

Audio scripts

Unit 1, Speaking, Activity 1

Track 01

- 1 How are you planning to spend next weekend?
- 2 What do you do to keep in touch with your friends?
- 3 Could you tell us about an interesting show or exhibition you've seen recently?
- 4 Is there a sport or hobby you did when you were younger that you've stopped doing?
- 5 Where do you like to spend your holidays?
- 6 What do you see yourself doing in four years' time?

Unit 1, Listening, Activity 2

Track 02

- 1 When I was young, I never imagined living alone. But at weekends I can lie in bed all day if I want to, read a book ... no one tells me what to do. My fridge is empty because I don't need to cook. I've never bothered because the nearest takeaway is at the end of a phone – though I'm sure that's not good for me physically or financially! I don't have to apologise for anything I do – that's the best. It's up to me: I can leave my stuff all over the place and it's still there when I want it – no one asks me to move it.
- 2 I come from a large family, so privacy was at a premium in my early years. Now I love the large number of people I count as friends but I see who I like when I choose. It's completely in my hands and that's the best thing. Of course, although there are countless options open to me, it can be a bit mundane at times and then I have to do something about it – go out, see a film – I do have to make the effort to find entertainment. It's true that I can cook what I enjoy and although it may be selfish, the ability to make my own food choices is an unexpected bonus.
- 3 I don't see it as selfishness, though I know others do – it's probably more knowing what I like and doing it without thinking about the impact on anyone else. I'm not anti-social; in fact, I'd say the opposite – I have loads of mates I care about. But living alone means I can recharge my batteries, chill out, get myself ready for work – and I do have quite a stressful job. Of course, there can be downsides – paying all the bills on my own isn't always easy but at least I can play my music as loud as I like without getting told off!
- 4 Up to now I've always been surrounded by people and living on my own has been a bit of an eye-opener – though not in a bad way. At uni I shared a flat with six others – that was a real challenge! It was tough to cope with the constant untidiness and chatter. Now I love coming home and being greeted by silence – I can always fill it with music or radio programmes if I need to. I guess I do miss having someone to chat over problems with, suggest what to do, but I can always pick up the phone. I even quite enjoy doing the cleaning myself!
- 5 I actually like my own company – it gives me time to sort out my thoughts, get things into perspective. It's easier to do that when you're alone. That doesn't mean I don't like people – far from it – but it's like having small children: it's great when they go to bed and you can take it easy! I know I can rely on friends or family if I need help. There are loads of different forms of technology that enable me to keep in constant contact with others, though it'd be good to have someone to sort it out for me when it goes wrong! I'm no good at that sort of thing!

Unit 2, Speaking, Activity 1

Track 03

OK, I'm going to look at these two pictures – the one of the teacher and the one of the politician; at least I'm pretty sure he's a politician because it looks as if he's at an important press conference. Both pictures show people who need to communicate well in their jobs. In my opinion, both of them have to get across important information but for different reasons. The teacher is trying to explain something to young students in a science class who may be hearing about something for the first time, whereas the politician is talking to a whole group of experienced journalists and photographers; I guess it could be just before an election and he's trying to explain his position, or he could be just meeting the press after something important has happened and he has to brief them about this. The teacher has to communicate very well to be certain that the children understand the point of the experiment and also I think it goes without saying that he must make sure that the children are enjoying the lesson – that's really important for effective learning. In this picture they look as if they're having a good time. The politician, on the other hand, has to appear confident, convincing and persuasive. He has to convince the journalists about what he is saying. I don't mean to imply that politicians don't always tell the whole truth but as far as I'm concerned, they need to be quite good actors!

Unit 2, Listening, Activity 1

Track 04

1

- A:** I'd never been to anything quite like this before. Sure, there'd been lots of conferences at uni, some excellent, but they were academic. This one was different. I'd not had high expectations – I'd heard speakers could be anything from top-rate to mediocre but, in fact, I wasn't disappointed.
- B:** I thought the presentations generally were slick but their content was average – I'd heard it all before. I'd hoped they'd break new ground but it didn't happen. I got the impression they wanted to push their own products on us and I wasn't ready to be cajoled. And as for the exhibition stands, there were loads of them.
- A:** What I was surprised about was the practical nature of the whole thing. Maybe I'm naive but I thought some of the innovative software being promoted looked cool. I've collected loads of brochures to look at.
- B:** A lot of it certainly appeared to be timesaving but you know what technology is: once it goes wrong, it wastes more time than it saves. I may stick to the tried and tested stuff I know; though there were a couple of things that I'll take away with me to try.

2

- A:** People don't seem to converse directly anymore – it's all online! So, I went to a park in town with a table and four chairs. I put up a sign offering free conversation and I pinned up a list of possible conversation topics, like the weather, history, birds. It only took a few minutes for a young couple to sit down. They went for a topic of cars. We talked for twenty minutes about their impact on the environment. After they'd left, more people came and sat down, and I ended up chatting to a steady stream of strangers. They really appreciated the chance to interact personally.
- B:** Sounds cool – like you're doing your bit to save the endangered art of social conversation! My seminars on being a good communicator get much the same reaction. People feel deprived of genuine meaningful interaction. We used to value that but not anymore.

A: All we have now are superficial posts on Twitter. How can you express anything meaningful in 140 characters? I realise people want to communicate quickly and succinctly but it's pretty shallow and creates a false intimacy.

B: If you can see body language and facial expressions, you can interpret tone, which avoids misunderstandings and creates deeper relationships.

3

A: I feel privileged because what I do with patients changes their lives. You've seen the film *The King's Speech*, where the king learnt how to manage when he stammered badly ...

B: That's what I like most – helping people, seeing them gain confidence and do well; that makes everything worthwhile. And it takes ages to qualify, so it's important to enjoy working with colleagues – that's crucial 'cos we can't do it alone.

A: That film didn't show everything we really do! It implied we only work with speech but, in fact, communication is more than making sure someone can produce all their sounds properly and it bothers me that people don't get that. Sometimes we help injured patients use non-verbal ways to get their point across. They might need help after having a physical problem like a stroke – they can talk but what they say doesn't make sense. Then we can make a real difference.

B: The key thing, I think, is to like people, be a good communicator and listener yourself – a people person.

A: It's impossible to do it alone – you must be involved with other professionals in the whole process so the outcome for the patient is as good as it can be.

Unit 3, Speaking, Activities 3 and 4

Track 05

A: Well, I don't like to say it but I think it's got to be money. When you leave school or college and start work, you can't do anything without money.

B: Yes, there's that, but maybe you're being a bit too harsh? Yes, I agree money is important but friendships are, too. Who do you go to when you haven't got a job or anywhere to live? Your friends.

