

Transcripts

Task 1

Magda: So, did you see the flat?

Sarah: Yeah, it's great...really spacious, really light, good location near a tube station – and not too expensive!

Magda: Sounds perfect. There's got to be a catch...

Sarah: Well, Fadi's cousin is the owner...

Magda: That's not a problem, is it?

Sarah: No...no, I don't think so...He seems ok...

Magda: You don't sound sure...

Sarah: No, really, he's ok. And I really need a new place!

Magda: So you think you'll move in?

Sarah: Yeah, certainly. Already decided...I move in on Saturday!

Magda: Great!

Johnny: Hi! Magda and

Sarah: Hi there Johnny! Come and have a seat! How's it going?

Johnny: Great thanks...just waiting for Harry.

Sarah: You two are hanging out together all the time at the moment...

Johnny: We're good mates, we get on really well...

Magda: Isn't Harry working for you as well now?

Johnny: No!!! He's working with me, not for me...there's a very big difference!

Magda: What's that?

Johnny: Well, if he was working 'for' me, that means I'd be his boss! But he's working 'with' me, which means that we work for the same company, that's all.

Magda: I'm not sure I'd want to be in the same office as you and Harry! What do you do, talk about football all the time?

Johnny: No! We don't even work in the same office!

Magda: Sorry, only joking...I didn't mean to be rude, but I think it's a good idea to keep friends and work separate...

Sarah: Mmm, I agree...

Johnny: You could be right – but we don't actually work together closely. It's a big company you know, and Harry works on the IT side. I'm at the front of the operation – searching out opportunities, winning contracts, clinching deals...

Magda: Alright for you then!

Johnny: I'll be rich in three years...

Magda: That's what you always say! There are more important things in life than money, you know!

Sarah: Magda, don't worry...not all Chinese people are like that. We don't only care about money!

Johnny: Maybe, but all I mean is, well, I know where I'm going...

Magda: Lucky you...I wish I did...I'm about to finish my degree and haven't got anything lined up for the future yet...

Sarah: Oh dear...nothing at all?

Magda: Well, I've got an interview with a small architect's practice next week...

Sarah: That's great news! Well done!

Magda: Yeah...but...I'm really worried about it! I've never done a job interview before. Can you give me some advice?

Sarah: Erm...I guess I could help...I've done one or two interviews...

Johnny: I'll tell you all you need to know! Don't worry. Just listen to me, take my advice and you'll definitely get the job!

Magda: Oh, er, well, great...

Johnny: But I can't tell you now...got to go...

Sarah: Where are you off to in such a hurry?

Johnny: Got an appointment with the boys, haven't I? Fadi and Harry - we're all playing football this evening. Bye!

Sarah: Bye!!

Task 2

Presenter: Art and Business is an organisation that develops creative partnerships between business and the arts. Peter Jones is going to talk about the company's ideas and tell us about some of their success stories.

Peter, maybe you could begin by telling our listeners why Art and Business was created?

Peter Jones: Well, in the twenty-first century productivity is no longer a matter of machines. The success of a company depends on its people and on the creativity of its people. It makes sense that the way to increase productivity is to stimulate creativity.

Presenter: And what better way to stimulate creativity than through reading books.

Peter Jones: Exactly. Every reader knows that a good book can stimulate the imagination and the intellect, get you thinking along lines you might not have thought of before, open up new worlds.

Presenter: So, have you had any help in setting up the project?

Peter Jones: Yes. The London Libraries Agency and an organisation called The Reading Partnership work with us on this project. We are trying to use the power of the written word to motivate staff in the workplace. In a recent survey seven hundred business leaders were asked which book had inspired them and had a positive influence on their career. They were able to choose any kind of book, any kind at all. Only about 40% chose a business book. Most people chose a work of fiction – a novel, a play or even poetry.

Presenter: How can reading help somebody to become a more creative worker?

Peter Jones: Successful managers need to be well-rounded people. They need active imaginations. When they interpret fictional scenarios, they are using their creativity. Readers combine imaginative skills with critical and analytical skills.

