

Proficiency Listening Part 1 – Short extracts

Teacher's notes, transcript and answer key

The following worksheet – taken from Mark Harrison's *New Proficiency Testbuilder*, and updated for 2017 – is intended to help your students prepare for Part 1 of the Listening paper of the Cambridge Proficiency Exam. The audio files can be downloaded from onestopenglish, and the transcript is included below for your convenience.

Transcript

Extract One

Pessimism is deeply ingrained in the British psyche. Pessimism is the natural British condition. There's nothing we relish so much as some bad news. Pessimists never expect their holiday plans to run to schedule. When the plane is delayed at the airport, they sigh: 'I knew this would happen.' When their bags go missing, they accept the loss with stoicism, reasoning: 'It had to be me.' Our administrators are forever being pressed to disclose their 'contingency plans' and 'Plan B'. Plan A is never expected to succeed. This national trait starts in childhood with the Christopher Robin stories. Eeyore, the pessimistic donkey who is always certain his tail will fall off, appeals immediately to the young British reader. He connects with our melancholy, phlegmatic side. Irony, on which so much distinctive British humour is based, has pessimism as its prime ingredient. It thinks the worst.

Extract Two

Brian J. Ford, a microbiologist, is the author of a new book, *The Future of Food*, which attempts to present an accurate and balanced picture of how our diet will shape up in the years to come. He predicts that, in future, food will be selected because of its power to boost the brain, or to delay the onset of senility. We will choose food to enable us to relish life to the fullest extent. Slimming diets, regimes of prescription and proscription, Ford foretells, will give way to a more positive approach that emphasizes the pleasures and health benefits of good food. Ford reckons that, in general, today's junk food will disappear, as nutrient-rich innovations bring us a diet high in

vitamins, minerals and health-giving supplements. Snack foods such as crisps, described as 'puffed-up particles of industrial starch, so rich in salt they could harm a child', will not, he foretells, be with us in their present form two decades hence. He says that we will look back on them as we look back on adulterated foods from a century ago, when flour was expanded with liberal additions of sawdust, lead oxide and powdered chalk.

Extract Three

Thomas Edison, the doyen of inventors, said it first: 'No sooner does a fellow succeed in making a good thing, than some other fellows pop up and tell you they did it years ago.' His rueful observation reflects a fact that anyone who has a good idea will run into soon enough: that creativity is such a precious commodity that when even a tiny bit of it appears, people instantly want to lay claim to it. For most of recorded history, having a bright idea was no protection against being ripped off by the unscrupulous. It's not a whole lot better now, but there is something that, in theory at least, makes sure that the credit and the money for the invention go where they are due: patents. The earliest-known English patent was granted to John of Uytynam, a Flemish stained-glass maker in 1449. John received the same privilege as those granted an English patent do to this day: a 20-year monopoly to exploit the fruits of his ingenuity. In return, he was required to teach his process to native Englishmen. That, too, is still part of the philosophy behind the modern patent: that it doesn't just encourage innovation, but also the spread of that innovation. Inventors don't actually have to hold classes to teach everyone else how to make what they've invented, but they do have to disclose how to do it. And what trouble that has caused ever since. For by revealing exactly what you have done and how, you're putting your intellectual jewels right where other people can get them. Not only that, but by stating what is new about your invention, you are revealing your likely marketing strategy.

Answer key

1. A; 2. B; 3. C; 4. B; 5. C; 6. B

Proficiency Listening Part 1 – Short extracts

You will hear three different extracts. For questions 1–6, choose the answer (A, B or C) which fits best according to what you hear. There are two questions for each extract. In the exam you will hear each extract twice.

Extract One

You hear part of a radio programme about British attitudes.

- 1 The speaker says that one example of British people's pessimism is their ...
- A ... calm response to problems that affect them personally.
 - B ... acceptance of what they are told by administrators.
 - C ... tendency to exaggerate potential problems.
- 2 What does the speaker say about British children?
- A They come to appreciate irony later in life.
 - B It comes naturally to them to be pessimistic.
 - C They are aware of having a peculiar sense of humour.

Extract Two

You hear the introduction to a radio programme about food.

- 3 Brian J. Ford believes that in the future people's attitudes to food
- A will be influenced by discoveries about old age.
 - B will reflect a growing interest in the whole subject of food.
 - C will focus more on what they can eat than on what they shouldn't.
- 4 Ford believes that some of today's snack foods will be regarded as ...
- A ... worse than today's junk food.
 - B ... unsuitable for consumption.
 - C ... more harmful than they really are.

Extract Three

You hear the introduction to a radio programme about inventors.

- 5 The speaker says that Edison's comment ...
- A ... reflects the naivety of inventors.
 - B ... sums up the unpredictability of an inventor's life.
 - C ... is as true today as when he made it.
- 6 What does the speaker say about the rules concerning English patents?
- A He can understand why they remain in force.
 - B They have always put inventors at a disadvantage.
 - C Some inventors do not abide by them.