A: I still think it's money. Money gives you the means to do everything: get a flat, go out with your friends, buy new clothes to keep up your image, even fund more education if you want to.

B: OK. We'll have to differ here, then. Let's say both money and friendships!

Unit 3, Listening Activity 1

Track 06

I = Interviewer J = Jon C = Clare

I: Today we're talking to Jon Simmons and Clare Harries, who both work as life coaches. Jon, tell us what a life coach actually does.

J: It's actually quite complex but, basically, people come to a life coach when they want to work on aspects of their life that are unsatisfying or when they feel their general quality of life isn't what they want. There may be different things bothering them – their weight, relationships, work and so on. My clients decide what they want to achieve and it's my job to make that happen – like a catalyst bringing about change. I don't regard my role as like that of a therapist, who goes into issues from the past in depth. Life coaching works on action in the present in order to facilitate a specific outcome later on. I provide support and encouragement so people can take control themselves.

I: Clare, what made you decide to become a life coach?

C: I'm fascinated by human potential – not just in terms of accomplishments, but happiness. I've always loved helping people and I've been through negative experiences myself – this job is all about both. I think sometimes people get stuck in a rut and if they have no one to talk to, they go round in circles. Friends and family may try to help but their advice is often based on their own insecurities and fears. What I particularly like is that coaching is about listening. People often know what the answer is deep down. I listen, ask questions and suggest practical action steps. It's underlying things like bad habits and limiting thoughts and behaviour that stop people achieving.

I: Are you ever surprised about why people come to a life coach?

C: People want positive change and growth. I know informal mentoring used to go on in the workplace and it often led to promotion. That was efficient but now people change jobs and careers very quickly. The knock-on effect is they've lost consistent and constructive feedback from people who know them well. Generally, society's quite fragmented – traditional means of support are breaking down, so people need to re-evaluate their aims themselves. Some big companies realise this, though I didn't expect to be working within one, which I actually often do.

I: Jon, what do you think is most important to understand about relationships?

J: Relationships are complex and affect every aspect of life. The basic principle of building robust and lasting relationships starts with how you feel about yourself. Self-esteem creates success and failure in everything. I've seen loads of people trying to live up to some sort of unrealistic self-image so they can fulfil the expectations of those around them. This creates emotional turmoil, stress and anxiety. The values you live by define who you are, what you do, so if you don't understand your own core values, you don't know yourself. A life coach helps people set goals and progress – just like a physical personal trainer.

I: What do you both think should be the core message of a life coach?

J: I wouldn't define happiness as being rich, having material possessions or being in love. I'd say it's more being able to use your unique talents, feel you're making a positive contribution to something larger than yourself while not thinking about what you can't do; that's pretty crucial and puts people on the road to feeling a high degree of happiness and fulfilment.

C: It's true that people are rarely able to stop unhelpful thoughts but a life coach can show them how. Such thoughts can become addictive and that means there's no progress or good use of people's unique talents. That's what I make them focus on; without it, they won't make progress.

I: What's the most rewarding part of your job?

J: I love working with individuals and small groups but I also get satisfaction from running larger seminars – that's when I feel I touch lots of lives. It's a given that things you appreciate in life contribute to your happiness. I feel very fortunate when I help people appreciate themselves and realise their own worth.

C: I love what I do and I've met loads of interesting people, but seeing clients build up their own self-assurance is probably the greatest feeling; and it's an unexpected bonus that I also get to see things in myself that I hadn't fully realised.

I: Thank you both.

Unit 4, Listening, Activities 1 and 2

Track 07

Hi, everyone – my name's Susie, and I'm here to talk about the life of a ballet dancer.

I started dancing as a child at a local dance academy but then was lucky enough to be selected for a vocational dance school. My parents wanted me to have a second string to my bow, so I also studied accountancy, not as a long-term career plan but as a kind of insurance policy. The training was physically draining, and I nearly gave up several times, but luckily I persevered.

Aspiring young dancers who get into a prestigious ballet school imagine that'll set them up for life, but they're wrong. After I graduated I was unprepared for how difficult a professional contract was to come by. There's so much competition within the industry – everyone wants to be a star! But as with any job, you start on the bottom rung of the ladder – in my case in the back row of the chorus – but I learnt so much there, especially self-discipline and where my strengths lay.

What's a ballet dancer's everyday life like? It's often routine, some say mundane, but in my opinion striving for perfection makes it rewarding. Every day begins with a class involving repetition of exercises to warm up the body. We practise in front of a mirror – that's not vanity, it's so we can spot any minor mistakes and correct them. It's all about getting everything exactly right, and this can cause some to overextend. At first I was shocked by the number of supports some dancers were told to wear in class, but fear of injury is always there.

Men find jumping and lifting puts strain on their feet, so they get bad ankles. When dancing en pointe, a woman's entire body weight is on her toes, potentially causing broken bones and bleeding. Physiotherapists deal with these issues daily, and encourage us to work hard to overcome them. One described us as 'hard as nails', another as tough, but I prefer 'determined'. In the past, if a dancer was injured, they'd just go away and rest. Now we're taught to do proper rehabilitation, which I appreciate.

I'm often asked whether ballet dancers are born or made, and genetics are important – not everyone is cut out for the life of a dancer. These days, though, it's all about science. Many people don't realise the hours we spend in a gym being monitored by computers. It's almost clinical. Sports scientists study our training methods. I learnt early on that my problem was flexibility, and improving that has been a long and painful journey.

In my dance company we rehearse two or three different ballets simultaneously. This means we have to be on top form all the time, but I love the variety. I might be a peasant, a queen or a swan, and I must make the audience believe in me. When I spend so much time focusing on technique it's easy to downplay acting, which is crucial for selling the story.

Finally, what marks out successful dancers? It's that magical spark that some call musicality, others charisma but I think it's stage presence. I'm so lucky to be able to do it.

Unit 4, Speaking, Activities 1 and 2

Track 08

A: OK, shall we start by looking at relationships?

B: Yeah, we know a bit about that one, don't we?

A: It's something everyone is looking for, isn't it? The perfect relationship. But it can be so hard.

B: That's very true. It's all about compatibility, really, and how prepared you are to work hard at the relationship.

A: My feeling is that a lot of relationships fail because people don't give and take. You need to accept the other person's faults as well as their good points.

B: Absolutely. What about succeeding in education? That's about hard work, too. You have to be disciplined and focus on your exams and stuff. Sometimes people don't balance their academic studies and social life very well, and that can mean you don't concentrate enough on your work.

A: You mean, like too many parties? Also, you have to have the right approach and the right abilities. Some people want to get a degree but they're just not cut out for that type of studying.

