

Audio script

Task 1

Thank you for coming to hear my talk about Museums for All. My name's James Edwards and I'm director of the association. Let me start by telling you what the association is. As the name suggests, it's a sort of club with all the museums in the country as members. Although museums themselves have been around for hundreds of years, our part in this is relatively new - two years ago a group of major museums came together and started the association - but we're already making big changes.

So, what's our task? Since the association was formed, we've been putting in a great deal of effort to alter the experience people have of visiting museums. For decades, museums have been seen as stuffy, boring places, but in the next few years we aim to have transformed this belief - and we've got plenty of ideas about how to do this! My own background isn't actually in this field. As a university graduate, I worked for a marketing firm and made the switch to advertising a few years later. It was while I was working for a large agency in this area that I was approached and asked to think about becoming director of Museums for All. I hope my experience will enable me to apply a fresh point of view.

At Museums for All, we believe we have to publicise museums more effectively as far as attracting visitors is concerned. The age-old way of running a museum has been too passive in this respect, which is why we're committed to being more active in that sense.

I can quite understand why traditional museums are the way they are - it's all to do with the history of museums, and the whole way of thinking about museums in the past, when they were mainly for people with high levels of education. All that has changed, but people in general still don't feel very much at home in museums. We're working on ways to change that.

The best way to encourage interest in museums, I think, is to get children into the idea from an early age. Ideally, I'd like to see close links between museums and schools in the area, so the children can feel that the museum belongs to them. It's important that we reach out to the community and connect with them in this way.

Many people find museums a little threatening - they're often silent places in dark old buildings. We want museums to be much more friendly places, much like shopping malls are - with things like cafes and gift shops. We envisage museums with a central area and wings or corridors leading off that area towards the exhibitions and other facilities. That would allow people to return to the central area after wandering around for as long as they want.

A trip to a large museum can leave people feeling overwhelmed. There's so much to see that visitors don't know where to begin. At Museums for All, we think that we can make a museum visit a far less exhausting experience, which for some people, is the case. By changing their appearance and improving visitor flow, we think people will come to enjoy the experience much more than they ever have.

Rebuilding museums, however, is rather expensive, but they are really important: investing in museums is investing in the future of the country, just like investing in other services for the community - and the government has to realise that.

We certainly have a huge challenge ahead of us in the next few months, but I feel very optimistic about what we have to do. I'm sure we'll see more and more people visiting museums in the near future through our programme of planned cultural events. Next year in June, we're organising a Museum Festival, which is intended to attract people who wouldn't normally go to museums. I'm convinced it will be a huge success. I think that's really all we've got time for right now, but are there any questions?

Task 2

Interviewer: This evening on *Young and Gifted* I am joined in the studio by Julia Emerson, the young Scottish writer who's recently had a screenplay accepted by a major Hollywood studio. Julia, I'm glad you could be with us today. Could I start by asking you to explain exactly why what you've done is so unusual?

Julia Emerson: Well, Hollywood films these days don't start off with a screenplay. The screenplay only gets written after the producers have come up with an idea for a film. Then they contact agents to find at least one major star who will act in it. The next step is to get a team of anything up to 20 writers working on the screenplay. Now, I was inexperienced enough to think that I could simply write a screenplay and send it to a number of studios. Which is what I did. When I didn't get an answer. I wrote another one. And this time, by some amazing chance, they accepted it!

Interviewer: I think everyone has been stunned by the fact that you've been successful with a screenplay at such an early age. But in fact, this isn't the first piece of writing you've had published, is it?

Julia Emerson: No, it isn't. I won a short-story competition in magazine when I was 15, and ever since then I've been writing in my spare time. I've had a number of articles published in teen magazines. I've always been fascinated by television and the cinema, and I even tried to develop an idea for a TV series, but somehow it didn't feel right. Then I tried putting down an idea for a film, and the writing just flowed.

Interviewer: Do you think you're influenced very strongly by films you've seen?

Julia Emerson: Yes, but I have to watch out or I might end up writing a slightly different version of a classic! I suppose everyone who does anything creative has to think about that, though.

Interviewer: Can you tell us something about this screenplay that's been bought by Planet Studios. What's it about?

Julia Emerson: It's about two sisters, who are stranded in the jungles of South America after becoming separated from the rest of their tour group. They have all sorts of adventures as they try to get back to civilisation. It's an adventure story, but it's also about the relationship between the two girls. You see, they've never been very close – in fact, at the start of the story they really hate each other. Or at least, they think they do.

Interviewer: How much of the story is based on your own experience?

Julia Emerson: Since I don't have any brothers or sisters, in one way it's clearly not based on my experience! But on the other hand, I have experienced how the feelings we have for our family can go through different stages and transformations which is the real theme of the story.

Interviewer: And when am I going to be able to see this film in the local cinema?

Julia Emerson: I've got no idea! The studio has paid for the right to use the screenplay, and they have that right - it's called an option - for another six months. They might make the film in that time, or they might buy the option again for another couple of years. It's all out of my hands, in fact. So I try not to get too excited about seeing the story on the big screen one day, because I have no way of knowing when that might be.

Interviewer: I hope it's soon, anyway. Julia Emerson thanks for talking to us. It's been a pleasure.

Julia Emerson: Thank you.