1 THIS IS US

Listening Part 1 Multiple choice

W = Woman H = Helena P = Pablo M = Man

Extract 1

You hear a talk by a toy designer.

W: As a little girl, I loved playing with dolls. I had quite a collection with at least twenty versions of one particular doll: blonde, brunette, redhead; wearing swimwear, a party gown or roller skates. And yet, despite their apparent diversity, not one resembled me in the slightest. They all had pearly white skin, ridiculously long legs and pencil-thin waists. Not one had dark skin, nor were there any in trousers, let alone business suits or lab coats. As for non-standard body shapes, like the ones I saw in my own neighbourhood, forget it.

Now, maybe I should have felt bitter at being excluded so blatantly. But like so many other girls who don't conform to the stereotype, I simply accepted it as the way the world worked. From a very early age, I'd internalised the attitude that some identities are more worthy than others. But as I've matured, I've come to appreciate that if we don't stand up for who we are, no one else will. So while it's certainly a relief to see today's dolls reflecting a much broader variety of female identities, including those living with disabilities, we're still a long way from true representativeness.

Extract 2

You hear a conversation between two friends.

H: Hey, well done on your big promotion, Pablo.

P: Thanks, but I can't make head nor tail of why they picked me. I certainly don't feel like a manager – more like a kid inexplicably finding himself crashing around in a world of adults.

H: Oh, come off it. No way would you have been promoted if you weren't up to the job.

P: Yeah yeah. I reckon it's just that my incompetence has somehow slipped under everyone's radar ... so far. And when I get found out, it's going to be utterly cringeworthy.

H: Sounds like imposter syndrome if you ask me.

P: You've lost me, Helena. What's that?

H: It's a common psychological condition where people feel like they're a fraud. You'd be amazed how many people experience it. Even powerful politicians and CEOs who seem super confident and professional.

P: Yeah, but in my case, it's genuine.

H: The thing is, we're all hopeless at objectively assessing our own abilities. Either we're wildly overconfident – I'm sure you can call to mind some examples of deluded individuals who are irrationally full of themselves – or else we're overly prone to putting ourselves down. If you really want to know how competent you are, ask your colleagues.

P: Perhaps you're right.

H: I am right – I'm always right.

Extract 3

You hear part of a radio news report.

M: A woman has been found guilty of fraud after faking multiple identities.

Cynthia Braithwaite was arrested last year while working as a hospital surgeon. She is believed to have faked her credentials and may not even have attended medical college. Despite her lack of training, she is reported to have carried out numerous operations on unwitting patients.

Hospital administrators were blithely unaware of the discrepancy until a fellow surgeon became suspicious of inconsistencies in her use of medical terminology. Upon re-examination, the glowing references on her CV as well as her medical school certificates were found to be forgeries.

It is unclear whether any patients suffered adverse effects after being operated on by Ms. Braithwaite, but the fact that she remained undetected for twelve months suggests she did a reasonably good job.

Had she been fired on the spot, as per hospital procedures, Ms Braithwaite would inevitably have vanished without a trace, only to reappear under a new identity in a new location months later, which appears to have been her modus operandi throughout her career. However, the severity of her deception and the risk to human life led to the police being called in instead. Based on evidence found in her flat, detectives were subsequently able to piece together her movements over the last decade, and the shocking scale of her history of deceit emerged.

2 WANDERLUST

Listening Part 2 Sentence completion

Hi and welcome to today's travel podcast, about one of the strangest new trends: sleep tourism. Of course, the fundamental purpose of a hotel is as a place to sleep, yet most hotel facilities encourage us to do anything but that, from late-night eateries to dawn-till-dusk entertainment. It's not uncommon to return from a holiday even more exhausted than before. So the idea of sleep tourism is that hotels prioritise **a decent night's sleep** above all else, with innovative techniques to help you to nod off quickly and snooze soundly till morning.

Sleep is also making quite a comeback these days, with a much wider realisation that our physical and mental health is intimately connected with the quality of our sleep, after decades of being scorned by high-achievers as **a needless luxury** when they should be working or networking. In a nutshell, if you're not getting enough sleep, you're making yourself ill. You might get away with it for a while, but you'll pay the price in the end. Not to put too fine a point on it, the longer you sleep, the longer you'll live, all other things being equal.

So how is a sleep-centred hotel different from a normal one? For a start, the rooms have high-tech soundproofing, to keep the noises from the street – and from the hotel's **communal areas** – out of your ears. That'll be a welcome change for anyone who's tried to kip in a regular hotel. We're talking about soundproofed walls, top-notch double-glazing and solid, tight-sealing doors.

The next issue is light: you don't want to be kept awake by **flashing neon signs** outside your window, or indeed to be awakened at the crack of dawn by glorious sunshine. So the rooms need heavy blackout curtains to cover the windows without even a crack of daylight peeping through.

Of course, having sealed the room to keep out noise and light, you've created a new problem: a lack of fresh air. Most decent hotels already have **air-conditioning systems**, but they're usually a poor substitute for the real thing: too stuffy, too intense, too noisy. Sleep hotels will almost certainly have to overhaul theirs if they want their customers to sleep like logs.

Next, of course, is the bed. I don't know about you, but I've had to put up with some dreadful hotel beds over the years, even in supposedly luxurious hotels. That's because we all have different perspectives on the perfect **mattress**. Some prefer a soft one to sink into; others are most at home on something far more rigid. So, as I see it, those staying in sleep hotels ought to be given a choice of at least three, tailored to their own preferences.

As for bedding, the possibilities are endless – and so should be the range of choices. Do you prefer a light and fluffy duvet? Do you need to be constrained by a weighted blanket? And so on, and so on. Finally, the hotel must offer a wide range of additional services to help its guests to drift off, from foot massages to herbal tea, and from **whale music** to scented pillow mist.

All these things can help, but they're still no guarantee of a good night's rest. Indeed, if, in spite of all these sleep inducements you're still unable to nod off, it could well be a sign of an **underlying medical condition**, be it severe stress, insomnia, sleep apnoea or restless leg syndrome. For this reason, it's vital for sleep hotels to provide medical consultations beyond simply pampering their guests.