B: I completely agree with you. A case in point is my brother; he thought he'd like to be a teacher but when it came to writing the assignments and developing lesson plans and so on, he realised it was beyond him. He's a successful businessman now!

Unit 5, Speaking, Activities 1 and 2

Track 09

I'd like to talk about these two pictures. In my opinion the people in both pictures are experiencing a feel-good moment. It's special for all of them but, obviously, for different reasons. The people are in contrasting locations, too. One looks as if it's a cold place, in a lovely mountainous area, whereas the other is obviously hot. In both pictures the place must be very quiet but in the second I imagine the woman herself must stay quiet so as not to disturb the animals. The woman in the first picture is probably with people we can't see, but from the way she looks, I'd say she's feeling proud about achieving something difficult. She certainly looks pretty pleased with herself. And this is just a guess but this might be the first time she's ever done anything so physically difficult, so it would be a very special moment for her. In the second picture the woman looks very happy and excited. I suppose she's always wanted to go on a safari like this. I can't be sure but I imagine this is probably a special moment for her because she's never seen such amazing animals close up before.

Unit 5, Listening Activity 1

Track 10

I = Interviewer J = Janet D = Dave

I: Today I'm talking to Janet Wilson and Dave Edwards, two comedians specialising in stand-up comedy. Janet, what does a stand-up comedian do, and how did you start?

J: I go into theatres, stand on stage and tell jokes! I'm completely alone – no actors. It's pretty scary, but that's part of the appeal. I write my own material, which can be demanding, and I love the creativity of it more than the actual writing process. I've always known I wanted to perform in one way or another. At school I had a ball acting in plays – I even joined a local drama club. Even then I preferred comedy roles, though I only found out about stand-up itself when I was taken to a show for a birthday treat. It seemed a logical extension of being an actor and I got hooked pretty quickly.

I: How did your parents react when you told them what you wanted to do?

J: My dad's into technology – he's a genius with computers. I'm a bit of a geek myself but I'm not particularly talented, though I write tech jokes in my material. I guess they hoped that I'd do something safe, like computing or medicine, but my academic record put paid to that! My brother's a lawyer and my parents are really proud of him. They've never been unsupportive of me but they'd just like to see a more clearly defined career structure – and the entertainment sector doesn't give that at all. Even people who make it big aren't necessarily working all the time.

I: Dave, how do you feel when you're actually performing?

D: It can be hard remembering everything as well as being flexible and responding to the audience, which is an important part of stand-up. They can be very demanding – they've paid money to be entertained and if I don't make them laugh, I've failed. As a comedian you have to understand that and not let it get under your skin. It's happened to me. What I thought were good jokes fell on stony ground and when there's silence instead of laughter

that's disconcerting. I want to spread joy, take people out of themselves, and it's pretty special when I can see I'm having that kind of effect on others. It's true that performing can be exhausting, even when everything's going well, but you're buoyed up by the audience.

- I:** So what do you think is most important for a successful comedian?
- D:** I'm happy with a good experience on stage. I'd love to win trophies, get recognised for my work, but there's more to it than that. As a creative person, I want to have a sense of progress. It's not just about comedy, it's about where you are in your life. You have to give all of yourself on stage, so you're very exposed and that has the potential to be hurtful. The bottom line is you need to be thick-skinned and confident in what you're doing but taking constructive comments on board. Take the rough with the smooth, in other words.
- I:** How do you both feel about the future of stand-up comedy?
- J:** It's definitely higher-profile than ever but there'll be more comedians trying to get work which will create extra pressure on all of us. It's a more viable career choice now – there are academic courses specialising in stand-up, so the genre could become even more specialised. I think it will always have a satirical edge to it, though.
- D:** It's high stakes, and understandably people get stressed. Though there may be more opportunities, it's vital to grab them with both hands because if you don't, someone else will. You must update your material constantly, but you can't let that unnerve you – you have to evolve however hard that might be.
- I:** Janet, how do you feel about your own future?
- J:** People often think comedians are misfits but I reckon that's an idea put about by comedians themselves, to make themselves sound interesting and boost audiences! I'm enjoying writing at the moment and I'd like to do more gigs. When you're over-specific about what you want to do, you risk setting yourself up for a fall if it doesn't happen. I don't make enough as a stand-up, which is something I have to address – I need to be realistic and bring in a regular wage for a while. I've got movies in my long-term sights. I've been looking at scripts, though I don't know how likely they are to materialise.
- I:** Thank you both for sharing those insights with us and good luck with your careers.

Unit 6, Listening, Activity 1

Track 11

1

- A:** People keep things that mean something to them. It may be a reminder of a special moment, a keepsake from a deceased relative, a picture of a place where something significant took place. It may be we feel these things somehow define us, but no-one else does. They mean nothing to other people.
- B:** I remember my aged aunt asking me if there was anything I wanted from her house. She had loads of things that meant a great deal to her. Embarrassingly, it was all stuff I'd think of as junk. But it was hard not to hurt her feelings, so I did choose something in the end.
- A:** Maybe the point is they make us feel part of our heritage. Certainly, that's the case with royalty, who have stuff going back hundreds of years – because it's part of their history – and they feel they have a responsibility to store it for future generations. And we all go to marvel at it in museums and galleries, so there's a point to it.
- B:** I reckon that each generation has its own priorities and they just don't fancy being coerced into keeping things that mean nothing to them.

2

- A:** Some people seem to have forgotten the key role museums play in preserving and cataloguing everything that's fundamental to our past and present – and they even provide pointers for the future. Students love them because they get a practical slant on subjects that otherwise they'd only read about. That advantage of museums shouldn't be underestimated or undervalued.
- B:** Be that as it may, it all comes at a cost and priorities are different nowadays. Museums may be important for those keen on history or anyone with a particular interest in a particular thing – like railways or dolls' houses. Of course, society would lose something if they weren't available but to be honest, they're a minority interest and therefore a luxury we can ill afford.
- A:** Museums are a highlight for tourists, who bring in revenue. They can enhance people's experiences of seeing new places and add to our understanding of how and why things have happened. We all have a responsibility to learn from the past. Obviously, not everything will appeal to everyone but that doesn't mean museums shouldn't be there.
- B:** People need to be trained to set them up and the payback isn't sufficient. If you think about it, technology's taken over – and it's more cost-effective than maintaining a stuffy old building!

