

The Transcript

Listening. You will hear the teacher talking about a natural disaster. Choose the best answer for each question (A, B, C or D). You will hear the text twice.

Now you have 30 seconds to look through the questions

[Pause 30 seconds]

Now we begin.

A: Good morning, class. Today we are going to learn the science behind one of Earth's deadliest natural disasters – an avalanche. An avalanche must be the most common type of natural disaster, because over 150 people around the world die in one each year. It is very unpredictable because it is a natural disaster that can happen anytime when snow builds up on a steep slope. All you need is a mass of snow and a slope for it to slide down.

B: Excuse me, Miss, but what makes an avalanche start?

A: Good question. Many things may affect the chances of an avalanche happening, including weather, temperature, the angle of the slope (that is, how steep it is), the orientation of the slope (that is, which way it faces), wind direction, terrain, vegetation, and general snowpack conditions

C: What's a snowpack?

A: The snowpack is the layers of snow that have accumulated below what you can see on the surface.

D: What makes a really big avalanche happen?

A: Different combinations of factors can create low, moderate or extreme avalanche conditions. If heavy slabs of snow lie on top of weak layers, the

snowpack may collapse and start an avalanche. The conditions can change from hour to hour, so one route may be safe in the morning but then very dangerous later. At times it might only take the weight of one skier to start an avalanche.

B: Wow! People must be mad to go skiing or climbing, then, when the conditions are bad.

A: Well, there are tests that can be done to test the stability of a snowpack, but we'll come to that later. But I agree to a point. Any climber or skier must be mad not to take basic rescue equipment such as a portable shovel and a radio transceiver with them when they are going to travel across snow.

C: I suppose avoiding an avalanche must be much better than trying to survive one, Miss.

A: Absolutely. An avalanche kills in two ways: by smashing a person into a rock or a tree or by burying them in a mountain of snow. Carrying the right equipment may mean the difference between life and death for someone buried in an avalanche.

D: But it can't be that difficult to survive an avalanche, can it?

A: That depends. You could be carried downhill at 100 mph in a mass of snow of up to 10,000 tons. You might have a chance if you are buried near the surface and the snow hasn't filled your mouth and nose. Statistics show that most survivors are dug out within 15 to 30 minutes. Victims buried longer than 45 minutes rarely survive.

B: Really?...

Now you have 20 seconds to check your answers.

[pause 20 seconds]

Now listen to the text again.

[Text repeated.]

Now you have 20 seconds to complete the task.

[pause 20 seconds]

This is the end of the listening task.