

Английский язык, 9 – 11 классы, муниципальный этап
Тексты для аудирования

(включить запись)

Look at Task 1.

You'll hear a part of a radio programme on which a reviewer talks about a newly published book about a woman called Natalie Hardcastle. For questions complete the sentences.

You will hear the recording twice.

You now have 45 seconds to look at Task 1.

Pause 45 seconds

Tone

This account of the life of Natalie Hardcastle begins with Natalie and her three young sons left alone on the isolated Australian ranch. Their house is a wooden hut with a hole in the roof, there is no running water or electricity, and there are no neighbours for 100 miles in any direction. More importantly, there is no husband to support the family. This is the low point in Natalie's fortunes, and the real story of her biography lies in how she and her sons come in terms with the disaster which life and her husband deal out to them.

At intervals throughout the book, we're told how she came to be in this position. We learn of her childhood and youth in 1950s Sydney, about her dream of Olympic fame, and about the riding accident which crushed her ankle and, with it, all her hopes of sporting achievement. We learn, too, of her meeting with Tony Hardcastle, a wealthy businessman and racing driver. He sweeps her off her feet and into marriage. Only then do we learn, as she learns, of the flaws in his character, with the risky business ventures he favours, which lead to financial disaster and cause her to be stranded, penniless, in the Australian outback.

Tony leaves her to restart his racing career in Europe, which isn't a success. He turns to Australia but not to Natalie. At this point Natalie decides to try to keep the family together and start her own business venture. She sets up a travelling clothes shop and beauty parlour – in a van! She converts an old delivery van and buys clothes from Sydney. Travelling at the weekends, with her children sleeping in the back, she visits small outback towns where the women greet her enthusiastically – they've never had these luxuries before. At last Natalie begins to make some money, but then disaster strikes. Tony comes back and forbids her to continue her business. Soon the money she's saved is gone and her financial problems return.

Ordinary mortals might have given up at this stage, but not Natalie Hardcastle. Of course there are moments when she feels depressed and when she lies awake at night worrying about how she is going to pay the bills. But she's a fighter who refuses to give in to misfortune. Enough drama for one life, you might think, but fate and Tony Hardcastle haven't finished with her yet. Financial disaster hasn't dimmed her husband's taste for losing money. His sudden (but one suspects richly deserved) death in a barroom fight uncovers huge debts, and relatives keen to take every penny from his estate, even if it leaves his family starving. Hard work, along with good luck and a surprise win in the state lottery, gives her time to keep the creditors at bay until she can afford to pay them off.

It's a remarkable story, and one that made me look at my own duller, but far safer husband in an altogether more positive light.

Pause 10 seconds

Now you'll hear Task 1 again.

Tone

Repeat Task 1.

Pause 5 seconds.

That's the end of Task 1.

Now turn to Task 2.

You'll hear a young man called Simon talking about the 'gap year' he took after finishing secondary school. For questions choose the best answer A, B or C.

You will hear the recording twice.

You now have 1 minute to look at Task 2.

Pause 1 minute.

Tone

I decided I would take a gap year when I was at my last year of secondary school. My parents wanted me to go straight to university – they were keen for me to get qualified and start on a career. But I didn't want that. I was only eighteen and I knew that once I started my profession I'd be stuck there until I retired, when I'm 65 or even 70 – who knows what the law will be by then?

I also felt I should get some experience of life, away from everything I'd ever known, you know, school and family. I thought that if I learnt to stand on my own two feet, I'd be able to cope with university better and get more out of my time there. I've heard that some students are so shocked by the changes in their lifestyle when they leave home that they give up university after only a month or two. I didn't want to risk that happening to me. So, I borrowed lots of travel books from the library and started to plan my special year. Whenever I got stressed with my school work I would look at the programme I'd made and dream of all the countries I was going to see. It kept me going and really encouraged me to work hard – it's good to have goals and aims in life, I think it gives you a purpose. Of course all this would cost me money, even if I stayed in the most basic of hotels and travelled by bus or train, not by plane, so I started to look for jobs I could do on my way round the world, and that's how I financed my tour – by going to the countries where I could get employment.

I started off in September, after I'd got my exam results, and I went to pick fruit in France. Not very far and not very unusual, you may think, but I had a fabulous time. I met loads of other gap year students and in just a month I brushed up my French, which proved to be useful when I got to Vietnam later in the year. Then I moved to Greece, where I worked in a bar on an island, and then on to South Africa, where I got a job on a farm. That was amazing – I learnt so much about working the land. And the animals I saw – ones I'd only ever seen in a zoo before. After that I travelled in the Far East as a tourist, so by the time I reached Australia I was broke. As the language was no problem I easily found two jobs, working as a waiter at night and dog-walking by day. When I left there I missed my four-legged friends. I spent the next three months in the United States and Brazil before coming home.

My friends were amazed at how I'd changed – I'd become more confident and I'd changed physically, much thinner. That was because of all that hard work I'd done, and sometimes I had been too poor to buy much food! But it had been the most amazing year of my life – and life-changing. During the year I'd grown to love animals so much I decided to give up my plan to go to university and become a farmer. My parents were so upset at first, but now they can see I'm happier than I've ever been. I'd recommend a gap year to anyone – you just never know how it'll turn out!

Pause 10 seconds

Now you'll hear Task 2 again.

Tone

Repeat Task 2.

Pause 5 seconds.

That's the end of Task 2.

(ВЫКЛЮЧИТЬ ЗАПИСЬ)

You now have 5 minutes to check and copy your answers onto the answer sheet.

That is the end of the listening tasks. The other task is Reading.