



Cuban doctors head to Italy

Lesson code: 116U-A46B-CEGL

UPPER-INTERMEDIATE
(B2-C1)

 British English

1 Warm up

Use the pictures to help you answer the questions about Cuba.



1. Where is Cuba? _____
2. What language do they speak in Cuba? _____
3. What is an important industry in Cuba? _____
4. What can visitors do in Cuba? _____

You are going to watch a news report about how doctors from Cuba are fighting the coronavirus. Do you know anything about this news story?

2 Watch for main idea

Watch the news report and number the people who are interviewed in the order that you see them. One person is extra.

Video



- a nurse
- the Cuban prime minister
- a tourist
- a doctor

In one sentence, what is the main idea of this news report?



3 Watch for detail

Read the sentences from the report and remember/predict the missing words. The words you write will have the same or similar meaning as the words in bold. Watch the report again to check.

- Now for the first time, a Cuban medical **working group** / b_____ is on the way to Europe.
- But we **completed the work that we said we'd do** / f_____ **our m**_____ there and we all came back.
- For the moment, Cuba has so far registered 25 cases of coronavirus, **much** / s_____ less than most Latin American nations.
- The authorities only announced they would **let fewer people come** / r_____ e_____ into the island on Friday.
- There are other foreigners that **live** / r_____ in Cuba permanently.
- Cuba is lending Italy these **doctors and nurses** / m_____ at no cost, but for over a decade the **allowing the use of (for money)** / l_____ of doctors and nurses has been the island's top **way of bringing outside money into the country** / h_____ c_____ g_____ .
- The Communist Party will be hoping that **record-breaking worldwide** / u_____ g_____ demand for doctors will help pay for the power, food and running water Cubans will need to get through this crisis.

4 Vocabulary in context

Choose the best meaning for these expressions in bold from the news report, using the context to help you.

- They insist they're going to Italy **of their own free will** but many of them are very nervous.
 - Their travel has been paid for by the government
 - They are volunteers
 - They are going to travel in the near future
- The country **boasts one of the highest doctor-to-patient ratios** in the world.
 - Cuba's patients are very grateful to their doctors
 - Cuba's doctors save a lot of lives every year
 - Cuba is proud to have so many doctors, compared to the numbers of patients
- ... global demand for doctors will help pay for the power, food and running water Cubans will need to get through this crisis. **A silver lining perhaps at a dark moment.**
 - Even though this is a difficult situation, Cubans can find some benefits
 - Cubans can't use electric lights at night because there isn't enough power on the island
 - Cuba needs more silver money to get through the pandemic



5 Comprehension questions

According to the report, what are the answers to these questions?

1. What similar action have Cuban doctors taken in the past, and why?
2. According to the report, does Cuba have a lot of coronavirus cases? Why might this be?
3. How has Cuba earned money in the past and why has this changed now?
4. How is Cuba earning money now? Are the medics in this report being paid?

6 Discuss

Discuss any or all of these questions in pairs or groups.

NEWS STORY

1. What other professionals are important in an emergency like a pandemic? Think of other types of key workers that are helping. (A key worker is a person who provides an essential service to their country.)
2. How should we support and thank key workers at this time?
3. Can you think of any other historical examples of international co-operation?

LANGUAGE POINT

1. Have you ever done something similar to these Cuban doctors **of your own free will**? Why did you want to do this?
2. Do you think your country has a high doctor-to-patient ratio? What about the teacher-to-student ratio? (You can say: for every doctor there are X patients.)
3. Describe a time in your life when you could say '**Every cloud has a silver lining.**'



2 Watch for main idea

TAPESCRIPT: Cuban Doctors Head to Italy

Over the last 50 years Cuban doctors have saved millions of lives in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Now for the first time, a Cuban medical brigade is on the way to Europe.

Ed Augustin: There are 36 doctors behind me and 15 nurses. I spoke to some of them over the last couple of hours and I can tell you they're very proud. They insist they're going to Italy of their own free will but many of them are very nervous.

Leonardo Fernandez (doctor): Of course, I'm scared but when we went to fight Ebola in West Africa in 2014, we were scared too. But we fulfilled our mission there and we all came back.

Carlos Armando Garcia Hernandez (nurse): What we're going to do is cure and bring relief, not only to the Italian people but the world's population. This is a global battle and we have to fight it together.

Ed Augustin: Why are you going on this mission if you know that Cuban doctors have died on past missions?

Carlos Armando Garcia Hernandez (nurse): Because we are the Cuban people, this is Cuba and we're always going to keep fighting.

For the moment, Cuba has so far registered 25 cases of coronavirus, substantially less than most Latin American nations. The country prides itself on its preventative health care system and boasts one of the highest doctor-to-patient ratios in the world. But the country's fragile economy is highly dependent on tourism, and authorities only announced they would restrict entry into the island on Friday.

