

Listening (audio script)

For questions 1-8, fill in the gaps with the words used in the talk you are going to listen to. Use one or two words in each gap. You will hear the recording twice. Now you have 45 seconds to look through the items.

[pause 45 seconds]

Now we begin.

Our lives today are dominated by gadgets. According to a recent survey British people spend nine hours a day on average using some form of electronic gadget: most time was spent on the computer (around four hours), followed by the television (90 minutes), the phone (around 40 minutes), and the microwave (10 minutes). The same survey revealed that one third of British people also considered their ability to use gadgets as their most valuable life-skill. Other life-skills such as cooking, DIY and gardening were ranked next with speaking a foreign language coming way behind. We have, it seems, become a nation both obsessed with and passionate about technology. This would seem to be supported by the long queues for the latest Apple iPad, which started three days before the item was even on sale, to the High Street stampedes for the latest Nintendo game. And even though we are living in a difficult economic climate, it seems the price tag for the latest piece of gadgetry hardly matters. The important thing is to be the first among your friends to have it. So why do we have this obsession with gadgets? A lot of technology purchases are a case of 'keeping up with the Joneses' - someone you know gets the latest TV or smart phone, for instance, and you feel you are missing out if you don't get one, so you do. I wonder how many bread machines, which everyone seemed to have in the 1990s, are now lying unused at the back of kitchen cupboards. And is our obsession something new? Well, no. It isn't something new. Admittedly, in the 1950s there wasn't the range or number of gadgets that there are today, but there was still the same excitement when any new gadget appeared. My grandparents told me that they were the first in their street to have a television and at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 all the neighbours were invited in to watch the ceremony. This, apparently, was not unusual. The 1950s in the UK was a decade when most women did not go out to work but stayed at home to raise their families. Most of their day was taken up with cleaning, cooking, washing and other household tasks. Items, which had been luxuries before the war, now became affordable for many families. With the introduction of the modern vacuum cleaner into most middle-class homes in the 1950s, and the precursor to the modern washing machine around the same time, a woman's workload was substantially reduced and women had more leisure time than ever before. Most women nowadays would not be pleased to be given a household gadget except for possibly a cappuccino coffee maker as say a birthday gift, but in those days, it was received with delight. Until recently, it was always assumed that men were more gadget-

obsessed than women - but it seems that today's women are just as interested in gadgets as men. The main difference between the sexes seems to be in the design - a lot of women, for example, want a phone that will perform, say, five basic functions: calling, texting, taking photos, storing photos and accessing the internet. For men, the more functions there are the better.

Now you have 30 seconds to check your answers.

[pause 30 seconds]

Now listen again.

[Text repeated]

Now you have 1 minute to complete the task and transfer your answers to the answer sheet.

[pause 1 minute]

This is the end of the Listening task.