3

- A:** Well, that was a bit of a slog! The story was so slow it almost stopped – it seemed to go on forever! I know that period of history was a bit complex and they had to get the facts across but they could have done better. After all the trailers and the hype, I expected better.
- B:** Facts? Is that what they were? I reckon most of it was fabricated; certainly, there were characters invented just to up the tension. That seems a cop-out – and worse than that, it's feeding false information to people who see it without knowing anything about what actually happened.
- A:** It's a film, not a history lesson – that seems a valid thing to do. Reading texts can be dry and kill interest in history. Making films at least brings it to life, though maybe not in this particular case! I'd rather see children in cinemas watching history unfold in front of them than not know anything about it. And the costumes and sense of the period were certainly on target.
- B:** What people see on screen is filtered through the consciousness of the director and the interpretation of the actors – it's not unbiased or objective.
- A:** It's sold as entertainment, not education – though in this case, it wasn't even that!

Unit 6, Speaking, Activity 2

Track 12

I'd like to look at these two pictures. The first one shows a woman on an archaeological site. She's crouching down over some notes and is either reading what she has written or checking some information. In the second picture it looks as if an athletics coach is monitoring a runner, making a note of how fast he can run. The coach is holding a stopwatch so that he can make sure the time is absolutely accurate.

Both pictures show different events being recorded but whereas the first could be an important public record of a historical finding, I imagine that the second one is a personal record so that in the future the coach and the runner can look back and check it to see how his performance has changed or improved. Regarding the accuracy of the recording, the historical information really needs to be totally reliable because the archaeologist is recording facts that people will need to know about in the future, and they will rely on the notes she makes. Although it's also vital for the athlete that the timings are spot-on because he may be aiming to break a record and so he must be completely sure exactly how fast he can run, the information is only for him and his coach, not for public record.

Unit 7, Listening, Activity 1

Track 13

I = Interviewer E = Emily J = James

- I:** Today I'm talking to entrepreneurs Emily Johnson and James Harris, who both started their own marketing business in their early twenties. Emily, what made you do that?
- E:** I didn't set out to be an entrepreneur; I kind of stumbled into it. I'd studied graphic design because I was pretty creative but when it came to finding a job, I wasn't getting anywhere. A mate said, 'You're good at marketing and selling. Why don't you try that?' So I did! Job satisfaction's more important than money. It doesn't seem like work when I'm doing something I enjoy or it feels worthwhile. Advertising fitted in with my creative side and marketing is an extension of that.
- I:** What's helped you most as a young entrepreneur?
- E:** Being a good communicator is up there – you have to sell yourself and your business. Of course, education influences who you are but it's just a grounding – experience in the business world is ultimately what counts. I did several internships for free when I was job hunting, and that type of experience is really helpful – it gears you up for the real world. It builds confidence, helps you see what the possibilities are. And I was pretty focused on making it work.
- I:** James, how did it feel when you actually started your own business?
- J:** You put yourself on the line and it's not easy to give up on security. I wasn't nervous about not cutting it, though that's the hurdle for most wannabe entrepreneurs. The way I came to terms with it was to take things one step at a time. I kind of knew there'd be ups and downs but you can't plan for how it feels when you're going through a low patch. When you're in a tight corner, you've only got yourself to fall back on and, surprisingly, I found that unpredictability thrilling. I do have to steel myself to learn from my mistakes, though.
- I:** So how is it for young entrepreneurs in a tough business environment?
- J:** Positive and negative – people admire your courage while having this stereotypical image of young people, which more often than not works against you. That's difficult, but the more you put yourself out there and people see what you can do, how determined you are, the more your name gets bandied about. Then age becomes a non-issue – people realise you've got recognition just because of your ability. That's crucial; we get clients through word of mouth and that can grow a business exponentially.
- I:** What do you enjoy most about running your own business, Emily?
- E:** You have to show the value of your business and how it benefits your client. My business is based on ideas, which makes running it more difficult than those with something concrete to sell. How do you evaluate an idea, know whether it's any good? But that's the buzz I get – seeing my ideas on a station wall, on TV. The best feeling, though, is when my work has helped a client achieve what they want. When they do well, so do I. I did think the hardest thing would be having the discipline because I needed to work nineteen-hour days. I got through it on my own but it was surprisingly easy because I loved every minute and I was doing it for myself.
- I:** What advice would you both give any aspiring young entrepreneur?
- E:** I wish I'd known how it could affect friendships – I realised I'd be giving up a big social life but I hadn't bargained on how it affected my relationships. You'd probably expect me to say, keep at it, but you have to believe that there's a point to it all and you're making a difference, so focus on that.

- J:** I'd say there's a world out there and conquering it is in your hands, so make yourself into something unique – don't accept second best. But your aim shouldn't be just getting rich – believe in what you're doing, make it count for something. Then it will give you more satisfaction than you can ever imagine. Oh, and enjoy it!

I: Thank you both ...

Unit 8, Listening, Activity 2

Track 14

I'm Peter and I'm here to talk about my work as a travel writer. It started by chance. I'd been on several short family holidays to Europe, America, Africa; then after college I took any job I could to save money for a few days in Singapore, followed by a six-month trek around Australia on my own – just for fun, but it got me hooked. I couldn't afford to do it in style, but being independent gave me options. I could choose where I stayed or how I travelled. I quickly discovered that the bonus of travelling alone was getting close to the local culture – I hated being what tour companies describe as 'protected' or 'sheltered' but I feel is 'narrow-minded'.

After that I checked out possibilities of travelling for a living, and a friend suggested travel writing. I found writing courses promising a life of leisure, free travel and non-stop holidays after qualifying. It sounded ideal and at the time I was excited by the concept, but I was probably immature. Once I actually became a writer I discovered that like anything in life, you must work hard and have a bit of luck.

Rather than diving in at the deep end by writing books, I decided articles would be the simplest way in. Being a rookie travel writer is hard; you can only spend a short time in a city or resort but you must learn everything about it. Consequently, you rush from restaurant to hotel, attraction to scenic landmark, making copious notes to expand into something coherent. Even after I got into what I call real travel writing, it's an uncertain way to earn a living. The biggest downside is there's no salary, plus you often have to pay for expenses up front and it can be months before a book's published and you get any royalties.

It's a competitive world and every casual traveller imagines they can make a contribution. Editors are swamped with stuff sent on spec by those hoping to pass on their own unique observations, but visiting an out-of-the-way destination and writing about it is no guarantee of publication. That's why many write online blogs instead.

It offends me how travel blogs are often just a way for people to vent their frustrations about their unpleasant journey or experience. A real travel writer filters out personal details – readers want to know your reaction to a place, not whether you were ill! They have to like and trust you, and through you engage with the place itself. That's where your skill comes in – ultimately, successful communication far outweighs your enthusiasm for travel or anything else.

If you're considering becoming a travel writer, think about why you want to do it, and be prepared for hardships. Sure, you need to be curious and perceptive, with an eye for the quirky and unusual, but that's not enough. Develop your own style and, primarily, never ignore feedback wherever it comes from. Oh, and meet deadlines or you'll get a reputation for tardiness!

