

UNIT 1

Lesson 1.4, Listening, Exercise C 1.5 P = Presenter Y = Yasmin

- P: We're all used to hearing about the effects of social media. Even on this show, we often remark how it's possible to have hundreds of 'friends' on Facebook but no friends at all on campus. This inevitably leads to wider issues, and not just for college students. Americans of all ages suffer from social isolation, feelings of exclusion, anxiety, and so on. In the UK, the authorities have come up with an unusual way of tackling the problem. Here to tell us all about it is Professor Yasmin Ahmed, Chair of the Sociology Department. Professor, welcome to our show.
- Y: Thanks. It's good to be here.
- P: So, tell us about this unique approach.
- Y: Well, in 2018, the British Prime Minister appointed a 'minister for loneliness', to address social isolation in the UK.
- P: A minister for loneliness? That has to be a first, doesn't it?
- Y: It certainly is. It's actually the first time a national government has directly tried to address the issue.
- P: So, what's the story? Where did the idea for this appointment come from?
- Y: It came about as the result of a recent survey by the British Red Cross which found that more than nine million British people are frequently or always lonely.
- P: That's a huge number.
- Y: I know! It's a serious problem, but loneliness is often a sad reality in today's modern world, and social isolation can have a negative impact both psychologically and physically. Depression, anxiety and stress are all directly linked to social isolation, and these, in turn, can lead to an increased risk of coronary heart disease, arthritis and type 2 diabetes. And in fact, the situation is quite similar in other countries. For example, a 2018 survey conducted by the global health organization, Cigna, found that nearly half of Americans say that they sometimes or always feel lonely. Another surprising thing which we learned from this research was that the younger generation actually feels lonelier than older people.
- P: Actually, that doesn't surprise me. Young teenagers can often feel socially isolated, can't they?
- Y: That's true, although the report specifically found that people between the ages of 18 and 22 felt the loneliest, despite being around others a lot of the time.
- P: But surely, living alone has a huge influence on loneliness, too?
- Y: Absolutely. In fact, I'd say it's actually the main cause of loneliness among older people. Something like half of people 75 and over in the UK live alone, and many of them find it difficult to get out and meet people.
- P: And this is why the 'minister for loneliness' has been appointed?
- Y: That's right. The creation of this position is an opportunity for people to start talking. To begin a public dialogue – about relationships, communities and mental health in general. The new minister wants to commission a study into the whole issue, and she wants to bring together local councils, community groups and charities, as well as businesses and individuals,

to develop a strategy which will tackle loneliness across the country.

- P: So what can we do, as individuals, to help on campus and in our own communities?
- Y: The most important thing you can do is to make contact – make friends. Not the social media kind! Reach out to classmates or neighbors who you've never really spoken to before. Stop and chat when you see them, instead of hurrying on.
- P: What about older people? Some of our listeners might feel a little awkward about just, well, walking up to somebody and starting a conversation.
- Y: Well. Something else you can do is to offer practical help – taking out the trash or changing a light bulb. Many older people find it difficult to get out at all, so you can offer the person a ride to the hairdresser's or just out to the local grocery store. These activities may seem somewhat boring to you and me, but if you don't see anyone for days on end, or even hear the sound of somebody else's voice, then these small gestures are really important.
- P: Did you hear that, listeners? These are ways – very simple ways – that you can make a real difference ...

UNIT 2

Lesson 2.4, Listening, Exercise B 2.5 P = Presenter G = Gudrun

- P: Hello and welcome to *Health Beat*. Now, we all know that making important lifestyle changes can be difficult – I mean, who hasn't struggled to stick to a New Year's resolution? But why is it so tough to make a meaningful change? Here to help me answer that is well-being coach and best-selling author Gudrun Nair. Gudrun – thanks for coming on the show.
- G: Happy to be here.
- P: So, how can we succeed in making lifestyle changes – which actually last?
- G: Well, I think the most important thing is to be realistic about what you're trying to achieve. All too often, we set ourselves vague or unmanageable goals and fail as a result. Let me give you an example. Say your goal is 'to lose weight'. What does this actually mean? How much weight are you trying to lose? When do you want to lose it by? Why are you trying to lose it? Vague goals like this can actually be pretty demotivating.
- P: So, what's the alternative?
- G: How about something like, *I'm going to lose three kilos in four weeks*. This is a challenging, but realistic goal, and it has a clear time frame.
- P: OK, so what else?
- G: Two words – start slowly. Massive lifestyle changes don't happen overnight – you have to build up to them.
- P: Can you give us an example?
- G: OK, let's say you want to introduce some physical exercise into your routine. If you try to do too much at once, it can all feel a little overwhelming, and this is when people give up. Allocate a particular time of day to exercise and set a time limit – say, ten minutes every morning before work. You'll soon find that it becomes part of your daily routine. After a while, you won't

even think about it. Then, you can move on to your next fitness goal, using the same method.