The real benefit of sleep tourism might not be that you get a decent night's sleep or two, but rather that you learn techniques that'll help you sleep better on a permanent basis. In other words, don't dismiss sleep tourism as the latest fad designed to extract as much cash as possible out of affluent tourists – although there's certainly some truth in that. Instead, think of it as a **life-changing experience** for those who are struggling with the nightmare of poor-quality sleep.

3 AHEAD OF THE CURVE

Listening Part 4 Multiple matching

Speaker 1:

When it comes to fashion, I like to be a leader, not a follower, but I used to get frustrated at the amount of waste involved. It reached the point where a sizeable chunk of my disposable income was going on clothes, so when I came across this app that uses AI and machine learning to suggest items of clothing for you to rent, it seemed ideal.

When I started using it, I used to spend ages selecting the items to borrow, but recently I've allowed the AI to make all those decisions for me. It means I get a new package of surprises in the post each week, which has really encouraged me to be far braver in my choices, without filling up my closet with unwanted clothes!

Speaker 2:

As a materials scientist, I'm fascinated by the range of materials that I can use to manufacture textiles. The shoes I'm wearing now, for example, are made from, would you believe, apples. Apparently, the producer uses the cellulose from apple peel and cores, waste products in the food industry, to make a sturdy leather substitute for shoes, suitcases and so on. A lot of people buy them because they're eco-friendly, plus, of course, they're cruelty-free, which is more than can be said for genuine leather. But for me, it's more about the quirkiness of having apple shoes! They're not perfect, I might add, but since I started wearing them I've been inspired to seek even better ways of using waste products in my own textiles.

Speaker 3:

My main area of research is the impact of microplastics on ocean ecosystems, causing untold damage to sea creatures that consume them. So when I heard about an innovative filter that can be attached to washing machines, to catch microplastics from clothes before they enter the waste water network, it made me realise I'd been using mine far too much. My filter wasn't cheap, and I'm fully aware that its impact is negligible – literally a drop in the ocean compared to other sources of microplastics – but I had to do my bit. The real breakthrough will come when washing machine manufacturers install such filters as standard, so by supporting this nascent technology financially, hopefully I can play my part in making that dream a reality.

Speaker 4:

I became a vegan because I loathe the idea of harming animals and because of the impact of livestock agriculture on our planet. So I've never been comfortable with wearing leather shoes. Unfortunately, shoes made from synthetic substitutes are far from perfect: my feet always used to pay the price in terms of blisters, heat rashes and agonising muscle ache. That's why I'm so excited about lab-grown leather, which self-assembles from collagen. It's basically identical to traditional leather, but without the need for an animal to die in the process. I forked out a fortune for the shoes I'm wearing now, but they've made a massive difference to my poor feet! I hope they'll serve me for many more years.

Speaker 5:

I've long been concerned by the sickening amount of waste in the fast-fashion industry, from textile production to the disposal of old clothes, many of which end up in landfills. So nowadays, I buy only circular fashion, which means clothes that have been designed with waste reduction in mind at every stage. Designers and

manufacturers create products that are easy to sort, disassemble and re-use to make new ones. Circular fashion items have a special label attached, with a QR code that enables them to be tracked efficiently throughout their lifecycle. This gives consumers like me the peace of mind that we're playing our part in saving the planet and taking financial responsibility for our choices.

4 MEETING IN THE MIDDLE

Listening Part 3 Multiple choice

D = Duncan J = Joanna

D: Excuse me, Joanna. Do you have a second?

J: Sure, Duncan. How can I help you?

D: Well, it's just that I've been assigned to take some soft skills training, 'Empathy in the Workplace'.

J: Ah, yes, that's right. That would have been at the request of your line manager. It's a really useful course – I've been on it myself and it's had a huge impact on me.

D: It may well have done, but I really don't think it's my cup of tea. I mean, my job is all about hard-nosed negotiations, not touchy-feely stuff like empathy. I don't need to feel sorry for the people I'm up against – quite the contrary, to be brutally frank.

J: Well, empathy isn't about feeling sorry for people – you seem to be confusing it with sympathy. Empathy is simply about trying to understand how other people feel, what motivates them, and so on. But beyond that, it's about an authentic desire to understand other people, at a deep level, and to care about their feelings.

D: Right. Well, in that case, it's definitely not for me. I'm not into feelings and emotions at all. I mean, I can see why it'd be useful in a job like yours, human resources, which is all about keeping everybody happy and all that.

J: Well, to some extent, but it's much more about defusing disagreements. When two people experience the same situation and come to radically different conclusions about what has transpired, it's useful to get inside their heads to work out why they are interpreting those events so differently. Often that involves going back in time to understand the build-up to the problematic situation, perhaps over several months or years, which may have affected the way each party perceived it. Once you've done that, rather than allocating blame, it's a matter of supporting the parties in the resolution of their current dispute, even if that means simply gritting their teeth and agreeing to put it behind them, and above all the prevention of its recurrence.

D: Sounds lovely. But my business is cold, hard sales, not conflict resolution.

J: OK, fair enough. So what sort of training would appeal to you?

D: Sales techniques. Tricks for turning prospects into paying customers who keep coming back for more.

J: Yeah, that makes sense. So you'd like to be more persuasive? Is that right?

D: Exactly.

J: It sounds like you need to be able to get inside prospective clients' heads, to understand what they really want, and to somehow manipulate their emotions so they buy from you, rather than your competitors, perhaps by exploiting their deepest fears and needs. Have I understood you correctly?

D: Absolutely. That'd be awesome. Can you recommend a course that'd help me with those things?

J: Sure, I have just the course for you. It's called "Empathy in the workplace".

D: But that's ... the same course as you offered me before. Have you just been manipulating me?

J: Possibly. A lot of people think empathy is all about being lovely and kind to people – and to a great extent it can be like that. But there's also a dark side to empathy: you can use it to manipulate people. Basically, you can split empathy into two elements: cognitive empathy involves understanding others' emotions, while emotional empathy is all about sharing those emotions – trying to feel what the other person is feeling. Like when you see somebody whack their thumb with a hammer, and you literally feel their pain for a moment.

