE STORY.”

Step 6. Print and read the article, using the strategies presented in this lesson.

Step 7. Answer the questions that follow to show that you understand the main points in the article.

## Activity VI A. Questions

1. What is the main idea of the article?
  - (A) Life expectancy is falling slowly.
  - (B) Life expectancy is claiming lives.
  - (C) Life expectancy is at its highest.
  - (D) Life expectance is hard to determine.
  
2. Which statement does the article make?
  - (A) Death rates for diabetes are falling.
  - (B) Death rates for diabetes are climbing.
  - (C) Death rates for Hepatitis B are rising.
  - (D) Death rates for Hepatitis C are rising.
  
3. How does the article link obesity and cancer?
  - (A) Obesity is never linked to cancer.
  - (B) Obesity is not linked to cancer.
  - (C) Obesity is weakly linked to cancer.
  - (D) Obesity is strongly linked to cancer
  
4. How much do Americans spend on health care, according to the article?
  - (A) About the same as Canada does
  - (B) Far more than any other nation
  - (C) Half of the gross domestic product
  - (D) One third of the annual budget