- P:** Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. So, what about making a list of your goals? Is that actually helpful?
- G:** Uh, it can be, but not the way most people do it. We tend to just write a huge list of everything we want, then forget about it. The lists I work on with my clients are a little different.
- P:** How so?
- G:** Well, first, I ask people to write down their motivation for each goal – why they actually want to make the change.
- P:** So, why it's important to them?
- G:** Right. Next, they make a list of any obstacles they might face – anything that would stop them from making progress.
- P:** OK ...
- G:** And finally, they make a plan of action – what steps they will need to take in order to actually achieve their goal. It's much more than just 'a list' – it helps people focus their ideas.
- P:** OK, I see how that could work.
- G:** Something else which I always say to my clients is – you don't have to do this on your own. A lot of people don't want to talk about their resolutions, as it kind of highlights all of their, ..., failings, their flaws. If we tell our friends that we want to lose weight, for example, it draws attention to the fact that we might be overweight, right?
- P:** True. It can be pretty difficult to talk about your problems – especially with people you know.
- G:** Exactly. But you'll find that if you're honest with your friends or family about what you're trying to achieve, you'll actually get a really positive reaction.
- P:** So, what's the best way to get started?
- G:** Well, why not use social media to your advantage? Share your resolution on Facebook and you'll have hundreds of people to support and encourage you. Committing to the goal in such a public way means there'll be a lot of people waiting to see whether you succeed and, believe me, that really helps with motivation.
- P:** Yeah, I can imagine. It's nice to hear about a positive use of social media for a change.
- G:** Well, social media has actually helped my clients in a lot of ways. For example, I was recently working with someone who had a really poor work–life balance. He rarely got home before eight o'clock in the evening, and by that point, both of his children were in bed. He felt like he never got to see them or his wife. So, to encourage himself to leave work on time, he started posting the exact time he arrived home each day and how much time this allowed him to spend with his family. That way, he could track his progress online.
- P:** And did he achieve his goal?
- G:** He certainly did. He now leaves on time every day and can help put the kids to bed.
- P:** Glad to hear it. So, do you have any final words of advice?
- G:** If nothing else, I think it's important to understand that you have to work hard to make meaningful lifestyle changes.
- P:** Gudrun Nair – thank you for talking to us. Next on the show, we ...

UNIT 3



Lesson 3.4, Listening, Exercise C C = Chuck

C: Good afternoon everybody. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Chuck Adams and I'm a survival expert with over 30 years' experience in some of the harshest environments on the planet. Now, I'm sure many of you heard on the news this week about the very lucky man who survived for 38 days after being shipwrecked on a remote Pacific island. He was spotted by a passing ship, rescued and is now safely home and recovering from his terrifying experience. Well, today, I'm going to be explaining what you should do if you ever find yourself in a similar situation. I think the most important piece of advice I can give – and this is true of many situations in which we find ourselves – is don't panic! Panic is your worst enemy. Provided you stay calm, you have a good chance of surviving. You need to believe that you'll be rescued. Your priorities should be safety, water, shelter and food – in that order. And rescue of course, but that comes later.

So, first of all – safety. The first thing you need to do is to establish what I like to call a 'safe zone'. Start by asking yourself if there are any immediate dangers in the area. For instance, are there any wild animals? Are there rocks or spiky plants which could injure you? You need to be aware of these things. It's extremely important to avoid injury. Out in the wild – with no medication – even a small cut can be fatal.

As soon as you've done that, the next thing to do is to look for water. As long as you have a supply of fresh water, you can actually survive for quite a long time with very little food. Obviously, if you find a stream, then you're very, very lucky! If not, then you need to find a way to collect water – this means collecting rainwater or finding water dripping down cave walls. You could also try to collect water from the leaves of any large plants you can find. It's important that you stay warm and dry and away from insects that might bite you. In other words, you need some kind of shelter. Find a fallen tree. Then collect some large branches and lean them across the fallen tree. Cover these with leaves and smaller branches to protect you from the wind and rain.

