

END-OF-TERM TEST LISTENING SCRIPT

Allison: Hey Jamal! Good to see you! I think it's been almost six years. You got a job in Korea and left right after graduate school, right?

Jamal: I did. And that was almost six years ago, you're right. I can't believe it's been that long.

Allison: So, how was living there?

Jamal: Though there were some minor difficulties, especially at first, Korea was pretty awesome. I got to know a lot about its culture and meet some pretty fascinating people. I also became pretty fluent in the language after having spent hundreds of hours with my face buried in Korean language-learning textbooks, watching Korean TV shows, and getting to know the people there. It was a great experience overall.

Allison: I'd been wondering if you ended up speaking Korean. You were the one in grad school who always talked about how much you loved to learn new languages. After learning Korean, you now speak what—four languages?

Jamal: Five actually. English, Spanish, French, German, and Korean.

Allison: I forgot about English. Did you learn to read Korean as well?

Jamal: Well, sort of. With Korean, my goal was to communicate in person with people. I focused on listening and speaking primarily, so I never got all that good at reading. They've got this written language system called Hangeul which is very easy to learn, however. The symbols correspond to Korean sounds very well, and there aren't many exceptions to the rules. It's not like English where a G and an H make a G sound, like in 'GHOST' but in a word like 'THROUGH' the two letters are silent, while in 'ROUGH' the G and H make an F sound. It's way easier than learning to read English. The problem with reading Korea for me was that the vocabulary was so difficult to learn. Anyway, I was more interested in the language people used to speak—like slang—than I was with language used in newspapers.

Allison: That's pretty cool. It seems like you're really into the language. So how is it being back in the States?

Jamal: It's been a little unsettling actually. For the first few weeks, I loved being here. I was hanging out with all my friends. I even got to travel around a bit and see my friends in other cities. But after about a month or so, I began feeling a bit depressed. I found myself wanting to return to Korea. I would get infuriated about the smallest of things, like the fact that there are delays on the subway for apparently no reason at all, how slow and dirty the buses in the U.S. are—you know, things like that. And, what was most difficult was when I went to the doctor around that time. Even though I had insurance, I was charged over 150 dollars for a simple check-up and some blood tests. The equivalent procedure in Korea would have been about twenty or thirty dollars at most. I called the insurance company and asked why it had been so costly, and all they said was that I had gone to an out-of-network doctor and that this was the normal fee for out-of-network care, and that I should have looked into the insurer's pricing policies before having the tests done. I was shocked.

Allison: Yea, the healthcare system here is pretty backwards. Are you still frustrated living in the U.S.? It's been three months since you've returned, right?

Jamal: Yea, I've started to feel a bit better recently. Though if things had been worse at the time, I might've moved back to Korea.

Allison: The reverse culture shock was that bad, huh?

Jamal: Yea, I was finding so many things that I disliked about being back in the U.S. It was a tough time for me, but things are much better now.

Allison: Well, I'm glad you've decided to stay. Were you back in Korea, I don't think we would've had the chance to see each other and catch up. We might've had to wait another five years!