Unit 9, Speaking, Activities 2 and 3

Track 15

These two pictures are quite different, although they both rely on an illusion to be successful. The first one shows a person performing on a ... sorry, it's gone – you know – the thing actors and dancers perform on? Anyway, it looks as if they're dancing in a classical ballet or something like that. A performance like this depends on the dancers managing to convince the audience that the world they're dancing in is real. This is quite difficult as ballet is very – what's the word? – stylised

– and because of that a lot of people just don't get it. The dancers need to have creativity – no, that's not the word I'm looking for; it's ... yes, talent – they have to have talent and imagination to create an illusion that becomes believable. That's really difficult for them to do, because dancing isn't something we do in real life, but if they're successful, the audience can enter that illusion and escape into a different world where dance and music combine to tell a story.

The second picture looks like it's a sort of machine where people can practise things before they do them in real life. It creates the illusion of the real situation, and in this case the golfer can hit the ball without having to walk miles to pick it up. I can't remember the exact word for the machine, but it's, like, when people are learning how to drive. The benefit they get is from practising in a safe situation so that they can do it well later. The machine – oh, what's it called? Never mind ... The machine is probably quite easy to create when you've got the right technology but in this situation it doesn't make playing golf any easier I imagine, because the golfer still has to have a lot of skill. It's vital to practise, though, and that's how he's benefiting from the illusion.

Unit 9, Listening, Activity 1

Track 16

- 1 I've always been an avid reader of psychology books and own many which have given me real insights and access to ideas that I often refer to. I'm involved in management training and I had a feeling that this would supplement my reading in that area and enhance my professional life. As I have no real psychology background and haven't studied it formally, it's inappropriate for me to comment on it technically but I'd imagine it would be rather simplistic for anyone wanting an in-depth specialist overview. It opens your eyes to different ways of looking at things, which can't be bad for people like me.
- 2 I haven't finished it yet but that's not because it's boring – rather the opposite, as I have to think carefully about each chapter and digest it. I probably wouldn't bother if it weren't part of my psychology module, though. I hadn't expected it but it's actually pretty accessible. There's a balance of technical information and fascinating details, and it's fairly readable. The examples given to support various facts are real – like, a baby's eyes have a fixed focus length that's exactly right for seeing its mother's face while it's feeding. That kind of thing's unusual in a science book but it brings it all to life.
- 3 Even for a complete novice, it's possible to understand and learn from this book. It wasn't on my university reading list nor had my tutor mentioned it but I came across a second-hand copy when I was browsing with a friend in a shop – it was cheap and on the flip test it looked worth reading, so I thought I'd give it a go. It gave me the impetus to track down other psychology books, which is why I reckon other people should try it. It isn't a textbook, so it's unsuitable for anyone wanting in-depth analysis. It's been written by someone who's knowledgeable and enthusiastic about his subject, which is great.
- 4 I studied psychology many years ago and when I saw a positive review about this book saying it was worth reading, I decided to buy it. I didn't find it at all dry or long-winded, and the lively style captivated me. I was surprised to discover just how far the field has changed and progressed in recent years and this should guarantee its appeal to ex-students like me, perhaps less to the uninformed reader with only a superficial interest. It's a field which has many facets to explore, and this brought back many memories and provided a few surprises.
- 5 I actually bought this for my student girlfriend but we'd been going through a bad patch and I wanted to share some of her interests to build bridges. As soon as I started reading, I was hooked. For anyone studying seriously, there are notes, suggestions for further reading and details about informative websites, which would probably be better for them than the book

itself – it's more – it's more for anyone with a passing interest in expanding their knowledge easily. Its main selling point is there's not too much jargon, which can be mind-bending and put people off. It's also related to everyday life. It's made me think about the way I deal with people!

Unit 10, Listening, Activities 1 and 2

Track 17

- 1 I grew up with animals – in fact, I lived on a farm – but choosing a pet for our children was a different ballgame. We did loads of research: books, internet, contacted pet owners to identify the pitfalls. It was a concern about taking care of the animal when we were away – we're inveterate travellers and I'd hate that to be curtailed – so it had to be something small. My kids are pretty thoughtless and I wondered whether it might encourage a sense of responsibility in them. Predictably, though, it's me who's ended up cleaning out the hamster's cage and making sure it's fed – it's really backfired on me. Now I'm stuck with it.
- 2 I wanted my kids to get the kind of pleasure I got from having a dog – though, actually, that wasn't an option as we live in a flat. They did some research into what they could have, then presented me with a choice. We're not that well off, so I was wary of anything that might run up bills by ruining furniture or needed the vet, so tropical fish were just the thing. They're fun to watch and though it's hard to believe, up to now I haven't had any problems with the kids forgetting to clean out the tank – they seem to love it.
- 3 I really struggle with doing exercise – it's my greatest bugbear – and as I get older, the weight seems to creep on. So when a friend suggested we got a dog so I'd have to take it for walks, it seemed worth considering, but the kids weren't keen – I think they realised they'd probably have the responsibility of doing the walking! We came to the conclusion together that we'd find an animal that would be pretty easy-care. My daughter wanted a cat and although there were costs involved, that wasn't an issue for me. And at least it walks itself, though the neighbours don't always like it!
- 4 The impetus came from the children – they'd been on about having a pet for ages, then when their closest friends got one, well, that caused huge arguments in our house! I didn't want the hassle some pets would cause, so I was strongly against it. But the final push stemmed from some classwork they had on birds and I felt I should support them. I'm prepared to admit now that my fears were unfounded. I feel bad about what I said because it's worked out for us. The parrot's pretty and the kids enjoy stuff like cleaning the cage – I don't have to do anything.
- 5 The great outdoors has always been my big thing. I've tried to instil it in the kids – not easy! They're more the 'read-about-it-on-the-tablet' types. I thought it would encourage them to get out into the countryside – a dog needs that – but it was me that ended up doing it. Not that I mind – I work from home and it gives me an excuse to get out without having to justify it. It was a failure as far as my initial plan was concerned, though. Sure, the kids love the dog and on some level they're glad he's there but they're still attached to their tablets!

Unit 10, Speaking, Activity 1

Track 18

- 1
- A: For a marriage to succeed, I'd say you need to have a lot of common interests.
- B: I agree up to a point, but I think having different hobbies can be refreshing in a way.

2

A: I think in a successful business partnership, both partners need to have different roles.

B: That may well be so, but don't you think they also need to have the same outlook and ambitions?

3

A: In a speaking test, I think it's important to have a partner who has the same sort of personality as you do.

B: I'm not entirely convinced. Suppose you get two very strong personalities together, who just keep interrupting each other all the time?