On an island, the ocean is an obvious source of food. As well as trying to catch fish, look for limpets – those small shellfish that attach themselves to rocks on the seashore. You will probably find some berries and fruits, too, but how can you figure out if they're safe to eat? Well, first, rub the berry or fruit across your skin. Then, touch it to your lips without eating it. Finally, put a piece of the berry or fruit in your mouth and then spit it out again. Provided there is no strong reaction, it should be safe to eat.

Obviously, getting rescued is your ultimate goal. It's important to remember that somebody is probably out there looking for you, so don't give up hope. An example of this is the man I mentioned at the beginning of the talk. He lit a fire on the beach and the smoke was seen by a rescue ship which had been sent to look for him. So, you need to make some kind of signal in case a plane or ship passes by. A distress signal is simply a pattern of three, such as three blows on a whistle, three flashes of light or even three piles of rocks. You could also use tree branches to spell out a message. Although, remember,

it needs to be really big if it's going to be seen from the air or by a passing ship. Three sailors were rescued in that way a couple of years ago. They wrote the word 'Help' using tree branches on the beach.

So, while I hope that none of you ever do find yourselves alone on a desert island, I hope that the tips I've given you today will help prepare you if you do.

UNIT 4



Lesson 4.4, Listening, Exercise B

4.5 **P = Presenter DS = Dr. Scott R = Richard**

P: Good morning. You're listening to *Future Talk* on Radio 106.7 FM with Nadia Hussein. On today's show, we'll be discussing the use of technology in medicine. My guests are Doctor Anna Scott, of Long Island City Hospital, and Richard Driver, a research scientist at the University of Ohio.

DS and R: Good morning.

P: So Anna, technology is changing the way doctors diagnose, treat and care for their patients. Tell us a little about the developments we can expect to see in the future.

DS: Well, this idea doesn't come from the future – but from the past! Since ancient times, medical practitioners have tried to replace missing body parts using artificial devices. Since then, there have been huge advances obviously, especially in the design and manufacture of artificial limbs.

R: That's true – designers are able to use lightweight plastics and carbon fiber to create the most incredibly lifelike arms and legs which don't look artificial at all.

DS: The really interesting part comes with the *control* of the limb though. Scientists are working on a brain-computer interface which will allow the patient to control his or her artificial limb using brain power alone.

R: Yes, but what you're not explaining is that this development has met with a lot of resistance from patients themselves. The kind of technology you're talking about requires far more complicated and dangerous surgery than that which is currently used to attach a prosthetic arm or leg.

DS: Well, that's true, Richard, but what's your point? We all know that these procedures are delicate, and, yes, they can be dangerous.

R: By definition, somebody who's lost a limb has already had a horrific experience. Many patients just don't want to expose themselves to another extreme procedure.

DS: I agree, Richard, but while there may sometimes be objections from a few patients, I think you'll find that most people want to improve their quality of life as much as they can. They've survived life-changing accidents – they're very brave people – and they're prepared to go that little bit further.

R: I don't know if you would say that if you were in their position.

DS: You're right, but that's why I believe we need to invest more money in this technology, so that we can be sure it's completely safe and 100% successful for every patient before we make it available.

R: Well, surely that's true of every new development, isn't it?

P: OK. Let's move on, shall we? Richard?

R: Well, Nadia, with people living longer than ever, being able to replace parts of the human body when they cease to function

is going to become vital. We hope that one day we'll be able to 3D print replacement organs. Organovo, a US-based medical research company, is currently developing an incredible 'bioprinting' process. Layers of cells called 'bio ink' are built up into carefully calculated designs to create new structures.

DS: Oh, come on. For most people – medical professionals included – the idea of 3D printing new organs is just science fiction.

R: Well, you're obviously wrong, because it's happening – here and now.

DS: You're talking about 3D printing new tissue. We're still years away from what you're suggesting.

R: It's undoubtedly true that this technology is in the early stages, but researchers have already printed small sections of liver tissue in the lab. I don't think it's actually all that unrealistic. Don't forget that medical procedures which are perfectly normal today were just a dream 20 years ago.

P: Anna, can you predict any other ways in which technology will transform patient care?

DS: I remember being terrified the first time that I had to take blood from a patient. Today, robots – which are not affected by anxiety or fear – can easily perform this procedure without making any mistakes. And of course, they will soon be carrying out much riskier, surgical procedures.

P: Maybe so, but a robot isn't the same as a doctor, is it? Patients may not *want* to have an electronic doctor taking their blood. Isn't it possible that the patient's fear may significantly impact their physical well-being?

