

# A magazine article

## 1 Read the article and choose the best title.

- a Nursing pioneers      b The first Emirati nurse      c Modern medicine in the Emirates

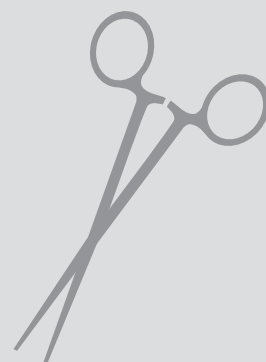
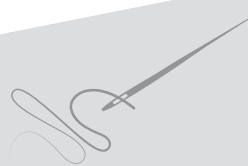
**H**undreds of people attended a special celebration in Ras Al Khaimah city to welcome a visit from Ruth Ash. An English woman now in her 70s, Ruth had worked as a nurse in Ras Al Khaimah from 1966 until 1971. When she had first arrived there in August 1966, the hospital was very basic and badly organised. Mrs Ash was an Oxford-trained nurse sent by the British government, and she made a list of supplies that she needed. These arrived from Dubai a few hours later in a couple of Land Rovers and before long she had set up the Emirates first modern hospital.

Whilst she was working in the Emirates, she also set up a mobile clinic and travelled to remote communities by truck to fight polio, cholera and malnutrition. Diarrhoea and malaria were also very common. She took with her a tin trunk packed with vitamins, scales, a blood pressure machine, a stethoscope and a camping stove. Wearing her white nurse's coat and cap, she gave out advice, malaria pills and a cream with an unpleasant smell called 'Winter Green' which she gave to the old men to rub into their knees.

**S**alma Al Sharhan – affectionately known as Mama Salma – was Mrs Ash's valued assistant. Working as the British nurse's apprentice, Salma was taught the basics of nursing and midwifery. Salma also accompanied Mrs Ash to remote mountain villages in Ras Al Khaimah to act as a translator as well as a nurse. When making visits alone, she often travelled by donkey, accompanied by an elderly man with a rifle.

Salma was born the daughter of a pearl diver. The family moved to Bahrain and she went to sea with her father and two younger brothers, trading clothing between Bahrain and Ras Al Khaimah. Then she moved back to Ras Al Khaimah and worked as cleaner at a pharmacy before getting a job with Ruth Ash. She was illiterate, but this didn't stop her being able to solve the many different problems she faced as a nurse. Once she made an incubator out of a cardboard box for a premature baby whose mother had died during childbirth. The child survived and later made regular visits to see the nurse who had saved his life.

Although she delivered many babies, Salma didn't have any children herself. She married a man from Bahrain, but divorced after he told her to stop working as a nurse. Sadly, Mama Salma died recently at the age of 80. However, her name will live on, as a laboratory at the Fatima College of Health Sciences in Abu Dhabi will be named after her. Thanks to Salma's fine example, the college of nursing at the Ras Al Khaimah Medical and Health Sciences University now offers a degree in nursing and the emirate has the most local nurses in the region.



**2 Read the article again. Choose the correct answers.**

- 1 Ruth Ash started nursing in Ras Al Khaimah in the \_\_\_\_\_.  
a 70s    b 60s    c 50s
- 2 Local people suffered from a number of diseases as well as a poor \_\_\_\_\_.  
a food    b diarrhoea    c diet
- 3 Salma helped Mrs Ash \_\_\_\_\_ as well assisting her with the nursing.  
a travel to remote regions    b teach the patients    c communicate with the patients
- 4 Salma couldn't \_\_\_\_\_, but she was an excellent problem solver.  
a train as a nurse    b read or write    c have children
- 5 There are \_\_\_\_\_ in Ras Al Khaimah thanks to Salma Al Sharhan.  
a many well-trained nurses    b mobile clinics    c translations of medical texts

**3 Answer the questions about the text.**

- 1 What did Ruth Ash do to improve the hospital?

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- 2 In what other way did she help the local community?

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- 3 How did Ruth Ash and Salma work together?

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- 4 Why did an old patient of Salma's go to see her from time to time?

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- 5 What caused a problem in Salma's personal life?

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**4 Answer the questions with your own ideas.**

- 1 Can you describe the hospital in your town or city? Is it a good hospital? Explain your answer.

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- 2 What different things might a nurse do as part of their daily work?

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- 3 Which illnesses are common in your country and how are they treated?

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