

Listening. Script

Task 1

You have 20 seconds to study the statements.

(pause 20 seconds)

Now we begin.

Some time ago, I was in a bicycle shop looking for a new lock for my bicycle. The shopkeeper showed me several, patiently explaining their advantages and disadvantages. None of them was quite what I wanted and eventually I said to the shopkeeper, "I'll think about it. Thanks very much", and left the shop.

Why did I say, "I'll think about it"? Not something more straightforward like, "None of these is right", "They're too big", "They are too small", "They're too expensive", "I'll go elsewhere"?

I think, there are two reasons why I chose to say "I'll think about it". The first is that I didn't want the shopkeeper to feel that his products were not valued or that his time had been wasted and second is that I didn't want to be the object of his possible annoyance or irritation. In other words, I didn't want him to feel bad. And I didn't want me to feel bad.

We have words for this general behavior pattern of not wanting ourselves or other people to feel bad as a result of the interactions that we have... have with other people.

We talk about tact, which is defined in the Collins Concise Dictionary as 'the sense of what is fitting and considerate in dealing with others so as to avoid giving offence', or we might equally call this, as many people do, politeness behaviour. Now notice that the definition of tact talks about avoiding giving offence. It is not talking about something positive that we do in order to make people feel better than they otherwise would. So, here we are not talking about the kind of behaviour we get into when, for example, we console a friend whose cat has just been run over or compliment our partner on a very well-cooked meal. We are not trying here to positively make people feel better, but trying to avoid them feeling bad. So, this is a negative kind of behaviour that I'm talking about. But the fact that it's negative doesn't mean that it's not terribly important. It is extremely important. It is essential to our self-preservation and to social cohesion. And for this reason avoidance behaviour is of great interest to many different kinds of scholars.

You have 20 seconds to check your answers.

(pause 20 seconds)

Now listen to the text again.

(text repeated)

You have 20 seconds to check your answers.

(pause 20 seconds)

Task 2

You now have 25 seconds to study the questions.

(pause 25 seconds)

Now we begin.

A Lone ly Job

Jane: Wherever have you been, Patrick? I haven't seen you for months. Someone said you'd emigrated.

Patrick: Whoever told you that? I've been working on a weather research station on the Isle of Collett.

Jane: Where on earth is that?

Patrick: It's a lump of rock about 100 miles north-west of Ireland.

Jane: Whatever did you do to pass the time?

Patrick: Fortunately I had my university thesis to work on. If I hadn't had a pile of work to do, I'd have gone off my head.

Jane: Was there anything else to do?

Patrick: Well, if you were a bird watcher, it would be a paradise; but whenever I got tired of studying, I could only walk round the island – and that took me less than twenty minutes.

Jane: However did you stand it? If I'd been in your shoes I'd have taken the first boat back to civilization.

Patrick: Well, I needed some information for my research there, and they paid me, so I saved some money. Now I can have a short holiday before I start looking for a job.

Jane: Have you finished your PhD already? I thought you had another year to do.

Patrick: No, time flies, you know. As long as they don't reject my thesis, I'll be leaving for London next week.

Jane: If I were you, I'd go off to the Mediterranean or somewhere before starting work.

Patrick: No thanks, I'll stay in London. I've had enough of the sea for a while.

This is the end of the listening comprehension part. You have 1 minute to complete your answer.