DS: When I say 'robot', we're not talking about a *Star Wars*-style android! A surgical robot is a mechanical arm to which tiny sensors and cameras are attached. A *human* doctor actually controls the entire procedure – a screen allows him or her to view enlarged 3D images of the inside of the patient's body.

R: I know that, Anna, but the level of risk is crazy! I believe that researchers are trying to develop robotic surgery too fast. There have been a lot of reports about robotic surgical devices making fatal mistakes. While I accept that in some cases these techniques are safe and useful, I just think that people have a tendency to admire anything 'new'. In some cases, the traditional surgical procedure is actually much safer. I, for one, think that some hospitals – especially private ones – are promoting these kinds of technologies in order to impress their patients and get more 'customers', if you like.

DS: Definitely! That *is* an issue, but I don't see why the unethical practices of a few private clinics should stop us from developing life-saving new techniques ...

UNIT 5



Lesson 5.4, Listening, Exercise A

5.5 **P = Presenter A = Aldo M = Mark**

P: Across rural Europe, young people are leaving small towns and villages by the hundreds and possibly even thousands. They leave behind them empty streets, closed schools and cafés and an elderly population. Fields which have been farmed for generations have been abandoned and houses are falling down because there is nobody there to repair them. According to EU statistics, as many as 22% of rural European populations are

elderly. However, some areas and towns are trying to change this trend of rural depopulation.

One person hoping to bring life back to their empty streets is Aldo Conti – a resident of Candela, a small town in south-east Italy. Aldo recently moved back to Candela after living in the UK for ten years, and was devastated to find it much emptier than when he left. I met Aldo last year, when he took me on a tour of the town.

- A: ... and this is the main square.
- P: Wow! It really is empty, isn't it?
- A: Yeah. When I was growing up, the square was full of people on the weekend, but now, everyone's just gone.
- P: And you want to repopulate the entire village? Sounds a bit ambitious.
- A: Haha! Well who doesn't enjoy a challenge? We all know that people are leaving the countryside and heading to urban areas. Here, in Candela, we hope to change that trend and bring life back to our village by encouraging city dwellers to relocate here.
- P: So how is this going to work exactly?
- A: Just think about it. Although most jobs and houses are in urban areas, there are a lot of people who are fed up with their hectic, stressful lifestyle in the city, people who are longing to get away and to live at a slower pace, closer to nature.
- P: Sure. But that's where the jobs are. Why would people want to move here?
- A: Well, for one thing, we are willing to pay people to come and live in Candela! We are offering a fee of between \$800 and \$2,000 to single people and families who are willing to join our community. Six new families have moved in already!
- P: That's incredible! And what are you asking for in return?
- A: New residents will have to commit to living permanently in the village. We will expect them to rent a house here, and we also require them to have a job with a minimum salary. So, they must work and have an income. We especially welcome families with young children as we're hoping to reopen the village school if we have enough students. The reopening of the school, local stores and businesses will create jobs for local people, too, which we hope will also encourage some of our own young people to stay here and not to head for the city.
- P: A similar project is taking place in Saint-Pierre-de-Frugie, in the Dordogne region of south-western France. I spoke to one of the project leaders, Mark Henderson, about how he hopes to breathe life back into the village. So you're not actually from here, are you?
- M: Uh, no. My wife and I moved here about four years ago for a bit of peace and quiet.
- P: Well, you've certainly gotten that!
- M: True – although I didn't think it would be *this* quiet! Our house was pretty cheap and it didn't take long to figure out why. There was no school, no stores, the farms and fields were abandoned, people were leaving. No, people had left – especially the young people, you know?
- P: Aren't the young people always the first to leave?
- M: Absolutely.
- P: So, what changed?

M: Well, as you can see, our village is beautiful.

P: True – the countryside around here is amazing.

M: Right – so we decided to concentrate on that – the natural environment. A team of volunteers started to work in the village – we fixed the fountains and public monuments; we cleared the footpaths and created walking trails. Suddenly we had nature lovers, walkers, campers, all wanting to come and visit our village and stay.

P: That's great. But what about local businesses?

M: Well, we restored one of the bigger, older houses and converted it into a hotel. We've also opened a village store that sells organic produce and the restaurant is open again. We've even created an eco-center which has educational resources and information for visitors. And best of all? We've installed several wind turbines and are now generating our own electricity!

P: Wow! So has it worked? Are people moving back to the village?