D: Ouch!

J: Exactly. So it's perfectly possible to have one without the other, which is where manipulation comes in. If you take the time to find out exactly how they're feeling and why, it's much easier to persuade them to do what you want them to. After all, you can't lead them towards your preferred destination if you don't know where they're starting from.

D: Aha ... yes, I see what you mean. Empathy for manipulation. I like that.

J: Well, just because it can be used to manipulate people, it doesn't mean you should. If you're too blatant about it, people will spot the manipulation sooner or later and feel cheated. I think it's better to treat it as persuasion: giving people what they really need, so they come away feeling as if they've won the negotiation. That way, they're more likely to keep coming back for more.

D: Definitely. Great. So can you give me some examples of techniques to develop empathy?

J: Well, I bet you can think of some for yourself. What do you think?

D: Er ... ask open-ended questions and pay close attention to their answers. I mean, really home in on what the other person is saying. Allow them sufficient time to gather their thoughts and then be patient while they're expressing those thoughts out loud. And, er ... actually care about how they feel, rather than just feigning interest. Is that right?

J: Sounds like you're a natural. You're going to love the course.

D: I'm sure I will. I'm really looking forward to it. Thanks so much for listening to me!

J: No problem at all. That's my job.

5 NEWS TRAVELS FAST

Listening Part 4 Multiple matching

Speaker 1:

It's embarrassing, but when my best friend told me she was getting engaged, I felt like I'd been hit by a ton of bricks. We'd been such good friends since childhood, and I didn't want anything to spoil that amazing relationship. I feel really guilty about it now, but although I smiled through gritted teeth, I left my friend in no doubt she'd let me down. To my shame, I kept that up for a few weeks until I realised how much my friend and I needed each other, and that it was my own behaviour that was tearing us apart. So I made a concerted effort, day in, day out, to be happy for my friend, and it seems to have paid off. We're still just as close as before, maybe even closer after my decision to put my friendship before my ego.

Speaker 2:

The most disgraceful news I've ever received was when I was told I was being made redundant via SMS after being a loyal employee for so many years. A few days later, I received a phone call to explain it had all been an administrative error, and I wasn't being fired after all. But what should have come as a relief served instead as a wake-up call that my employers could be so callous and incompetent. That's when I knew it was finally time to go it alone, an idea I'd been toying with for years. Since then, I've been my own boss, which is a far healthier way of organising my life. Looking back, it's infuriating that they treated me that badly, but at the time it was as if it was happening to someone else.

Speaker 3:

My dream to become a vet dates back to my pre-teens. You see, I'd been pestering my parents for years to get me a puppy, and it had become something of a battle of wills. When they finally relented, you might expect me to have felt overjoyed at the news. But I'd never believed my self-centred wish would come true. When it did, to my shame, I felt a sense of dread: would I really have to take it for long walks twice a day, all by myself, as I'd promised repeatedly? Eventually, I got over my qualms, fulfilled my obligations and discovered the satisfaction of taking responsibility for other living creatures that depend on you entirely, which seems to have been what set me on the path I ended up on. As for those long walks, my parents often joined me, so they were nothing like as lonely as I'd imagined.

Speaker 4:

Throughout my childhood, my parents had pushed me towards a career in medicine, just like my self-satisfied so-called genius older sister. Whenever asked about my plans, I'd mindlessly repeat the mantra about becoming a doctor, without questioning what I really wanted. But when my school-leaving exam results arrived, leaving my career plans in tatters, my parents were knocked for six – and weren't exactly supportive in my hour of need either. As for me, it dawned on me how much I'd been privately dreading medical school and that for the first time in my life, I was free to choose my own path. I still had no idea what to do instead of becoming a doctor, but I realised it was a decision I'd have to take for myself.

Speaker 5:

When a national newspaper announced it was looking for a young person for a three-month unpaid internship, I sent off my application immediately, never in a million years believing I stood the faintest chance, and waited nervously to hear back. Eventually, I got the news I'd been dreaming of – I'd been accepted! It was only later that I started thinking through the downsides of working for free, which would have meant asking my parents to support me financially - something I was reluctant to do. After a great deal of soul-searching, I turned down the offer. It was one of the hardest choices of my life, but the right one – I realise now the value of weighing things up properly. Shortly afterwards, I landed a well-paid job with a rival paper, so it worked out perfectly in the end.

6 HIGHS AND LOWS

Listening Part 1 Multiple choice

L = Lewis K = Karen W = Woman H = HR manager J = Javier

Extract One

You hear a conversation between two friends.

L: How was your first day at the office, Karen?

K: A bit of a nightmare, to be frank. When I arrived, nobody was even expecting me. I showed the receptionist the message from the boss, instructing me to come in today, but he claimed not to have been informed about it. Apparently, the boss was away and seems to have overlooked to mention my recruitment to anyone else.

L: That's so rude!

K: I suppose she might simply have too much on her plate. You can't really blame her.

L: Yeah, yeah. Nobody's too busy for common courtesy! What happened next?

K: The production manager got me inputting data into a computer system, but I kept making mistakes.

L: I'm not surprised! Didn't you ask for help?

K: Sure! But whenever I asked a question, the manager rolled his eyes as if I was a waste of space. I guess it was the last thing the poor guy needed – a clueless rookie to train up unexpectedly.

L: I know how he feels, but that's hardly your fault. I'm sure you'll be an invaluable team member once you've learnt the ropes.

K: Well, I'm not going back. If they want good people to work there, they'd better make them feel a bit more welcome!

Extract Two

You hear part of a lecture about hyperinflation.

W: In a nutshell, hyperinflation is when price rises spiral out of control. Most economists classify it as a monthly rate of 50% or more, which doesn't sound so terrible, but it's equivalent to almost 13,000% in a year. The most extreme example was Hungary in 1946, when prices more than tripled every day. Imagine working all month, but by the time you received your wages, they'd be barely enough to buy a loaf of bread. Under such conditions, workers tend to demand payment on a daily basis and in non-monetary form, or in more stable currencies.

