

Task 1. Script

My parents now both work from home so they made the decision to move from our city-centre flat to the countryside, although it meant big changes for the whole family. It was a winter evening when we first went to the village, and as we walked along the pavement I remarked on how dark it was without the street lights of the city, and how bright that made the lights of the cars seem as they approached. I also noticed the sound of running water, and when we reached the house I was delighted to discover that it stood next to a little bridge over a stream. I soon decided I liked the house. It has thick stone walls, high ceilings and wooden floors. The central heating keeps the temperature in all the rooms pleasant throughout the year, although during the colder months those in the basement tend to get a bit damp, probably because of the stream. My room is actually on the other side of the house so I don't hear it at night, which is a pity, really. I was used to the constant big-city background noise of traffic and voices, and for a while after we moved in I'd keep waking up in the middle of the night owing to the total silence there. It doesn't bother me now, though, and these days I look forward to settling down for the night in my large, comfortable bed. I rarely stay up any later than when I was in the flat, and in the mornings I normally wake up at the same time, but there aren't the sounds of the city telling you it's time to get up so I'm usually in far less of a hurry to do so. The atmosphere here is so relaxing, and I have a wonderful view from the window of my room. Whereas before I'd see city wildlife like cats, dogs and maybe the occasional fox, here I start the day to the sound of distant farm animals and the sight of rabbits in the open fields. Apparently there are also deer around, though I haven't actually spotted any yet. The pace of life in the countryside is certainly slower, but I think I've adjusted pretty well to it. I must confess, though, that I can get a bit fed up with the speed of the Internet connection here, compared with how fast it was in the flat downtown. In spite of that I still manage to chat online with my friends there more or less whenever I want, so I don't have the feeling of missing them that I thought I might have before I moved. There is, though, fairly weak mobile reception out here - sometimes no signal at all - and when that happens I may not receive calls they're trying to make to me which can be annoying. I suppose poor public transport is another disadvantage of living in the country. There isn't a railway station within five kilometres, it's nearly a two-kilometre walk to get to a bus stop, and taxis charge a fortune to come out here. It's so different from where I grew up, where the buses stop right outside your home or you can take the Underground. You can live quite happily there without a car, but not here. People say 'why not go by bike?', but the reality is that it's just too far to ride anywhere from here - and dangerous on those country roads, especially in the dark. I'll just have to rely on my parents for lifts everywhere until I pass my driving test, which I hope will be before I go to university next year. Fortunately, it'll be a shorter drive from here than from where I used to live, and I'll avoid the awful traffic on the roads in and out of the city, too!

Task 2. Script

J - Jane; M - Martin

J My first job was for a shipping company in London – well the main office was in London but it had offices all over the world. It was a good job, I mean the pay wasn't bad. The people were OK and my boss was great.

M So why did you leave?

J I never seemed to feel well while I was there. For the first time in my life I developed some sort of asthma or hay fever or something.

M Really? You mean you were coughing and spluttering all over the place? Was it air-conditioned?

J Yes, I couldn't bear it; not being able to open the windows breathing in everybody else's germs and so on.

M Sounds as though it might have been a 'sick building'. I worked in one once - air-conditioned like yours, and we all used to go down with colds and flu or bad chests and things like that. At first the managers just said it was our imagination or that we weren't happy in our work but I really believed it was to do with the building. When I left there I went to work for a firm who were based in an old house - wonderful - I could open the windows and breathe real air!

J Do you think there was something in the air then, in your old place?

M I'm sure there was - though we couldn't prove it. Mind you, it can't just be air-conditioning, because the place I work in now is the same, yet I feel fine.

J Yes, me too, but I think it's got more to do with the way the office is laid out. I mean where I am now it's spacious, the chairs are comfortable. I've got a lovely view over the park, and there are only two of us to a room. It makes you feel positive, and relaxed! It's a great environment to work in, especially when you compare it to open plan offices. I *hate* open plan offices - it's so distracting - all those phone calls and people rushing about.

M Funny, that's what I like about where I am now. It's busy, people always jumping up and down and coming in with the latest news. It's really exciting.

J Sounds awful to me, but then I have to concentrate hard and try and be creative!

M Oh, so you don't think working in a newspaper's really creative then? I'll have you know I ...

J No, no, sorry, I didn't mean that, but it's a different sort of creative. Perhaps you need people buzzing about to stimulate you?

M Yes, yes I do - there's nothing so stultifying as total silence for me ...

J Oh peace, perfect peace - I couldn't ask for anything else.