4

A: If you look at successful, famous comedy acts from the past, there's usually one partner who seems quite serious while the other one is the real funny man.

B: Isn't it sometimes the case that the serious one is really the brains behind the partnership?

5

A: To work together in a successful coalition, surely, the politicians have to have a mutual respect for each other and at least support each other in public.

B: But that is unlikely to hold true in all cases. If one member of the coalition disagrees really strongly with something, then it would be hard to stay quiet!

A: I dare say you're right but then that would risk the coalition and be against his best interests, don't you think?

Unit 10, Speaking, Activity 2

Track 19

A: Well, that's a tricky one, isn't it? As we said, I think all of them present difficulties. Which would you say is the most difficult to make succeed?

B: Yes, it's not an easy choice. There are challenges in all the types of partnerships. I imagine in the short term a coalition could well be the hardest to make succeed because usually the politicians have different principles and politics from each other. Working together must be very hard!

A: You're so right! They have to swallow their pride a bit and make compromises. But if we're thinking long term, I guess the most difficult of these has got to be a marriage!

B: Yes, there are so many pressures when two people get married, it's very easy for the marriage to fail. It's all a matter of give and take, isn't it?

A: Yes! That's the same for all partnerships, of course, but in the long run, I think it's hardest to make a marriage work well.

B: I'm with you there. Let's go for that.

Unit 11, Listening, Activity 1

Track 20

I = Interviewer K = Karen J = Jason

I: We're talking to Karen Simpson and Jason Todd, fashion designers promoting handmade eco-fashion. Karen, a controversial question: it's sometimes said that consumers of fashion are just obsessed with their appearance. What's your take on that?

K: Well, there are many things involved in fashion and that's why people love it – self-esteem and image, certainly, but also fun. I got into it after reading my sister's fashion magazines and yes, I was knocked out by those beautiful pictures. But I grew up in the country; my family drummed environmental responsibility into me but I realised that wasn't the case for many people. After I went

into fashion design, I wanted to promote those values, show it was possible to blend a beautiful appearance with an underlying responsible approach.

I: Jason, is it easy combining an ethical approach with fashion design?

J: There's a lot to consider. I aim to design clothes from materials that won't run down any non-renewable resources but it's important to also make sure the process of producing them doesn't cause pollution in itself. Then there's what happens when clothes are finished with – whether throwing them away harms the environment. It's not how everyone in the industry thinks and I'm not sure I got it myself at first. I want to make people look good but didn't realise how much of an uphill struggle it would be to achieve this while making them environmentally aware at the same time.

I: What would you both say about your design style? Jason?

J: I'm pretty hard-boiled as a person and I've had my fair share of setbacks. I've tried to turn those to my advantage – I expect a lot of myself and what I can achieve, and push myself creatively. My designs embody where I'm at in terms of the look I want and the materials I use, and they stand out. I'm always true to what I believe in.

K: I get inspiration from travelling, though I put my own take on what I find. I mix different traditions to make something unique and I think outside the box – like the garment that can be worn in different ways depending on how it's put on. That saves people money 'cos they buy fewer clothes! But I do have an identifiable look underlying all my designs so people know what they're getting with me.

I: Karen, what's the priority in your designs?

K: I design for someone who stands out from the crowd and isn't frightened of expressing themselves or standing up for their principles. My clothes give confidence. For some designers, the bottom line's financial and so they kowtow to the mass market – their designs don't push the envelope, they avoid risks. I show it's not impossible to be the height of fashion while sticking to my core values. And it's not just eyewash – I hate waste, so I use recycled materials – it's plain common sense, not just ecologically responsible.

I: Jason, as a creative designer, how do you feel about the practical side of production?

J: When I start designing, I get my head into colours, fabrics, the look I want. That's creative and takes ages. The final designs are often nothing like my first ideas 'cos I chop and change and get input from other people. I stick to my requirements of low-impact clothes in spite of any market pressures, but it's an evolving process. I'm pretty driven, which means I'm heavily involved in it all and I get a real kick from seeing my abstract concepts take shape.

I: Finally, how do you both see the future?

K: I guess it's obvious – people are seeing our throwaway society and realising that there is a way of getting what you want without destroying anything. That probably sounds totally idealistic but I'm hopeful. It's not plain sailing, and I know it'll be challenging – but this is not just happening in fashion, it's happening in other areas, too.

J: People sometimes describe so-called green fashion as unattractive but that perception needs addressing. I'd love to sell huge numbers of clothes but not at the expense of what I believe in, and that'll be tough. Clearly, anything handmade shows values like quality, tradition and attention to detail, though, of course, people need to accept that it means it's costly, which they don't want.

I: Karen and Jason, thanks for your time!

Unit 11, Speaking, Activity 2

Track 21

Right, I'd like to discuss these pictures – the one with the woman getting the presents and the footballers. Obviously, in both the pictures the people are feeling strongly about something but they're in very different situations and have very different feelings.

The people in the first picture are enjoying a special moment, and they all seem to be very happy because they're laughing, whereas there's no doubt that the footballers have very negative feelings. They're certainly not laughing!

The people in the first picture are very excited to see the woman happy. I think they're her family and maybe it's her birthday and they've been planning to give her a surprise for a long time. They're glad that it's turned out to be a success, and she's feeling happy that her family have been so thoughtful.

Conversely, the footballers are showing completely different emotions. They both look angry, even aggressive, and the referee is trying to stop them having a fight. Maybe the one in green and yellow kicked the other one, or perhaps tried to push him out of the way and he didn't like it. I'm convinced that it'll be difficult to calm them down, but in a competitive game like football emotions are often very intense but quite short-lived. I suppose the referee will sort everything out.

Unit 12, Listening, Activity 1

Track 22

Hi, I'm Tony and I'm here to talk about being a toy inventor. Although I never studied design or technology, I've always come up with out-of-the-box ideas. Like, while I was at school, I wrote stories for comics, cartoon captions and, most bizarrely, jokes for radio. I think I've got the knack of seeing the funny side!

Toys have always been my thing – how they're designed and put together and what's actually enjoyable about them. I get a buzz from trying to work something out – other people call it problem-solving or lateral thinking but I regard it as a puzzle. My breakthrough came about by chance, though. I was watching a game of badminton when I started thinking about different ways a shuttlecock moves. Then I thought of this table-top game where you punch it forward not with a racquet but with a glove. I wanted to make loads of money, so I looked on the net for big companies I thought might take it up.

The people at the first company were friendly and made positive comments but they were worried about finance and my idea didn't really suit their brand image. They recommended a different company, and the people there were keen to adopt my prototype and then it all kicked off. I'm now a freelance inventor but I still send my ideas to different manufacturers and there are no guarantees they'll be accepted. It's not what I'd call a secure existence!

