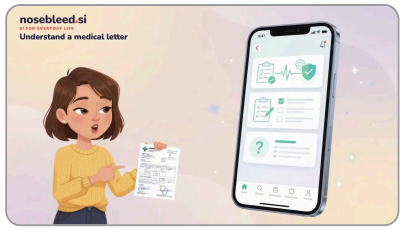
Understand a medical letter



Use AI to explain the medical words in a letter, then check its summary against the letter.

By the end, you'll be able to:

- keep personal details private when using AI
- use AI to explain medical words in plain English
- check an AI summary against the letter

Warm-up Match the medical words to their meanings

Draw a line from each word to its meaning. They're all in the sample letter on the next page.

Osteoarthritis	Only when you need it
Medial	Exercises and treatment to help you move
Physiotherapy	Another check later
As required	Wear and tear in a joint
Review	On the inner side

1 Keep it private

Before you share a letter with AI, cover your personal details. On the sample letter, **circle everything you'd cover up**. How many did you find? _____

MADE-UP SAMPLE LETTER, FOR PRACTICE ONLY

Anytown General Hospital

Orthopaedic Outpatients · 01632 960 789

2 February 2027
Hospital number: AGH 445566

Dr A Patel, Elm Road Surgery
Copy to: Mrs Margaret Hill, 12 Example Street, Anytown, ZZ1 1ZZ
Date of birth: 03/05/1950 · NHS number: 999 123 4567

Dear Dr Patel,

I saw Mrs Hill in clinic today with a history of left knee pain for 3 months, worse on stairs.

Diagnosis: mild osteoarthritis, left knee.
X-ray: mild joint space narrowing, medial compartment.

Plan:
1. Referral to physiotherapy.
2. Continue paracetamol as required.
3. Weight-bearing exercise encouraged.
4. Review in orthopaedic clinic in 6 months.

GP action: none required.

Yours sincerely,
Mr J Okafor, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

Anytown General Hospital and everyone named are made up. 01632 960 numbers are reserved for drama, and NHS numbers starting 999 are not given to real patients.

SAMPLE

2 Ask AI to explain it

If you have a device, try this prompt, then type out the letter **without the personal details**.

TRY THIS PROMPT

Please explain this letter from the hospital in plain English. Tell me what it says is wrong, what will happen next, and what any medical words mean. Please don't add anything that isn't in the letter. Here it is:

3 Spot the mistake

This summary has **one mistake**. Check it against the letter, and find it.

EXAMPLE SUMMARY

The hospital found mild wear and tear in your right knee. You'll be referred to a physiotherapist, you can keep taking paracetamol when you need it, and walking and other exercise is encouraged. You'll have another check at the clinic in 6 months. Your GP doesn't need to do anything.

The mistake is: _____

4 Your questions

Write two questions Mrs Hill could ask her physiotherapist or GP.

Find out more: read the free step-by-step guide, with a 10-second video, at **nosebleed.si/ideas/understand-a-medical-letter**

Teacher notes: Understand a medical letter

Time: 45 to 60 minutes

Level: beginners; no AI experience needed

Group: any size; works well in pairs

You'll need: a copy per learner; phones or tablets with an AI chat app (optional)

Before the session

Try the prompt yourself with the sample letter. Learners should never bring their own medical letters to class. Many hospital letters are now written to the patient, but some are still written to the GP, like this one.

Running order

10 min	**Warm-up.** Match the words. Reassure learners: these words confuse everyone.
10 min	**Part 1.** Read the letter and circle the personal details.
15 min	**Part 2.** Try the prompt, or read out an AI answer.
10 min	**Parts 3 and 4.** Spot the mistake, then write a question.
5 min	**Wrap-up.** AI explains; your doctor advises.

Answers: warm-up

Osteoarthritis: wear and tear in a joint.
Medial: on the inner side.
Physiotherapy: exercises and treatment to help you move.
As required: only when you need it.
Review: another check later.

Answers: Part 1

Name, address, date of birth, NHS number and hospital number.

Answer: Part 3

It's the **left** knee, not the right. Small mistakes like this matter in health, so always check AI against the letter.

More words

Joint space narrowing: the gap between the bones in the joint is smaller, a sign of wear.
Weight-bearing exercise: exercise on your feet, such as walking.

Safety notes

- AI explains what a letter says; it can't say what's right for you. If anything worries you, ask your GP or the clinic.

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