In most cases, hyperinflation stems from governments creating money without backing it up with tangible assets like gold deposits. This is always tempting for the powers that be. After all, who wouldn't love to be able to mint as much money as they wanted? This was easier said than done centuries ago, when all money took the form of metal coins with their own inherent production and distribution costs, but those constraints no longer applied after the introduction of paper money. As we move towards wholly electronic money, this temptation is likely to be even harder for desperate governments to resist.

Extract Three

You hear part of a salary negotiation in an office.

H: Ah, Javier, come in. What can I do for you?

J: I'd like to request a pay rise.

H: I see. As you know, we have pay bands for employees at different levels of the organisation. You're in band C, as far as I remember.

J: Exactly. But I'm not asking you to increase everybody in band C's pay, just mine. I believe I deserve at least a 10% increase, due to my impact on the company's bottom line.

H: Whether you deserve it or not is irrelevant, I'm afraid. Paying you more than others within your band would be sure to undermine staff morale.

J: What if I were to move up to a higher band?

H: That's something to discuss with your line manager at your next annual review, but it would depend on vacancies for higher level positions, of which there are none right now.

J: Well, that makes my decision much easier.

H: What decision?

J: To accept a position with our competitors for 10% more money. I wasn't convinced it was the right thing to do, but everything's much clearer now.

7 WORKING IT OUT

Listening Part 3 Multiple choice

M = Marta A = Alex

M: So how was the job interview, Alex?

A: Really weird, Marta! I bluffed my way through most of the questions, but there was one that totally stumped me: 'How many tennis balls would fit into this room?'

M: Sounds like a BOTEC question to me – a back-of-the-envelope calculation. They're becoming increasingly common during job interviews.

A: I don't get it. Why on earth would anyone want to fill the interview room with tennis balls?

M: That's not what they were trying to get at. It's all about seeing how different interviewees handle seemingly unanswerable questions. Do they simply throw in the towel? Or do they make a go of it? If so, what techniques do they use to arrive at their answer?

A: That doesn't bode well for me, then. I just shrugged my shoulders and claimed ignorance. When they pushed me to hazard a guess, I blurted out the first number that popped into my head, a quarter of a million. What would you have done?

M: I'd have said something like this. A tennis ball is about 10 centimetres long, so you could get about a hundred in a square metre, and a thousand in a cubic metre. How big was the room?

A: Maybe ten metres by eight. And let's say 2½ metres high.

M: OK, so 80 times 2½ is 200 cubic metres. If there are a thousand tennis balls in each cubic metre, that's 200,000 altogether.

A: So my guess was pretty accurate. Cool!

M: Yeah, but also irrelevant. They were more interested in your approach to problem-solving, which you completely flunked.

A: I still don't see why it's important. If they really want to measure something, surely they should actually measure it, not just guess.

M: Sure, but some things are impossible to measure. They're often called Fermi problems, after the ground-breaking nuclear physicist Enrico Fermi, who had an uncanny knack for making accurate estimates with little or no actual data. Some universities hold Fermi Olympiads, with teams competing to answer questions like 'How many molecules of air are there in this room?'

A: So they're basically pointless brain games, then, for showing off how clever you are?

M: Far from it! Perhaps the most famous Fermi problem is, 'How many planets in our galaxy are there with intelligent civilisations?' – apart from our own, of course.

A: And? How many are there?

M: Well, scientists use a formula called the Drake Equation with seven different unknowns that have to be multiplied together. The current lowest estimates are basically zero, but the high estimates suggest there may be fifteen and a half million other such planets.

A: So basically, nobody knows ... yet.

M: Well, those variables definitely need tightening up before they narrow it down to a more useful number. But we're on the right track – at least we have a formula, which turns pure guesswork into something far more scientific!

A: Still feels a bit pie in the sky to me, but it's a start, I suppose.

M: OK, here's a question for you. How many petrol stations are there in Paris?

A: I haven't the foggiest.

M: So break it down. How many people live in Paris?

A: Let's say 10 million, but it depends what constitutes 'Paris' I guess – just the city, or the surrounding area too.

M: OK. And how many people are there for each petrol station?

A: Well, I guess each station gets a few hundred customers each day, maybe a thousand a week. Not everyone fills up once a week, as I do. And there are also a lot of non-drivers or infrequent drivers, especially in a big city with good public transport, perhaps four or more for every frequent driver. So I'll say 10 thousand people.

M: Good. So how many petrol stations are there in Paris?

A: 10 million divided by 10 thousand – a thousand. How does that sound?

M: Let's Google it ... 938, apparently.

A: Hah! I'm getting good at this.

M: You are! Another use of these techniques is as sanity checks.

A: What's that?

M: A way to check a figure after you've done a proper calculation. Coming back to your tennis ball problem, imagine you've hired someone to actually fill that room with tennis balls, and after a week of work they claim to have used 800,000 balls, which you now have to pay for. What's your reaction?

A: No way! We estimated 200,000. The true answer might be half that, or twice that, but I can't believe it'll be four times our estimate. They must've cheated.

M: Yes, or we may have messed up with our estimate. Either way, we need to do some more research before paying their invoice. And that's the value of a sanity check.

8 HUMAN IMPACT

Listening Part 2 Sentence completion

As an environmentalist, I work in the Campo-Ma'an National Park in Cameroon, which is part of the huge Congo basin, home to the world's second largest tropical rainforest, the Congolian Rainforest, which stretches over much of west equatorial Africa. Its dense tropical peatlands make it a carbon sink, one of the world's biggest. As such, it absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, which helps to curb global warming. In fact, the Congo Basin sucks about 4% of global CO_2 emissions out of the atmosphere each year. In contrast, most other rainforests actually emit more carbon than they absorb.

My work can be pretty disheartening most of the time, with so many ecosystems under threat and myriad species facing extinction. That's why on those rare occasions when some encouraging news comes in, we want to shout it from the rooftops. Not only because it cheers us up, I might add, but because it often precipitates the release of additional funds that support the vital work of myself and my fellow conservationists.

