

Listening scripts 9-11

Task 1

1

How's your general knowledge? Reckon you can outwit the competitors on the TV quiz shows? Well, Quiztime gives you the chance to show what you can do. Beat the clock to answer questions on a variety of topics, ranging from football to soap operas, natural history to music, fashion to computers. Throw the dice and race round the board, collecting points as you go. Based on the hit TV programme of the same name, Quiztime comes in both adult and junior versions and is guaranteed to keep the whole family entertained for hours.

2

A: All I can do is either give you a jacket in another size or issue a credit note. I can't give you a cash refund unless the product is faulty in some way, I'm afraid, because you paid by credit card.

B: But supposing there isn't a blue one in the longer fitting?

A: Well, I expect there will be if you look – or we can order one in for you. A credit note would be valid for up to six months.

B: But that's no good to me, it's a 100-mile round trip from where I live.

A: I apologise, sir, but those are the rules.

3

The thing is, last month I had a service done and the work alone cost me well over £100. And that's

without the parts. What worries me is whether you can trust them or not. I mean, I don't know a thing

about what goes on under the bonnet. How do I know they're not just ripping me off and saying they've put new bits in when they haven't? I suppose you'll say I should go to an evening class or something to find out how the engine works but quite honestly, I haven't got either time or interest. I just wondered if you had any ideas on what I could do.

4

A: Right. Here we are ... I'm not so sure that this is a good idea, Miriam. They did say on the phone

that there wasn't one. Why don't we go to a shop and buy a map of the area and then get someone to mark the bus routes on it for us?

B: Oh honestly, Tom, why should we spend money needlessly? These places always have maps, it stands to reason. I'm going to go up to that uniformed man over there and ask him to lend me one, then we'll take it next door to the library and photocopy it.

A: OK, but don't say I didn't warn you.

5

Look, I'm sorry. I accept it was a genuine mistake – these things happen but surely, I'm entitled to some

kind of compensation. Had I known there was a midday flight, I'd certainly have chosen it. But when I spoke to your employee on the phone, she said there was only one flight a day and, as you know, with these cheap flights, once you've booked, you can't change them. So, we ended up having to get up really early in the morning in time to catch the flight she'd booked us on, then had to wait ages at the other end because we were too early – the rooms were still being cleaned.

6

We're on the train and we'll be arriving around six o'clock but what I want to know is whether we've got time for a round of golf before dinner or whether we're down to eat at a specific time. Yes, I know that you didn't make the booking yourself but I think I read something about the rest of the conference delegates arriving tomorrow morning, so I'm not sure what arrangements have been made for tonight. I seem to have mislaid all the paperwork somewhere, it's probably on my desk somewhere – can you have a look? Or perhaps you could check with the organisers and then get back to me, please? I'm on the mobile number. Thanks.

7

It's the latest idea to hit London. A company called Q4U has launched a new service that takes the tedium out of waiting around – be it for prescriptions at the chemist's, picking up dry cleaning or queuing for theatre tickets. Anything that people waste their time standing in a queue for. Customers pay the company £20 an hour and one of their professional queuers does the boring bit on their behalf. The idea has caught on fastest when there's something to be picked up, especially holiday documents. The company says that, given mobile phone technology, the idea can actually be applied to any time-wasting task. Who knows? Maybe even the dentist's waiting room!

8

For both customers and e-commerce businesses, not to mention the mail-order industry in general, the question of delivery has long been an issue. The problem is simply this: that the people most likely to spend serious money having a purchase delivered are the least likely to be in when it arrives. After all, they are the ones most liable to possess a job and a busy life. It makes you think that if e-commerce had been around first, then the invention of the walk-in shop would have been welcomed as a brilliant new idea. But, fortunately, it looks like a solution is at hand. Tanya Wilde went to investigate...

Task 2

In today's lecture we're going to be talking about experiments, and I thought it might be interesting for you all to learn about the world's oldest continuously running laboratory experiment that is still going today. In fact, it holds the Guinness World Record for being the longest-running experiment. This experiment began in 1927 and has been going ever since. It's called the 'pitch drop' experiment and it was created by Professor Thomas Parnell at the University of Queensland, Australia. Parnell was the university's first physics professor, and he wanted to show in this experiment that everyday materials, such as pitch, can have quite surprising properties. You see, when pitch is at room temperature, it feels solid. You can easily break it with a hammer. However, it isn't in fact solid. At room temperature, pitch is many billions of times more viscous than water, but it's actually fluid. In 1927, Professor Parnell took a sample of pitch. He heated it and poured it into a glass funnel. He allowed the pitch to cool and settle – for three years. He then turned the funnel upside down and cut the top off it. Since then, the pitch has slowly dropped out of the funnel. How slowly? Well, the first drop took eight years to fall. It took another forty years for another five drops to fall. Today it's been almost 90 years since the experiment started. Only nine drops have fallen from the funnel. The last drop fell in April 2014 and the next one is expected to fall in the 2020s. The experiment has a tragic story associated with it. Professor Parnell died without seeing a pitch drop. His replacement, Professor John Mainstone, became responsible for the pitch drop experiment from 1961. He held the job for 52 years, and missed seeing the

drop fall three times – by a day in 1977, by just five minutes in 1988 and finally in 2000, when the webcam that was recording the experiment suffered a power outage for 20 minutes, during which time the pitch dropped. The pitch drop experiment is something we can all participate in now. There's a live web stream that allows anyone to watch the glass funnel and wait for the fateful moment. A similar experiment to the Queensland pitch drop was set up in Dublin, and the video of the moment the pitch actually dropped went viral on the internet. It's interesting to see how a very slow event can spread news so quickly.