

AUDIO SCRIPT

LISTENING

Task 1.

Beth : It's amazing, when you look back at the last 30 years, just how much the world has changed. I mean, can you imagine a world without the internet, email, mobile phones even ...?

Mark: Mm, it's funny to think that, one day, we'll look back at this decade and think, 'How different things were then!'

Beth : I think the biggest change we'll see in the future is in the environment.

Mark: You're right. Experts predict that our population will have exceeded 9 billion by the year 2050. If that's true, we'll need to produce 50% more food than we are now. There'll be huge demands for food, water and energy.

Beth : We'll probably all be starving and fighting wars over resources.

Mark: Well, hopefully there will be other solutions! We'll certainly have to rethink food production – we won't be able to rely on imports any more.

Beth : I agree. We'll have to increase our production of genetically modified crops, no matter how unappealing that might seem now. If we don't, we won't have enough food for everyone! As for fishing, I think at the end of this century there simply won't be enough fish for people to eat.

Mark: I'm less pessimistic about the future than you are, Beth. I think the environment will be far better than it is right now.

Beth: Why do you say that?

Mark: Well, I think we'll all be using wind energy and solar energy. Perhaps we'll even find a new, harmless energy source. Frankly, we don't have any choice – we must find a replacement for fossil fuels. I think, sooner or later, everyone will accept that climate change is a fact and we have to do something about it.

Beth : I suppose you believe that we'll all be using cars that run on water!

Mark: We might! I'm sure that in the future we'll have the technology to develop this. People are already using less plastic and more biodegradable materials – so I think this trend will grow and grow.

Beth : Well, I worry about our wildlife, too. We're losing more of our rare habitats because of climate change and deforestation. I think it's inevitable that more animals and plants will become extinct.

Mark: But climate change will also help the spread of different species around the world, won't it? Our climate will be better suited to birds and animals that are originally from other countries.

Beth : Yes, that's happening now. We're already seeing insects and birds that don't normally live in the UK.

Mark: Well, that might be a positive thing about the future, too! And I can think of others ...

Beth: Such as?

Mark: Well, even now, scientists are researching ways of controlling the weather, so I'm sure they'll find a way to make more accurate predictions and, eventually, to control the weather.

Beth : Really? Controlling the weather?

Mark: Yes! I read a news story on the Internet recently – scientists created more than 50 artificial rainstorms in areas where it hadn't rained for months! Controlling the weather like this would have a huge impact. We could use it to stop droughts and help farmers to grow crops.

Beth: It sounds amazing.

Mark: So, it's not all bad news, is it?

Beth : No, I suppose not.

Task 2.

Speaker 1: The other day, the *Washington Post* revealed that the Department of Defense was going to shoot dogs with high-powered weapons so that scientists could study their wounds. The plan was to shoot scores of dogs and other animals and to newly built establishment in Washington, named ominously and officially the Wound Laboratory. The laboratory said it wanted to shoot dogs in order to train aspiring doctors for battlefield medicine and to research better ways of treating wounds in battles. Hundreds of fearful and outraged people called the Pentagon. Many of them were children. Such was the wrath of the nation that the Secretary of Defense quickly issued a succinct instruction that no dogs would be shot for medical experimentation or training.

Speaker 2: It's incredible to think how well some animals can be trained. For example, dolphins which are trained to help autistic children overcome fear of communication with other people. Scientists who have worked with dolphins consider them to be truly intelligent. Some believe that they might be even more intelligent than us. It is known that dolphins have larger brains than us humans. There is considerable evidence that they are able to communicate with each other. Moreover, there have been lots of instances when dolphins saved people from drowning in the sea and brought them back to the shore.

Speaker 3: I have known all my life that I do not like to live in a house that does not have a cat. I know that after a heated telephone conversation or a difficult interview, I have to find the cat. He'll open half of one eye and say: "Do you do get yourself worked up, don't you? Calm down, calm down". Cats are the greatest comforters. Scientists have proved that cats are comforting for us. If you stroke a cat and talk to it, the blood pressure of the animal and the person will go down. Here's something else. Did you know that people who have been ill in hospital or having an operation? Did you know that if they have a pet to care for, they'll get better more quickly? I can believe it. There are even hospitals that are experimenting with having animals for long stay patients to look after.

Speaker 4: Animals have always been in our lives. Dogs have been around us for thousands of years and they've served as hunters and guards. Dogs, it seems, have always been easy to train. Obedience and a desire to please have really let the dog in for a subservient role with us. In the ancient Roman town of Pompeii, there is a house that bears the warning "beware of the dog". Apart from catching things and guarding things, dogs are of course very good at guiding people. The Romans used to have guide dogs for the blind. Today, guide dogs are the best way to help blind people.

Speaker 5: There have been lots of cases recorded of animals knowing when bad weather or natural disasters were about to happen. People say the dogs hear rumbles and bark more or birds sense vibrations and stop laying eggs. Recently, there have been tales of people seeing grass snakes disappearing a few days before earthquakes, giving them time to get out of the trouble zone. It's logical, I think, as they are close to the ground. I know some people are really worried that communities seem to play so much reliance on this, but in fact, even though it seems unlikely, it works and has saved many lives.