The rainforest is also a biodiversity hotspot, hosting numerous species of plants, over 1000 species of birds, hundreds of species of fish and mammals, including okapi, forest elephants, chimpanzees, bonobos and western lowland gorillas - the world's most threatened primate species.

Unfortunately, the forest is under threat from a range of human activities, including deforestation (both of the commercial and illegal variety) and encroachment by palm oil plantations. The region's colossal store of fossil fuels also makes it enticing for energy businesses. Ironically, the forest is even threatened by the renewable energy sector, which relies on the mining of scarce minerals that are relatively abundant in the Basin.

Coming back to my work, one of Africa's most iconic mammals is the leopard, which once roamed over vast swathes of the continent, but has now been deprived of around a third of its former range. Leopards were long thought to have been wiped out entirely from most areas of the Congo Basin, including Campo-Ma'an National Park, owing to habitat fragmentation and destruction, loss of prey and, above all, illegal poaching. Humans have been persecuting leopards throughout history, especially in retribution for real and perceived livestock loss, but also as a kind of trophy kill – a way for hunters to show off their prowess with a spear, bow and arrow, or shotgun. The upshot of all of this is that for over twenty years, not a single leopard was sighted here, so we'd all but lost hope of its survival.

But then, a few years ago, an adult leopard was caught on camera for the first time. You see, we'd set up 19 camera traps across the park in an effort to track the movements of endangered forest elephants. Such traps are designed to be triggered by movement of larger creatures, and because the cameras are far more unobtrusive than human-operated cameras, and can be deployed so widely and cheaply, they have become a vital source of conservation data in recent years. For example, a team of researchers recently used a similar network of traps to establish the existence of lowland gorillas in central mainland Equatorial Guinea.

There was only a solitary leopard in the photo, but of course it's unlikely to be the only one within the national park, so we can now go about the daunting task of ascertaining their number and location. The presence of the leopard has helped us to access funds in order to

expand our network of camera traps, so we're optimistic that it's only a matter of time before more are snapped.

Leopards are apex predators, which means they sit at the top of the food chain, and therefore have a disproportionate impact on the entire ecosystem. In consequence, any fluctuations in their population can have substantial knock-on effects on all the wildlife lower down the food chain. That's why it's so imperative to study leopards, so as to better comprehend how to protect their habitat and plan strategies, in partnership with local communities, who of course are directly impacted by our conservation efforts, and the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife in Cameroon, to help them to thrive.

Part 4 Multiple matching

Speaker 1:

I'm extremely troubled by the climate crisis, so whenever I'm obliged to take a plane for work, I feel deeply conflicted. I'd love to stop flying entirely, but it's a vital part of my professional duties. That's why it was a relief to see the option of paying my usual carrier for carbon offsets. For every kilogram of carbon emitted, one kilo is absorbed, for example by planting more trees. Sadly, these offsets turned out to be a scam to extract money from environmentally conscious customers, with little by way of tree-planting going on. Fortunately, not all offsetting schemes are scams, so next time, I'll research the most scrupulous ones so as to make my own arrangements, even if there's a risk that I'll end up out of pocket.

Speaker 2:

I read an article recently about cruelty-free cosmetics, and it mentioned a rabbit icon that shows they've never been tested on animals. As animal cruelty is something I abhor, when I spotted a rabbit logo on a bottle of shampoo last month, I snapped it up immediately, despite the eye-watering price. But this morning, as I was about to recycle the empty bottle, I realised that the logo bore no more than a passing resemblance to the one from the article. I reckon if I were to go through the ingredients list, it'd turn out to contain all sorts of dodgy stuff. I'm absolutely furious to have been taken in like that, but at least I'll know exactly what not to do next time.

Speaker 3:

As an eco-blogger, , the whole idea of plastic waste is a pet peeve of mine and thankfully, due to my own faux pas, I'm well placed to get the word out there. With any luck, anyone who's like-minded won't repeat my error. The thing is, I noticed an exotic brand of body lotion that came in a paper bottle, I was intrigued as to how the paper didn't leak. The bottle itself was all green, with pictures of leaves, trees and even a 'happy Earth'. It was surprisingly affordable, so I grabbed one. Today, having used all the body lotion, I was finally able to investigate the packaging. To my horror, the inside of the paper is lined with a layer of plastic! And because they're glued together, I'm not sure if it's even recyclable!

Speaker 4:

I've been looking forward to performing at tomorrow's arts festival for months, so you can imagine my shock when I arrived at the venue today to discover it was being sponsored by an oil company. It's such a blatant attempt to burnish their image by associating with an esteemed cultural event: "Perhaps fossil-fuelled vehicles aren't so bad after all, because these artists seem to support them." Well, I'll make sure none of my audience is left in the slightest doubt how I feel. I'm not surprised at the oil company for trying it on like that, but I can't believe the organisers kept quiet about it. If I'd known, I'd never have allowed my reputation to be tarnished in this way.

Speaker 5:

I started buying free-range eggs a few years ago, not only because I hate the idea of hens being cooped up all day, but also because I was keen to avoid food contaminated with hormones and antibiotics. But it turns out I should have been buying organic eggs instead, which are much more tightly regulated – hence the substantially higher price. Apparently, 'free range' is a fairly loose and potentially misleading phrase which doesn't necessarily mean the chickens are free to spend long, happy lives wandering around grassy fields, as the picture on the box implies. Anyway, I've made the switch now, so my conscience is a lot clearer about the impact I'm having on those hens.

9 BY DESIGN

Listening Part 2 Sentence completion

As I'm an artist, I'd like to start by showing you my paintings. This first one shows a cityscape by night. This next one is a forest scene, painted on a glorious spring morning.

I should add at this point that I'm totally blind, so these paintings have been created using only my mind's eye, so to speak. To be clear, I don't expect special dispensation as an artist just because I can't see. I'd like you to judge them on their own merit. I believe my lack of vision actually allows me to perceive the world in an unconventional, yet aesthetically pleasing, way, with any luck!

Most people who are classed as blind actually have some ability to see, albeit severely constrained. For example, they may be able to perceive light, colour and some movement. Many blind artists fall into this category, and their ability to transform the limited input from their eyes into paintings blows my mind.

