
GRETCHEN BLOOM

the language of hospital services in english



ENGLISH FOR CAREERS

Gretchen Bloom

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FOREWORD

This book is one of a series of texts called *English for Careers*. The series is intended to introduce students of English as a foreign language to the language of different professional and vocational fields. The career areas that are covered are those in which English is widely used throughout the world, such as air travel, computer programming, the petroleum industry, international banking, and so on.

Each book in the series serves several purposes. The first is to give the student an introduction to the particular vocational area in which he or she is involved. The duties of different kinds of jobs are discussed, as well as the problems that might be encountered at work. In this particular book, *The Language of Hospital Services in English*, the jobs of the personnel who staff a hospital are discussed. Medical jobs are included, but equally important are the jobs performed by the various technical, administrative, and other kinds of personnel essential to the operation of a hospital. The book is not intended as a detailed training manual, but rather as a broad introduction both to the occupations and the problems involved in this kind of work.

American hospitals have been used as models in this book. However, the manner in which American hospitals function is basically the same in hospitals throughout the world.

From the point of view of teaching English as a foreign language, these books are intended for a student at the high intermediate or the advanced level. In other words, the student who uses these books should be acquainted with most of the structural patterns of English. His principal goals as a learner should be mastering vocabulary, using the various patterns in a normal mixture, and improving his ability to communicate in English.

These books address themselves to all of these needs. Each unit begins with a glossary of special terms in which words and expressions

used in the vocational areas being discussed are defined. This glossary is followed by a vocabulary study that tests the student's comprehension of the special terms and gives practice in their use. In the reading, these terms are used again within a contextual frame of reference. Each reading is followed by questions for comprehension and discussion. They give the student the opportunity to use in a communicative situation both the vocabulary items and the structural patterns that have occurred in the reading.

Each unit ends with an exercise or exercises, some of which pose problems that might occur if the student were working at the job. He might, for instance, be asked to fill out forms that are used on the job; or he might have to make up short dialogues that involve human problems and situations that arise in connection with the job. In doing these exercises, he will also practice the specialized vocational vocabulary and other new words, as well as the structural patterns that are used with them.

A great deal of successful language learning comes from experiences in which the learning is largely unconscious. In offering these books, it is hoped that the student's interest in his chosen field will increase his ability to communicate more effectively in English.

The author of this book wishes to express her appreciation to the staff at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, D.C. for their cooperation in making available much of the material on which this book is based.

GRETCHEN BLOOM
Washington, D.C.

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UNIT ONE

THE MODERN HOSPITAL:

AN OVERVIEW

Special Terms

Hospital: An institution in which sick or injured persons are given medical or surgical treatment. The first hospitals were no more than rest houses for the sick. Modern hospitals provide a variety of services.

Patient: A sick or injured person who makes use of the medical services offered by the hospital.

Community Hospital: The most common type of hospital. It offers general, short-term care to *acutely* or severely ill patients. It differs from specialized hospitals and hospitals that provide long-term care for *chronic* or recurrent conditions.

Voluntary Hospital: A private, nonprofit hospital that is financed by private contributions and sometimes by government grants. Most hospitals in the United States are voluntary hospitals.

Proprietary Hospital: A hospital that is run to make a profit.

Health Insurance: A form of protection against unexpected high medical costs. The purchaser makes regular payments called *premiums* to an insurance company. In return, he or she expects the insurance company to pay a percentage of medical expenses. *Blue Cross* and *Blue Shield* are very popular private plans in the United States. *Medicare* and *Medicaid* are sponsored by the United States government at a nominal cost to the insured.

Hospital Board: The policy-making body for the hospital. It is also known as the *board of directors* or *board of trustees*. They hire the

hospital administrator, approve the medical staff, and make the major decisions about the services offered by the hospital. Their decisions are based on the advice of a number of hospital committees.

Hospital Administrator: The person in charge of running a hospital. Hired by the board of directors, this individual is responsible for coordinating the various services provided by the hospital.

Medical Director: The physician responsible for the medical services in the hospital. He or she is usually appointed by the board and advised by members of the medical staff.

Medical Advisory Board: A *standing*, or permanent, *committee* that advises the hospital board on general medical policies. This group is also referred to as the *joint conference committee*.

Accredited: Certified or approved by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals. All hospitals must meet certain standards of health care before they can be officially accredited.

Ladies' Auxiliary: A group of volunteers who support the hospital. They raise funds and work without pay.

Vocabulary Practice

1. What is the purpose of a *hospital*?
2. What is the name given to a sick or injured person who makes use of a hospital?
3. Define the term *community hospital*.
4. What is meant by *acute* illness? *Chronic* illness?
5. Does a *community hospital* usually accept patients who need long-term care?
6. What is the difference between a *voluntary hospital* and a *proprietary hospital*?