Manuel Marrero Cruz (Cuban Prime Minister): We're not closing the border, meaning what we're doing is regulating entry into the country of people, except those that are residents of our national territory who are not only our countrymen. There are other foreigners that reside in Cuba permanently, or some who because of their work are here for several years.

Cuba is lending Italy these medics at no cost, but for over a decade the leasing of doctors and nurses has been the island's top hard currency generator. With Cuba's tourism sector hit hard by the corona virus pandemic, the Communist Party will be hoping that unprecedented global demand for doctors will help pay for the power, food and running water Cubans will need to get through this crisis. A silver lining perhaps at a dark moment.



1 Warm up

5 mins. The purpose of this stage is to introduce the topic and start students thinking about this news story. Go over the four questions with the whole class, using the pictures to help and feeding in the answers as needed. Students need a bit of background information about Cuba to help them understand the news report. Then ask students what they've heard about how Cuban doctors are helping to fight coronavirus. Do not confirm or deny any ideas but tell students they are going to watch a news report to find out more.

ANSWERS: 1 Cuba is an island in the Caribbean. 2 People speak Spanish in Cuba. 3 One very important industry in Cuba is tourism, but sugar and tobacco are also important. 4 Visitors to Cuba enjoy the classic architecture and can also see vintage cars from the 1950s in everyday use on the streets.

2 Watch for main idea

5 mins. In this stage, students will watch to get a general idea of content and organization. Set the task before viewing and then play the report. Students should focus on watching and listening at this stage; they should not be making notes while they watch. After watching, students should be able to order the interviewees from memory. After you check answers, set the follow-up question (one sentence only!) and compare answers with student predictions from the previous exercise. Avoid getting bogged down with vocabulary, as students will be watching the report for detailed information and vocabulary in the next stage.

ANSWERS: in order - 1 a doctor 2 a nurse 3 the Cuban Prime Minister (extra = a tourist). The main idea of the story is that Cuban medical workers are going to Italy to help the doctors there to treat patients with coronavirus.

3 Watch for detail

15 mins. In this stage, students will listen for detailed information. Go over the instructions and perhaps demonstrate the first exercise (without confirming or denying the answer). Remind students that it can be helpful to think about parts of speech for the missing word, as this can lead them to typical endings, eg in question 1, the missing word is a noun because the synonym "working group" is a noun and the word comes before and is the subject of the verb "is". Then allow students time in pairs to look through the exercise so they can remember or predict the missing words, using all the clues to help. If they don't know an item, they should just move on to the next one. Students then listen to the report a second time before checking answers in pairs. Often students can hear all of the phonemes of the word but need support in converting this to plausible spellings. After you check answers with the class, they may want to listen one final time to focus on the relationship between sound and spelling. Drill any words, phrases or sentences that were problematic for students - the underlined syllables in the answers are stressed.

ANSWERS: 1 brigade 2 fulfilled (our) mission 3 substantially 4 restrict entry 5 reside 6 medics / leasing / hard currency generator 7 unprecedented global

4 Vocabulary in context

5 mins. In this stage students can focus on some multi-word expressions, or chunks, that appear in the text and are often used in other contexts. Working alone or in pairs, give students a few minutes to read the sentences and the options and then check answers. There is an option to explore these chunks further in the discussion task.

ANSWERS: 1b 2c 3a - this is based on the metaphorical idiom: every cloud (temporary negative situation) has a silver lining (positive side).



5 Comprehension questions

15 mins. This stage provides a final check on comprehension before students move on to discussing the issues raised/and or activating language points. They can work in pairs to formulate their answers. They should be prepared to justify their answers and they can refer to the tapescript or listen again to the report if they need to. Check answers with the whole class.

ANSWERS: 1 Cuba sent medical teams to fight Ebola (another virus) in West Africa in 2014. They seem to have done this because they believe that Cubans have an obligation to share their fighting spirit and help other countries. 2 Cuba has only 25 cases of coronavirus, possibly because they have a strong preventative health care system and many doctors. 3 In the past, tourism was a major source of income in Cuba. However, with travel restrictions due to coronavirus, they can no longer make money in this way. 4 Instead, Cuba is hiring out its medical workers to other countries to pay for basic necessities on the island, although the medics in this report are working for free.

6 Discuss

15 mins. Students can work in pairs or small groups to discuss the questions. Focus primarily on one or the other section, depending on the needs and interests of your group. Encourage them to give reasons and examples and to use vocabulary from the lesson. If your class set-up allows, you could stage the questions and regroup students for each one, so they have an opportunity to speak to different people. Conduct a quick class feedback at the end of the session.

