

**In this unit**

- talking about pregnancy and birth
- giving advice
- signs and symptoms of pregnancy and labour
- writing a discursive essay

## Listening

### From pregnancy to birth

1 Listen to five short conversations between the midwife and Hannah, a first-time mother. Decide whether each one takes place

- 1 pre-birth    2 during birth    3 after birth.
- a \_\_\_\_\_    b \_\_\_\_\_
- c \_\_\_\_\_    d \_\_\_\_\_
- e \_\_\_\_\_

2 Compare your answers in pairs. Say what clues you heard.

3 Complete the sentences with the words below.

- a miscarriage    dilated    forceps    presentation
- an epidural    induce    gas and air    waters
- birth plan    a contraction

1 My \_\_\_\_\_ broke last night, and I started getting strong \_\_\_\_\_ early this morning.

2 Well, you're seven centimetres \_\_\_\_\_ now, so I don't think we'll need to \_\_\_\_\_ you.

3 Now, on your \_\_\_\_\_ you've said you'd like \_\_\_\_\_ as pain relief, yes?

4 Yes, but if I can't bear the pain, I'd like \_\_\_\_\_ That's normal when \_\_\_\_\_ are used.

6 I've had \_\_\_\_\_ before, so they thought I should have a scan.

7 The baby's \_\_\_\_\_ is perfect, with the head down.

## It's my job

1 Before you read the interview, guess the answers to these questions.

- 1 When does Nicky feel extremely happy?
- 2 What makes her feel awful?
- 3 In what ways does Nicky prepare women for birth in her weekly antenatal classes?

2 Read the text and see which of your guesses match what Nicky says.

3 Discuss with a partner whether you would like to do Nicky's job. Explain your reasons.

## Nicky Cox

Q What do you enjoy about being a community midwife?

A The job has great highs. After I have delivered a baby, I often feel elated. I've smiled to myself on many occasions and thought, 'And I'm getting paid to do this!' It has its downsides too, though. When a birth doesn't go to plan, say, it is very prolonged and the heart monitor shows the baby is in distress, it can be very stressful. And of course – very, very rarely, thankfully – when there is a stillbirth or a baby is born with a deformity, it makes you feel awful for days or even weeks.

Q What are the qualities of a good midwife?

A Number one is people skills. Of course you need a lot of knowledge, but perhaps more than any other nursing job, a midwife must be good at getting on with people. When a woman gives birth, she feels very vulnerable and at the same time, it is an intensely personal experience you are sharing with her. I try to develop a strong relationship with my mothers during pregnancy when they come for their ultrasounds and physical examinations.

Q What are your views on a natural birth at home?

A It's all about choosing the right type of birth for you. I think giving birth without pain-controlling drugs in the comfort and familiar surroundings of your own home can be a wonderful experience. But my job is to explain objectively to each woman her options and let her decide. I run a weekly antenatal class for parents-to-be in which I explain the ins and outs of hospital birth, home birth, and water birth, as well as covering issues such as breastfeeding, the mother's diet during pregnancy, and how the father can help during labour.