7. What is *health insurance*? What is a *premium*?
8. Give an example of a private *health insurance* plan and a government-sponsored plan.
9. What is the governing body of a hospital called? Give two names.
10. Who is the person responsible for running a hospital?
11. Who oversees the medical services offered by a hospital?
12. What does the *medical advisory board* do?
13. What is another name for the *medical advisory board*?
14. What is a *standing* committee?
15. What does it mean for a hospital to be *accredited*?
16. What does the *ladies' auxiliary* do?

The Modern Hospital: An Overview

The modern *hospital* is one of many institutions responsible for providing health care to the sick and injured, but it is probably the most familiar and certainly the most complex. It hardly resembles the earlier institutions that were also known as hospitals. Advances in medical science have created a virtual revolution in the health services field. The quality of care available to *patients* has improved; the need for personnel trained in the health professions has grown; and the variety of ways for people to work with the sick and injured has increased. Years ago, an individual had the choice of becoming a doctor, a dentist, or a hospital administrator. Today, he or she can choose from hundreds of health-related professions.

Many of these personnel, trained in a variety of fields, are needed to staff a modern hospital to provide adequate patient care. Most people forget that patients have many kinds of needs. They must be fed; their medical records must be kept; the floors must be kept clean;



A modern hospital. (Courtesy The New York Hospital—Cornell Medical Center)

and the laundry must be washed. In addition, employees have to be hired and equipment has to be purchased. These are some of the countless tasks that must be performed efficiently and properly by the hospital staff.

Hospitals were not always so complex. In India, hospitals existed as early as the fourth century B.C. But they were really only rest houses where the sick remained until they either recovered or died. In ancient Greece and Rome, temples were often used as hospitals. These early hospitals were clean, pleasant places, but they did not pay much attention to the body. The name hospital, in fact, is derived from the Latin word *hospitium*, which means “a place where guests are received.” The English words *hotel* and *hostel* are derived from this same root.

The Church assumed the primary responsibility for the care of the sick during the Middle Ages. Hospitals continued to be used as rest houses, but they gradually acquired a bad reputation. They became known as places of filth and death, to be avoided at all costs. It is no wonder that early American settlers in the New World did not want

to establish hospitals. It was not until 1713 that William Penn founded the first community hospital in the colonies in Philadelphia.

During the nineteenth century, medical advances changed all this. Louis Pasteur developed his germ theory, and Florence Nightingale made nursing a respectable profession. Since then, the number of hospitals has grown dramatically in the world. By 1873, in the United States alone, there were nearly 200 hospitals. Today, there are more than 7,000.

There are many different kinds of hospitals. The most common is the general or *community hospital*. It treats patients of all ages and numerous illnesses and injuries. Most patients have *acute* problems and usually stay less than a week.

Other hospitals provide more specialized care. Some treat patients with *chronic* illnesses and offer facilities for long-term care. Others take patients of only one age group, such as children, or patients with one particular illness, such as tuberculosis.



Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital, a voluntary, nonprofit, specialty hospital. (Courtesy Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital)

Hospitals can also be categorized according to the nature of their financial support. Most hospitals in the world are financed by the government of the country in which they are located. This is not true in the United States, where only military hospitals and some other specialized institutions are run by federal, state, or local government. Here hospitals tend to be private, nonprofit institutions. These *voluntary hospitals* are usually associated with universities or religious groups. Some of their operating expenses may be paid for by government grants. Most of their revenues, however, must come from private endowments and gifts.

Operating a hospital has become extremely costly. As a result, patients often cannot afford to pay these expenses. Fortunately, different kinds of health insurance are available. In the United States, the federal government assists those over 65 years of age with a health plan called *Medicare*. Those under 65 who are unable to pay insurance *premiums* are eligible for *Medicaid* assistance. Most other people are protected by private insurance plans. Two of the most popular of these are *Blue Cross* and *Blue Shield*.

A third kind of hospital, in addition to government-financed and nonprofit, is the *proprietary hospital*. This kind of hospital is private and is run to make a profit. It is usually small and located where there are no other adequate health care facilities.

Most hospitals are governed by a *hospital board*, which is also known as the *board of directors* or *board of trustees*. This board is made up of a variety of citizens of the community who serve on a voluntary, nonpaid basis. The board must make sure that the hospital provides efficient and economical health care to its patients. It is also responsible for maintaining adequate medical standards. To achieve this, the board hires a *hospital administrator* to run the hospital and a *medical director* to oversee the medical staff.

A series of permanent or standing committees meets on a regular basis and advises the hospital board. The most important of these committees is the *medical advisory board*, also known as the *joint conference committee*. This committee is made up of the medical director, selected staff physicians who are their department heads, and the hospital administrator. It advises the board on general medical matters and reviews the performance of the doctors. Other standing committees include finance, education, public relations, personnel, long-term planning, buildings-and-grounds, and nominating committees.