In addition, many artists were formerly able to see normally, before an accident or illness rendered them blind, so they often paint from memory. If they were already an accomplished artist before losing their sight, they may also use a certain degree of muscle memory, so their hands can paint familiar objects without deliberate control from the brain.

A third type of blind artist uses touch to build 3-D mental models of objects or people, then sculpts either a literal representation of what they have perceived or else a more abstract interpretation, with some features distorted or exaggerated, to striking effect.

As for me, I fall into a very small category of 2-D artists who have been totally blind since birth. So you may be wondering how on earth I do it. The key is that I've had an immensely supportive and patient family who have taken the time to

painstakingly describe every aspect of the world around me, year after year. My parents used to take me for long walks through forests and describe everything in powerfully evocative language – not just the objects they could see, but also the nuances of light and shade, the subtle differences in colour, and so on. This non-stop narration allowed me to construct a 3-D model of the world inside my mind, such that soon, I genuinely felt that I could see the forest in some way.

I began drawing initially by etching marks in wooden surfaces, which I could feel with my fingers. Crucially, my parents gave me detailed feedback on my etching – where I was going wrong in my shading, for example – which enabled me to nail that particular skill after a while. As I progressed to drawing with coloured pencils, it took a great deal of trial and error to get it right.

Coloured pencils are terrific up to a point, but you can't feel their texture on the page. Water colours never worked for me at all, because they just feel wet to the touch, which is meaningless to me. I experimented a few times with oil paints, which have a lovely 3D texture once they set, but I always ended up covered in sticky paint! Eventually, I stumbled across acrylic paints, which share that wonderful texture while drying a lot more quickly. So now I paint by building up layers of colours, which allows me to perceive my paintings while they're in progress – although I still sometimes end up covered in paint!

Coming back to the paintings I showed at the beginning, they are created inside my imagination, but they're composites of thousands of views that have been explained to me over the years. Inevitably, I perceive the world differently, which some critics may see as a disadvantage, but fortunately the people who buy my work see it as a plus. While it's wonderful for my work to be appreciated by my respected peers and discerning clients, I still paint mainly because I feel a powerful urge to make sense of the world around me, and to capture that in my art. If others like what I do too, then all the better.

10 ADAPTATION

Listening Part 4 Multiple matching

Speaker 1:

The idea of passive income, which comes in regardless of whether you're working, has always been appealing. That's how I got into self-publishing, initially with a set of instruction manuals, of all things. Once that stream was flowing, after some wrong turns that nearly ended my career, I could finally turn to something that would give me a sense of fulfilment: a fictionalised account of my childhood, which had been on my to-do list for ages. You might call it self-indulgent to put my younger self at the forefront of my work, potentially putting readers off, and I was wracked with self-doubt in this respect, but now I realise that all fiction is to some extent autobiographical, and I'm relieved to have found a ready audience for my work.

Speaker 2:

I've been making a decent income as a ghost writer of celebrity autobiographies for years, so you might say I've been writing fiction all along – there's certainly plenty of embellishment of the truth to make it more sensational. Having honed my talent for engaging narratives in other people's names, it felt like the natural next step to apply those skills to something more creative. I'd assumed it was a matter of coming up with a strong plot, then following the well-trodden path of turning it into a full-blown novel, but I couldn't have been further from the truth. When it finally came out, after countless revisions, it was universally panned by the critics, for good reason. Hence my decision to revert to what I know best!

Speaker 3:

It very nearly didn't happen at all, after hackers took control of my computer and corrupted my files, including my almost-complete manuscript. Fortunately, I had printouts of earlier versions, so I was able to painstakingly reconstruct most of it eventually and may even have added improvements along the way. My publishers were certainly relieved, after the sizable advance they'd paid me, and although I'd originally agreed to write the thing on a whim – flattery having been a major influence – I felt a strong sense of commitment to see it through. I still have a nagging doubt that the book's success is more about my earlier reputation as an actor, rather than any inherent quality in the writing, but I'm prepared to let that go!

Speaker 4:

As a person with dyslexia, I struggled in English lessons at school, and was told in no uncertain terms that my writing was dreadful. But I used to have such a vivid imagination, such that I could create entire worlds in my mind, with dozens of characters and intertwining plotlines. So as not to lose track of who had said what to whom, I started committing my stories to paper, and eventually, after a lot of encouragement from friends and family, I decided to take the plunge and get them professionally edited, despite my being continually racked by self-doubt. They still needed a lot of refinement before being fit to publish, but my editors provided invaluable guidance along the way.

Speaker 5:

It started out as an accident, when I was still a drama student. Some friends and I put on a comedy show, and I was tasked with scripting some sketches. One of my early drafts involved an overly complex dialogue between a plaintive alien and the earthling he encounters during an accidental visit to Earth. That particular script was too shallow and didn't make the cut, but I kind of identified with the grumpy space traveller character I'd created and ended up writing a lengthy backstory for him, which gradually morphed into a sci-fi trilogy! Despite frantic work commitments, I was driven by an uncontrollable urge to get it out of my system. Gratifyingly, when it finally came out, it seems to have caught the vibe within a certain niche.

Part 2 sentence completion

Now that English is so dominant globally, it's easy to forget that people on the British Isles once spoke languages from a very different family: Celtic. These seem to have originated in a quiet corner of the Alps two and a half

thousand years ago, and gradually expanded from this ancient heartland until, at their peak, their area of influence stretched over a vast swathe of Europe from Spain to modern-day Turkey. Much of this territory fell to the Roman Empire, and most Celtic languages were replaced by Latin and its descendants, plus languages that arrived on the scene later.

The only exceptions where Celtic languages survived were in the northern and western parts of the British Isles never colonised by the Romans: Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Cornwall. After the fall of the Roman Empire in France, many speakers of Cornish, the Celtic language of Cornwall, emigrated to the Brittany Peninsula in northern France, where their language morphed over the centuries into Breton, the only Celtic language still widely spoken in mainland Europe, with between 200,00 and 300,000 speakers.