Presenter: Are we talking about the right and left sides of the brain?

Peter Jones: Yes. Our logical left side of the brain interprets the language of a book. The creative right side looks at the forms of expression. The left side analyses the plot while the right side is more interested in the relationships between characters – the emotional aspects.

Presenter: How does this transfer to the world of business?

Peter Jones: Creative ideas make businesses more competitive. Shared reading experiences improve communication and morale at work.

Presenter: Can you give listeners some examples of how this scheme has been brought successfully into the workplace?

Peter Jones: Employees at WH Smith have stuck poems and quotations above their desks for inspiration.

Presenter: Well, WH Smith deals in books. What about other examples?

Peter Jones: The telecommunications company Orange set up a project called ‘Talk Books at Work’. They discovered that encouraging employees to read helped them to develop their linguistic and interpersonal skills. Marks and Spencer has set up reading groups at work. The groups cut across the usual hierarchies and working relationships have improved greatly.

Task 3

Hello. I’m going to talk about British festivals. I’m sure you’ve heard about the Notting Hill Carnival in London and the Edinburgh Festival, but today we’re going to look at a lot more that you might not know about. Actually, a lot of these are not exactly festivals, but strange races or competitions. Some of them are ancient and some are modern.

So, let’s start in January in the north of Scotland with the Burning of the Clavie. This is a whisky barrel which is set alight then carried through the streets as a bonfire. It’s an ancient tradition which always takes place on 11th of January, the first day of the year, according to an older form of the calendar. The bonfire brings good luck for the coming year and people used to keep bits of burnt wood as protection against evil spirits. At the end of January, even further north, in the Shetland Islands, there’s another fire festival, the Up Helly Aa. This seems like an ancient festival, but has actually only been going for about 130 years – well, it is fairly old, I suppose. People carry fire-lit torches and a Viking boat through the streets, then set fire to the boat. There’s lots of dancing; it’s good fun.

Now to the north of England. On Shrove Tuesday in February, otherwise known as Pancake Day, a special Pancake Bell is rung in Scarborough. Everyone goes down to the road next to the beach where they skip – yep, they jump over long ropes, up to fifteen people to one rope. And they have pancake races. This is quite common in the UK – running with a frying pan and tossing a pancake at the same time.

Another kind of race takes place in spring – cheese rolling. In Gloucestershire, in the south-west of England, round cheeses in round boxes are sent rolling down a hill and people run after them and try and catch them. The hill is very steep, so people often fall over – if you take part in this you need to be very fit and wear your oldest jeans. Nowadays this strange custom attracts visitors from all over the world, but the people from the local village are usually the ones who catch the cheese.

From people-racing, to animals, very tiny animals. World Championship Snail Racing takes place in a village in Norfolk. The snails have to race from an inner circle to an outer circle and the winner gets a lot of lettuce. There’s a party and barbecue for the snail owners and observers. This custom began in the 1960s after a local man saw something similar in France. In the UK we don’t eat snails, by the way.

More fun, in my opinion, are the onion-eating contest, also in Gloucestershire – a race to finish eating a raw onion – and the Black Pudding Throwing Championship, in Lancashire. Black puddings are like big sausages made mainly from dried blood. Contestants bowl three black puddings each at 21 Yorkshire puddings set on a six-metre platform; the winner is the one who knocks down the most. Another fun contest takes place in September at the Egremont Crab Fair in Cumbria in the north of England. The World Gurning Championship is a competition to pull the ugliest face. It sounds ridiculous but this is an ancient British tradition and the Crab Fair itself dates back to 1267. The man who won the title of best gurner the most in recent years had all his teeth taken out so he could make terrible faces more easily.

Finally, let's go back to the south of England. In Brighton there's a Burning the Clocks Festival to celebrate the winter solstice on December 21st. This custom started twenty years ago and is very popular. People make clock lanterns and time-themed figures of paper and wood, then walk through the town to the beach where the sculptures are set on fire and there's a massive firework display.

So, that's just a taste of a few of our old and more modern traditions. Would you like to take part in any of them?