Many hospitals are also linked to the community through their volunteer programs. These are still frequently referred to as *ladies' auxiliaries*, because most of their volunteers have been women. Some volunteers help by soliciting community support for hospitals. Others actually work in the hospitals, helping to serve food trays or to select books for patients from the library cart. Some volunteers may even be involved in occupational therapy or perhaps in other semi-medical capacities. Many hospital gift shops are run by ladies' auxiliaries. Other kinds of volunteers include teenagers who are often known as *candy stripers*. They are called this because they wear pink-and-white striped uniforms to distinguish themselves from the nurses.



A candy striper helping a patient.
(Courtesy Montefiore Hospital and Medical Center)

The American Hospital Association has done much to improve the standards of hospital care in the United States. Founded in 1899, the AHA holds annual meetings, maintains a library service, and publishes materials to help hospitals improve their care. One of the goals of the AHA has been to encourage more hospitals to seek accreditation. Most hospitals in the United States now are *accredited* by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals. A hospital must offer two essential services before it can be accredited. It must

have both an organized medical staff that provides responsible medical care and a staff of licensed, registered nurses on duty at all times. The following support facilities must also be available: a dietary department, a medical records division, a pharmacy, a pathology department, a radiology department, an emergency care unit, and a medical library. It is the responsibility of the board of directors to assure that these facilities are provided.

The following description of the organizational structure of Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, D. C. may help to illustrate how a modern hospital functions.

Georgetown University Hospital offers a variety of medical facilities through its many clinical departments. There are, for example, departments of general medicine, psychiatry, anesthesia, pediatrics, surgery, pathology, radiation therapy, neurology, ophthalmology, radiology, emergency service, physical medicine and rehabilitation, oral surgery, ambulatory care, laboratories, and obstetrics and gynecology. Each of these departments is run by a chairman who is responsible to the medical director.

The hospital administrator at Georgetown University Hospital handles the various administrative services that support the medical staff. The administrator is assisted by an associate administrator, five assistant administrators, and several administrative assistants. The five assistant administrators are in charge of the five service areas: nursing, financial affairs, materials management, hospital services, and professional services.

Both the medical director and the hospital administrator are directly responsible to the chancellor for medical center affairs. The chancellor is in turn responsible to the university president, who is appointed by the board of directors for the university. The chancellor for medical center affairs must also concern himself with the schools of medicine, dentistry, and nursing.

The subsequent units in this book will examine the various services offered by most hospitals in greater detail. Attention will be paid to administrative, technical, and institutional facilities, as well as the medical services.

Discussion

1. What complex yet familiar institution provides health care to the sick and injured?
2. What have been some of the results of recent advances in medical science?
3. How did the first hospitals differ from modern hospitals?
4. Describe a community hospital. What kind of care does it offer?
5. How are most hospitals in the world financed?
6. How are most hospitals in the United States financed?
7. With hospital costs as high as they are, how do patients manage to pay their bills?
8. Name two of the most popular private health insurance plans in the United States. How do they differ from Medicare? From Medicaid?
9. Define the duties of the hospital board.
10. What two employees does the hospital board usually hire? What do they do?
11. What is the medical advisory board? Name some of the other standing committees found in most hospitals.
12. Where does the term *candy strippers* come from?
13. How do volunteers help in the hospital?
14. What are the purposes of the American Hospital Association?
15. What does the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals do?

16. What are some of the services that must be provided by a hospital in addition to medical services?

Review

- A. Try to imagine all the needs you would have as a patient in a hospital. What services would you expect the hospital to provide to meet those needs?
- B. Write an agenda for a possible hospital board meeting, imagining a number of issues that might realistically be discussed.

UNIT TWO

THE ADMINISTRATION OF A MODERN HOSPITAL

Special Terms

Hospital Administrator: The chief executive officer of the hospital. He or she is responsible for seeing that all of the services required by the hospital are provided. The hospital administrator must also make sure the hospital is run efficiently.

Associate/Assistant Administrators: Administrators who are trained in hospital administration but lack the experience to assume the top position. They must work first as associate or assistant administrators.

Administrative Assistant: Assists with various routine administrative tasks.

Medical Record: A permanent document on which everything relating to a patient's medical diagnosis and treatment during his hospital stay is recorded.

Controller/Business Manager: Manages the hospital's business office. He or she is also responsible for the hospital's finances. The word *controller* is used when the person advises the administrator on financial policy. The term *business manager* applies when the person simply manages the office.

Accountant: Maintains financial records and statistical reports. He or she works in the business office.

Credit Manager: Handles the hospital's credit and collection activities. This person also works in the business office.