Back in Britain, Celtic languages faced a vicious onslaught in the 5th century from a new set of invaders: the Anglo-Saxons, whose language is now known as Old English. These interlopers from northern Europe asserted their control over modern-day England and beyond, pushing the Celtic languages to an ever-shrinking periphery on the far north and west.

In Ireland, the Gaelic language thrived for much longer. Indeed, by the 10th century, it had spread into the Isle of Man, becoming the Manx language, and Scotland, where Scottish Gaelic replaced an earlier Celtic language, Pictish. However, these three Gaelic languages were threatened by the encroachment of English, especially from the 18th century.

Irish Gaelic survived mainly in the sparsely populated western fringes of Ireland, before undergoing a revival in modern times, while English dominated in the larger population centres.

Scottish Gaelic survives as a native language mainly in the highlands and islands, with about 57,000 fluent speakers. Interestingly, there are speakers of Scottish Gaelic in Nova Scotia in Canada, the result of an 18th century influx of Gaelic speakers. Despite their tiny numbers and the precariousness of their language, this remote outpost of Scottish Gaelic has spawned several prominent literary figures, including Lewis MacKinnon, an award-winning Canadian Gaelic poet.

The third Gaelic language, Manx, went extinct on the Isle of Man in 1974, with the death of a man considered the last speaker to have grown up in a Manx-speaking environment. However, in recent years, there have been concerted efforts to bring the language back from the dead, with a number of people claiming some level of proficiency, a great example of what community leaders can achieve when they set their mind to it.

Coming back to the non-Gaelic Celtic languages, Welsh also came close to extinction. By 1900, it was already a minority language in Wales, and monolingual speakers of Welsh all but disappeared over the next hundred years. Just like the other endangered Celtic languages, dedicated activists pushed hard to preserve it, with impressive results from the beginning of the 20th century. Welsh is now spoken to some degree by come 900,000 people in Wales, plus a small community of fluent speakers of Patagonian Welsh in Argentina.

Finally, my own language, Cornish, was long thought to have died along with its reputed last native speaker, Dolly Pentreath, in 1777, although it now seems a handful of speakers kept the language alive surreptitiously, presumably due to relentless persecution from the English-speaking elite. This remote corner of England, neglected by the rest of the country except as a tourist hotspot, has always had a distinct identity, which is feeding current efforts to revive the language and culture.

In 2010, UNESCO officially changed its designation of Cornish from extinct to critically endangered. It is estimated that there are now about 400 advanced speakers, along with thousands more with limited skills in the language, which is currently being taught in some local primary schools. Perhaps one day soon, the first native speaker of Cornish for two and a half centuries will be born.

11 TALK OF THE TOWN

Listening Part 1 Multiple choice

Extract 1

You hear a woman talking about her childhood in the countryside.

W: When I was about ten, we uprooted to a quaint village in the English countryside – the kind that you see on TV and muse about how wonderful it must be to escape from the hustle and bustle of the city. I'm not sure my parents were driven by the idea of idyllic surroundings for children to grow up, but that's how they sold it to us at the time. Looking back, it seems to have been rather more prosaic. The house they bought was certainly generous in terms of square metres and right up there in terms of glamour when compared with what they could have afforded in a city.

It wasn't exactly off the beaten track, but the lack of kids of my own age, coupled with the appalling public transport network and winding roads that were too dangerous to ride a bike on, meant I spent much of my youth feeling trapped and alone. The picturesque views, so enchanting initially, felt bleak and oppressive.

When I hit 18 and had the opportunity to up sticks to head to uni, I didn't hesitate to choose a buzzing urban centre with a thriving student social life and buses and trams galore. I've never looked back since.

Extract 2

You will hear two friends discussing some old buildings.

M: Why don't they demolish those derelict factories? What an eyesore!

W: Seriously? They're part of the city's heritage. This whole district used to be the throbbing heart of the city, with tens of thousands of workers churning out vast quantities of high-quality manufactured goods.

M: That's as may be, but we can't live in the past. The present needs of the city surely trump nostalgia about dilapidated factories. Today's inhabitants need affordable housing, office spaces, somewhere to relax and socialise.

W: Just because they're in dire need of sprucing up, it doesn't mean we have to rip up the old to replace it with the new. There's massive untapped demand for warehouse conversions, both for residential and commercial purposes. People will fork out a fortune to live and work in a place with a sense of history.

M: Actually, you're talking about a modest but vocal niche. Converting old factories is a logistical nightmare, what with all the toxic chemicals, unstable structures, poor infrastructure, and so on. It's far better value for money to start from scratch, and with most locals on a tight budget, that's all that matters.

Extract 3

You will hear part of a lecture about the psychology of cities.

W: You can all probably think of different cities that are known for their traditional mindset, their innovativeness, their rebelliousness. But what does it mean to talk about the personalities of cities? It certainly sounds like pseudo-science, doesn't it? In fact there's a simple mechanism to explain it: once a city gains a reputation for a particular trait, perhaps as a result of a few well-known residents, or an influential institution such as a university or theatre, then as the years pass, newcomers with similar characteristics are attracted, perhaps subconsciously, while those who don't identify with them are put off, accentuating the city's personality in the process.

A recent study set out to demonstrate whether living in a city whose personality matches your own can improve your self-esteem. And indeed the researchers identified such a relationship, although it was dwarfed by the far more powerful connection between certain personality traits, such as extroversion and self-esteem, which has long been proven to exist. The researchers noted the need for caution as to the direction of causation, however. It may be simply that people with greater self-esteem tend to have the self-confidence to take control over their residency.

Part 3 Multiple choice

I = Interviewer R = Robert S = Susan

I: Now let's turn to a concept that has raised a lot of hackles recently: 15-minute cities. I'm joined by Dr Robert O'Keefe, a keen advocate of such cities, and Susan Travis MP, who is spearheading a campaign to prevent their expansion. Dr O'Keefe, what exactly is a 15-minute city?

R: In a nutshell, it's a city where every resident can access everything they need for day-to-day living, including shops, schools, offices, medical centres, sports amenities and open spaces, within a fifteen-minute walk or cycle ride from their homes. The concept arose from the rapid and often chaotic growth of cities in recent times, and the inherent unfairness in their layout, such that most people need a car to go about their daily business, leaving those who are unwilling or unable to use a car at a distinct disadvantage.