You're all looking for unusual careers like mine, so here are some things I've learnt. Don't give up if success doesn't come immediately. I know some incredibly creative people who throw in the towel at the first rejection – I don't get that at all. If I get turned down, I revisit it immediately – come at it from a different angle.

I realise you need to bounce ideas off people who should provide some support and back-up, but more crucially, honesty – I'm certain that's vital if the feedback is to be of any practical use. Telling white lies isn't helpful.

Check out what companies specialise in. It may seem obvious but people often don't – they just go for a name they know, which could mean you start off on the wrong foot. Companies don't want you to submit the same idea several times, however much you might have amended it. They won't necessarily give advice or make suggestions but should provide feedback on why they've turned you down; if not, request it – though sometimes you may have to accept that an apparently good idea isn't going to work.

Any company will take time to assess a new idea – whether it's practicable, functional or saleable. You must be determined but there's a difference between persistence and making a nuisance of yourself. First and foremost you need patience. If they get annoyed, they'll think it's easier to work with someone else.

It's a fascinating job and in the modern world of digital games it may seem old-fashioned, but there's a market out there and it's a creative and exciting job to do. So ... any questions?

Practice test, Listening Part 1

Track 23

1

- A:** People say we don't need much of an attention span these days but if you look at something like, say, a TV series, and there are different branches of the story to keep up with over a long period, only being able to concentrate for a short time is going to be pretty useless! Think about the number of characters you have to remember – and that's without the complexities of the plot!
- B:** But longer series are great for character development – and writers seem to be moving towards longer books, too. They can really explore a character and engage readers – that's why they're on the up.
- A:** It's true that short stories aren't that popular. Going back to attention spans, you'd think if people really had difficulty concentrating, they'd choose to read those, not longer books, which is not actually the case.
- B:** It's a shame they don't though. I think sometimes one page can say what a whole novel takes about 400 to do! There's irrelevant detail in a novel, too, which really irritates me.
- A:** Ironically, something short needs even more attention because it isn't all spelt out for us, so we need to think about it more.

2

- A:** We're all using digital technology more these days but it can be isolating in spite of the fact that we use it for social networking. So, when it comes to playing games, it's understandable that digital multiplayer games are featuring more and more. I feel strongly that even this can't replace the personal connection.
- B:** Well, we're living in an age where digital information networks get into every aspect of our lives. In a way, games are a cultural reflection of this. Playing against another person lets you try something out, play with cause and effect in a safe environment – no personal contact. In that sense, digital games are helpful.
- A:** People want leisure activities that let them actively interact. I think board games fulfil our need for the face-to-face contact we used to have. With board games we're doing something but also connecting with each other on a personal level, and so they're becoming popular again.
- B:** But you have to look at this surge in the popularity of board games in context. There's a big retro-trend going on now – you know, like, with clothes and even vinyl records! So it's also true that most keen digital games players are board game enthusiasts. It's niche, but significant.

3

- A:** Technology is generally used for archiving information. There's this idea that it's part of a long progression which began with the first written records on stone tablets and continued developing without a hitch to the present day's sophisticated level of storing data, whereas, in fact, it can actually be compared to the science of biology, which had ups and downs and many species along the way simply died off and never made it.
- B:** Archivists joke about how digital information either lasts forever or five years, whichever comes first. What they mean is, it's ridiculously intricate because formats change, operating systems get updated and the hardware running those systems becomes outdated and unusable.

A: So over the long term, things we'd like to pass on from now might actually be more difficult for future generations to access than, for example, finding out about a dead civilisation from actual relics.

B: We can certainly learn a lot about past civilisations simply by digging up clay tablets, but there's the possibility of an enormous gap in history covering the period from the rise of the internet to whenever we reach a point in the future where methods of archiving are fixed and accessible.

A: It's still important to archive, though!

Practice test, Listening Part 2

Track 24

Hi, everyone! I'm Carol, and I'm here to talk about making lifestyle changes and how I turned my life around. After university, I'd hoped to do something intellectually challenging that would also get me into the high life. My friends defined success as owning possessions but though I kind of went along with that, it was the sense of achievement that I was aiming for. Working in finance seemed ideal. But the ethical side of it all bothered me. I also turned into a clock-watcher because the job wasn't really demanding and a commuter; that was the biggest downside as it took hours every day!

One day, a friend bought me a birthday present that changed everything. It wasn't a physical present – it was an experience, which is quite a common type of present in the city. My experience was becoming a zookeeper for a day. I suspect that far from being thoughtful, my friend thought it would be a joke, but I got to see what went on behind the scenes and the complexities of looking after exotic animals. Far from boring, or mundane, it looked so worthwhile and, suddenly, my own job seemed pointless. I kept my feelings to myself – people might have thought I was crazy! But when I saw a vacancy for a zookeeper, I went for it. I had zero qualifications, no experience but loads of enthusiasm, which is what may have swung it for me at the interview.

The full training took two years and now I'm in charge of the lions, tigers and wolves. It's definitely not glamorous – you have to muck in, get dirty, work all hours in all weathers. A typical day starts with cleaning cages and checking on the welfare of the animals. It gets to me if I hear visitors say the animals are cute but it's a shame they're smelly – I take pride in making sure that's not the case!

There are strict safety standards – crucial, given the wild animals I work with! They're shut away while I'm in their cages but I check the lock on the door many times while I'm in there – I still get shivers when I first go inside. They're not pets and although they know me, they could still attack. I can identify a shift in their moods from their behaviour. That protects me.

People ask about the morality of zoos. Well, keeping animals in compounds isn't ideal, but we're protecting endangered species – a zoo could be their last refuge. We try to make their lives as natural as possible. Even though it's tempting, I never mollycoddle cubs or meddle with the way family groups interact among themselves. I'm very emotionally involved, which makes this more rewarding than anything I've done before.

I do miss city life and my colleagues but I'm healthier doing a physical job, though I never get the chance to dress up in smart clothes – my hands and nails are a real mess!

Practice test, Listening Part 3

Track 25

I = Interviewer Ji = Jim Je = Jenny

I: Today we're talking to two voice actors, Jim Horton and Jenny Simmons. Jim, tell us what you do and how you feel about it.

Ji: Hi! I provide voices for animated characters in films and video games. I also work in radio dramas and commercials. Sometimes it's just speaking but there can also be singing. I'm a workaholic,

which means I accept pretty much everything I'm offered – my personal life takes a back seat, though I don't mind that. I'm very creative and I love variety. Of course, some of what I do's just to pay bills – like recording samples for automated announcements in stations. That's mundane, even though I don't actually have to record millions of different things! Each announcement is assembled from fragments, thank goodness.

