

# Doctors Without Borders



## Pre-Reading

### A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What is a “volunteer”?
2. What is a “border”?
3. Which geographic borders have you crossed in your life?
4. What are some different types of natural disasters?
5. What type of aid do doctors provide in war zones?

### Doctors Without Borders

Doctors Without Borders is an international, independent medical organization that provides health care in emergency situations.

### B. Vocabulary Preview

Match these words to their correct definitions.

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| _____ 1. aid         | a) to show support for one specific group or cause                                |
| _____ 2. midwife     | b) a person who assists women before, during, and after childbirth                |
| _____ 3. pharmacist  | c) a person whose job it is to distribute medicine                                |
| _____ 4. frustrated  | d) feeling upset because you can't change or accomplish something                 |
| _____ 5. refugee     | e) to talk publicly about an issue that needs attention                           |
| _____ 6. crisis      | f) a person who has fled his/her homeland due to war, politics, or fear of danger |
| _____ 7. side (verb) | g) a feeling of self-worth  |
| _____ 8. priority    | h) to give money or services to a person or group in need                         |
| _____ 9. donate      | i) the most important thing   |
| _____ 10. dignity    | j) a very bad situation   |
| _____ 11. speak out  | k) help   |
| _____ 12. unjust     | l) unfair   |

## Reading

1. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), known as “Doctors Without Borders” in North America, is an organization that provides medical **aid** in over 60 countries. Doctors, nurses, **midwives**, lab technicians, **pharmacists**, and other medical and non-medical professionals work for MSF. An MSF mission generally lasts nine months to one year.
2. MSF was founded in France in 1971. French doctors who worked for the Red Cross were unhappy with how Nigerian troops were treating aid workers. They were also **frustrated** with how slowly the Red Cross acted in response to emergencies. Furthermore, they hated that they had to stay silent about the awful things they witnessed. French journalists were also experiencing frustration. They wanted doctors to pay more attention to people who were suffering from natural disasters.
3. The frustrated French doctors realized that they had something in common with the journalists. Both groups wanted the world to know how people were suffering. They joined forces to form the humanitarian organization MSF. They brought aid to **refugee** camps and became well known around the world for helping people in **crisis**.
4. Today, field staff for MSF work in war zones, disaster zones, and developing countries that require health care. MSF does not **side** with a certain political party, religion, or government. Their number one **priority** is to help people in emergency situations related to public health. MSF is a non-profit organization that is funded by donations. Individuals, corporations, governments, and the United Nations **donate** money to MSF.
5. One of the main goals of MSF is to bring **dignity** back to humans who have lost it. MSF workers often **speak out** against the **unjust** treatment of humans. They tell the world about governments that misuse donations or prevent aid from reaching people who need it.

## Comprehension

### A. True, False, or Not Mentioned?

Read the statements below. Write T if the statement is true. Write F if the statement is false and correct the information in your notebook. Write NM if the fact is not mentioned.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Canadian physicians came up with the idea for Doctors Without Borders.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The original doctors who started MSF worked for the Red Cross.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. French journalists helped promote Doctors Without Borders.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. People who volunteer for Doctors Without Borders receive free accommodations and food.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Doctors Without Borders is run by the United Nations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Nurses who work for MSF have to quit their jobs at home before they can volunteer in the field.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. MSF helps keep people informed about humanitarian crises around the world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Governments in disaster zones sometimes misuse aid.

### B. Likely or Unlikely?

Place a ✓ beside any act that would be common practice for MSF workers. Place an ✗ beside something that MSF workers would not likely do during a mission. Look up any words that you don't know.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Distribute vaccines to protect children from diseases.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Educate women so that they can get good jobs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Provide health education for local parents and teachers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Improve water and sanitation systems after major floods.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Perform surgery on earthquake victims.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Equip local families with weapons for protection.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Deliver babies in refugee camps.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Start private practices in growing American cities.

# Vocabulary Review

## A. Complete the Sentences

Choose the correct word from the vocabulary list on page 1 to complete each sentence.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ needed food and shelter. They fled their homeland because of the war.
2. The humanitarian \_\_\_\_\_ is getting worse in the flooded region. Many people are sick, hungry, and homeless.
3. The first \_\_\_\_\_ is to deliver clean water to the area.
4. Please \_\_\_\_\_ money to provide for the children in need.
5. The frustrated midwife \_\_\_\_\_ about gender inequality in the villages.

## B. The Suffix "-ist"

In English, the suffix "-ist" is often used to describe a person who has a specific role. Look for the root word inside a word that ends in "-ist." There are many medical professions ending with "-ist." Some examples are listed to the right. Can you think of some other words that end in "-ist"? Write them on the blanks. Place a star next to any words that you find difficult to pronounce or spell.

### Examples:

- pharmacist
- dentist
- anesthesiologist
- psychiatrist
- specialist

### Other Words Ending in "-ist":

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

# Discussion

1. Why might language barriers be a problem for MSF workers? Is it important for your doctor to speak your language well?
2. Do you think doctors change the way they practice medicine after taking a mission with MSF?
3. Is MSF the type of organization you would donate money or time to? Why or why not?

## Pair Activity

### A FRUSTRATING MISSION

Imagine one of you is a journalist interviewing a frustrated doctor who works for MSF. Create a fictional crisis or use a real-life scenario. Write some questions and responses. Try to use words from the vocabulary list on page 1. Take turns pretending to be the reporter and the doctor. Share your dialogue with your class.

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Crisis:** \_\_\_\_\_

Reporter: \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporter: \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporter: \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporter: \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporter: \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

## Memory Game

### FIRST AID KIT

1. Gather in a circle with the students in your class. Decide what your humanitarian mission will be.
2. The first student says the phrase below and names one item to bring in the first aid kit.
3. The second student repeats the phrase, names the first item mentioned, and adds another item.
4. Continue with each student, adding a new item to the list each time.
5. Any student who can't remember the items mentioned before (in the right order) gets cut from the mission! Who will remain? (No note-taking!)

*"I am going on a Doctors Without Borders mission, and in my first aid kit I will bring..."*