I: That sounds reasonable, doesn't it, Susan Travis?

S: Well, when presented in such terms, yes, it sounds like a modern utopia, where residents are free to leave their cars at home while they walk or cycle to their heart's content. Personally, I enjoy a good stroll or bike ride in the countryside, so I can see the attraction. In reality, this is not about freedom of choice, because you won't have the option of leaving your car at home. For one thing, all of the parking spaces will have been converted into children's play areas and open-air cafés, and for another, even if you can find a place to store your car, you'll be hit by a hefty fine for every day it's within the city boundaries. This is nothing more than a full-on attack on car-owners, who form a sizeable majority in this country, let's not forget, both in rural and urban areas.

R: Just because we own a lot of cars, it doesn't mean we're wedded to them. The automobile is the scourge of the modern city in a host of ways. Most obviously, they spew unimaginable levels of pollution into the atmosphere, which is detrimental both for the health of city dwellers and for our planet as a whole. Not only do cars kill or maim thousands of people each year, but they also turn whole neighbourhoods into no-go areas for kids and cyclists. They take up a ludicrous amount of space: just consider all those roads, which seem to be permanently clogged, not to mention the thousands of parking spaces required. But perhaps their most profound impact is the way they precipitate the fragmentation of our lives, with workplaces remote from residential areas, out-of-town supermarkets elsewhere, and so on. In other words, cars make us ever more dependent on cars, in a never-ending death spiral. You talk about freedom of choice, but car-centric cities only ever have one option: more cars.

S: So your solution is to ban them? Is that what you're saying?

R: No, Susan. The solution is to discourage them. A small minority will continue to need their cars, and if they're prepared to pay for the privilege, they may even find their lives have become easier, once all the traffic jams have disappeared.

S: What utter nonsense!

I: So is that your main complaint, Susan? That fifteen-minute cities will make life harder for those of us who can't part with our cars?

S: It's certainly a strong argument, but it's about something far more fundamental than that. It's about governments attempting to control every aspect of our lives, by

planning all the places we're allowed to visit within our own designated zones. What happened to spontaneity? Can't we allow our cities to grow organically, without some master plan to decide what must go where? Before we know it, we'll need permits to leave our zones. Believe me, it's a slippery slope. The technology already exists: facial recognition software will monitor those who attempt to leave their zones too frequently, or whose carbon footprint is deemed unacceptable by the powers-that-be.

R: Oh come on, Susan. You know as well as I do that that's simply a groundless conspiracy theory, invented by social media warriors with too much time on their hands and axes to grind. Nobody is suggesting limiting what people are allowed to do within cities, and the idea of permits to leave zones is simply fiction. To be honest, I can't believe you'd sink so low as to peddle such nonsense.

S: I suggest you do some research, Robert. You'll be amazed at what you find.

R: I have done my research! I've dedicated my life to researching such issues, and all the credible research points to 15-minute cities vastly improving everyone's lives, not to mention the environment. I've also extensively studied the strident claims you're making, and I can assure you they've been thoroughly debunked, every one of them.

I: Right, well, we need to take a short break now, but we'll continue this discussion in a moment.

12 ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Listening Part 1 Multiple choice

Extract 1

You hear a motivational speaker giving a talk to a group of people.

M: The message to take away from today's session is that the barriers holding you back are overwhelmingly in your head. You need to silence the inner voice telling you you're not good enough to fulfil your dreams, that you're not ready, that you'll be poked fun at for even trying. Yes, you can never make full provision for what life throws at you, no matter how hard you try. And yes, you may raise a few eyebrows by engendering important life changes. But we're talking about a tiny minority, whose derogatory comments aren't worth even a second of your thoughts.

Now, you may be thinking, it's all very well for him to tell us to change our lives, but what does he know about the difficulties we're facing? I don't claim to know what you're each going through, but I've been in this business long enough to realise that no challenges are insurmountable, and in fact many of those who've turned their lives around have gone on to achieve great things despite – maybe even because of – formidable personal circumstances. It's time to shake off your past and look forward to a bright future. Who's with me?

Extract 2

You will hear two friends talking about running.

W: How did you get into running?

M: I used to run to keep in shape in my youth, but as my career took off, I let it lapse, with never enough hours in the day. Then we happened to get a puppy, and because I work from home, it fell to me to take her for long daily walks.

W: Couldn't you have kept them short?

M: I tried, but then she'd pester me until I relented and took her out again. Those long treks really ate into my working day, so I figured I'd need to squeeze them into shorter periods – hence the running. I'm still not up to my previous levels of fitness, but I'm getting there. What about you?

W: I can't imagine life without running. I'm hooked on the feel-good endorphins released into my bloodstream during a run and really miss them when I'm too confined to my sickbed. Also, all that time alone with my thoughts always triggers a flood of inspiration, doesn't it?

M: Sure. I get a kick from the idea that my immune system is so strong after all those runs in the rain and snow! And I find my head swimming with novel ideas when I'm out and about.

Extract 3

You will hear a woman talking about a sports accident.

W: I've always loved sports – tennis, swimming, everything. In my early teens, I was playing hockey when the ball hit me square on the nose. With blood everywhere, as you can imagine, I was sent to the school nurse with a suspected breakage. I don't remember being checked for possible concussion – the whole event was just a blur to me, and looking back that's probably why. I was convinced I was covered in cuts and remember being almost disappointed once I'd been cleaned up to find no external traces of the accident whatsoever.

The next day, the doctor reassured my parents there was nothing untoward. But she said something that struck me as odd: in your 40s you'll need an operation. I recall thinking, 'How can I be expected to remember that for almost 30 years?', but sure enough, not long after my 40th birthday, it became blindingly obvious I'd need surgery on my internal tubing. For one thing, I was constantly coming down with annoying little colds, but the worst thing was that whenever I went to the pool, I was sneezing for days on end, and I wasn't prepared to go on like that. So I went along with her wise words from long before.