I: Jenny, you trained as a regular actor. What was hardest for you about changing to voice-overs?

Je: I was at drama school when a director of an animated film invited me to do some stuff with him. I had to work on the technical aspects of dubbing, like synchronising, but I used my overall acting skills and followed my instincts. It's about having a clear voice in the recording studio; getting your feelings across through that alone. But the greatest challenge is adjusting to the fact that there isn't any extended practice beforehand which would let you create a character – it's all very quick. It's demanding even though it's just another aspect of theatre work.

I: How do you start working on a new project, Jim?

Ji: Generally, I get the picture of my character with a description and synopsis of the plot. I establish something I can work with and the director hones that, suggests things, maybe gets me to try something different, which can be annoying. There are only a certain number of voices anyone can do and the skill is to portray a different character even though the voice may be similar. I often get offered the kind of work I've done before, which is fun, but stuff I don't normally get to do is most thrilling because it's scary! I guess any acting's like that.

I: How do you both go about portraying a character?

Je: When I first started, I had to work at it – establish my limitations and set aims – but as I go along, I find different nuances in my voice that I can use to create different characters. Sometimes when I go into the recording studio, it just happens; but even then it has to have the ring of truth. The process can be quite organic.

Ji: There's a lot of experimenting, trying different things out, and everyone joins in with this but as long as you're coming from your own experience and it's believable, you'll get your character across. I love coming up with something surprising, though if it's rejected, I don't take it personally!

I: Jim, you work on video games – how does that compare with animated films?

Ji: They pay quite well but in many ways they're harder – there's so much crammed into a short time. There are different issues – like, if it's a fighting game, you can't fake anything, you have to really yell. The script looks completely different, too – it's more like a spreadsheet with cues. You don't get to see any animation and it's timed, so you might have to scream for exactly three seconds. That might not seem much, but you try it! Then you have to do it in different ways and it might be followed by shouting. You certainly need throat sweets afterwards!

I: What's your advice for anyone hoping to become a voice actor?

Je: The most popular route is going to drama school, studying improvisation, like me, and I can't fault that. You could find someone to help you apply for auditions. I might recommend getting an agent quite early on, to provide support, though that's a matter of preference.

Ji: You must have a natural quality in your voice that directors identify and people respond to – though you can't learn that. Voiceovers require sophisticated skills, so getting the right kind of basic drama training is really the bottom line. And, of course, don't give up – but that goes without saying.

I: Thanks, both of you!

Practice test, Listening Part 4

Track 26

- 1 This competition was a multi-sport race – running, kayaking, swimming and cycling, in some of Australia’s most spectacular places. I’d wanted to do something similar for a while – although I’m very fit, I wanted a challenge, though I wasn’t sure what. This wasn’t on my radar initially, though I subsequently looked it up on the website when a friend mentioned it in passing. The beautiful pictures got me hooked. It wasn’t all easy, especially as I’m not a strong swimmer and the water there’s famous for sharks and rip tides – pretty scary and certainly challenging! The upside was the people, who I’ll stay in touch with for a long time to come.
- 2 I’ve always been scared of heights, though I’ve never chosen to confront it head-on – I haven’t felt the need. When I got the chance to go climbing in the Dolomites, it seemed like something too good to miss – at least that’s what my friend said! The system of paths, cables and ladders in this place gave novice climbers like me the chance to get to the top of some of the peaks, and it was good being part of a group, even though there was a prize for the fastest climber. Unexpectedly, I revelled in honing the technique of climbing and I want to progress with that – a bit of a surprise, really.
- 3 I took part in a car rally across the desert – madness, you might say! We raced across the red sands at high speeds in searing heat – I actually lost a lot of weight, which hadn’t been my intention! It was frightening at times but I found an inner determination I didn’t know was there. I’m never happier than mucking around with engines – I’ve done that in my spare time all my life, and collected old cars – so that was probably why I agreed; oh, and I suppose, the reward – though that didn’t lead anywhere – shame we came twenty-fourth!
- 4 I cycle to work every day, mostly because it keeps me fit, though I do enjoy it. I went in for this twenty-four-hour bike race in America. It was in a beautiful desert region that to describe as tough would be an understatement, and I have no real idea how I got involved other than the attraction of the idea that the winner got a large cheque, which was most appealing! Sleep deprivation was the main difficulty and there were some highly technical and scary ascents and descents, which I hadn’t fully realised, so I dismounted for the parts where I lost my nerve. I actually found that a salutary life lesson!
- 5 My mate had this small light plane and offered me the chance to learn to fly it – for a financial investment, of course! I decided something was missing in my life – that it was too run of the mill, and others seemed to have so much more. I opted in, even though I was scared of heights and, at first, this was an issue. I soon got used to it and we competed in this long-distance flying race. We didn’t win, but one thing I had to do was become proficient in weather forecasting – it’s fascinating and has opened up a whole new aspect of life.

Practice test, Speaking Part 1

Track 27

First of all we’d like to know something about you. Where are you from?
What do you do there?
How long have you been learning English?
What do you use the internet for most?
Who are you most like in your family?
What has been your most interesting holiday so far?
What kind of career would you really like to follow?
Where do you see yourself in ten years’ time?

Practice test, Speaking Part 2

Track 28

In this part of the test I’m going to give each of you three pictures. I’d like you to talk about two of them on your own for about a minute, and also to answer a question briefly about your partner’s pictures.

Candidate A, it’s your turn first. Here are your pictures. They show people studying in different places. I’d like you to compare two of the pictures and say why the people might have chosen to study in these different places and what difficulties they might have. All right?

Thank you. Candidate B, which place do you think presents the greatest challenge to the people studying?

Thank you. Now, Candidate B, here are your pictures. They show people taking part in different competitions. I’d like you to compare two of the pictures and say why the people might have chosen to enter these competitions and how difficult it might be to prepare for them. All right?

Thank you. Candidate A, which competition do you think would be most satisfying to win?

Thank you.

Practice test, Speaking Part 3

Track 29

Now I’d like you to talk about something together for about two minutes. Here are some things that many people want to achieve in their lives and a question for you to discuss. First you have some time to look at the task.

Now, talk to each other about why many people want to achieve these things in their lives. All right? Could you start now, please?

Thank you. Now you have about a minute to decide which achievement would make most people proud.

Thank you.

Practice test, Speaking Part 4

Track 30

Some people say that we are too materialistic nowadays. What do you think?

How much influence do you think advertising and the media have on people’s aspirations?

Do you think that celebrity culture has a positive or negative effect on people? Why?

Some people say that being happy is more important than earning a lot of money. What do you think?

How important is it for people to have experience of the arts like music and theatre?

Do you think that technology improves our lives or makes it worse?

Thank you. That is the end of the test.

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