M: Well, let me give you a few stats – the population of the village has risen from 360 in 2008 to over 400; 22% of our farmland is used for organic farming – that's compared with 3% in the rest of France; and our school has reopened – there's even a waiting list.

P: That's amazing. I hope it all continues.

UNIT 6



Lesson 6.4, Listening, Exercise B

6.6 A = Anya C = Cleo

- A: Cleo! I was so happy when I got your message. I haven't seen you in ages! How are you? Are you still living in Philadelphia?
- C: It's so great to see you, too, Anya! Yes, I am. I'm married now and I have two children.
- A: That's fantastic! Girls, boys? How old are they?
- C: My daughter's 6 and my son's 12.
- A: 12? That's amazing! How's he doing in school? It's not so bad at that age, is it? It's when they're 15 or 16 that things start to get a bit tough – a lot of pressure ...
- C: Well, the thing is, Anya ...
- A: ... what with exams and so on. I know my daughter finds it quite stressful. She's about to take her exams and, well, she has a lot on her plate. Still, it's worth it, in the end, isn't it? I mean, to improve their job prospects.
- C: Actually, neither of my children go to school.
- A: Seriously?
- C: Yes, my husband and I homeschool both our children.
- A: You're joking, right? I mean, how will they get the certifications they need to go to college?
- C: Just because they're homeschooled doesn't mean they're not getting an education, Anya. My husband teaches them math and science, and I teach them English literature and essay writing.
- A: Look – I know you studied English Lit, and your husband is a biologist, but, I mean, those aren't the only subjects. What about music, art, geography and, well, everything? Don't you think you've bitten off a little more than you can chew? It's a huge responsibility. How can you provide them with a full curriculum?

- C: We hire tutors for those subjects which we can't teach ourselves, and, as a matter of fact, the kids are getting better grades than some of their peers who go to mainstream schools. They're not required to study subjects they don't like and they do really well in the ones they love. What you don't understand is that they have so many more choices. They're not limited by a rigid school curriculum. They can think outside the box. We go on nature walks and visit art galleries. We do craft projects and experiments. There's so much more flexibility with, well, with the way we do things.
- A: You still haven't explained how you expect them to get into a good college, Cleo.
- C: College isn't everybody's cup of tea. There are other paths in life. Actually, my son wants to set up his own business when he's older. Some of America's most successful businesspeople didn't go to college.
- A: Well, I guess that's true but, what about friends? I mean, one of the main reasons we send our children to school is to learn to socialize. How do you expect them to ... to ... learn to deal with the real world? You can't keep them hidden away at home forever!
- C: I'm sorry, but that's ridiculous. I'm not keeping them 'hidden at home'. As a matter of fact, my son is quite shy, and he found it difficult to cope when he first started high school. That's why we pulled him out.
- A: Oh, come on! You're not helping him to deal with his shyness with your overprotection. He has to learn to deal with difficult people and situations. You're depriving him of the skills he'll need in his adult life.
- C: Well, I for one think that the school environment doesn't prepare you for adult life. Children don't always treat each other well, you know. Quite the opposite in fact. I'm sorry, but you seem to have a very negative attitude.
- A: Look, I'm sorry, Cleo, we seem to have gotten off on the wrong foot. Let's just forget this whole topic of conversation and start again. Umm ... How are your parents?
- C: They're fine, thank you. Look, Anya, it's been nice talking to you, but I have to go. I'll ... maybe I'll see you sometime. Bye.
- A: But ... Cleo!

UNIT 7

Lesson 7.4, Listening, Exercise A 7.5 L = Lecturer

- L: When I was here five years ago, I spoke about the need for society to find creative ways to address the issue of overcrowding in our towns and cities. I wanted to inspire people to make better use of the space we have and many projects since – for example, the revitalization work happening in neighborhoods near Los Angeles – seem to have taken my lead.
- However, space in urban areas is still at a premium. Today's megacities continue to expand at an alarming rate and many experts believe that by 2050, two-thirds of the world's population will be living in urban areas. For generations now, architects have carved out space by building upward. Now, it seems, some city leaders have decided the answer to our problems may lie below ground, and I hope that the projects I'm going to show you today will make you feel the same.

Lesson 7.4, Listening, Exercise B 7.6 L = Lecturer

- L: A great example of how the space below cities can be exploited is the 'Growing Underground' project in the UK. This is London's first and only underground farm – created in old underground tunnels which run 30 meters beneath ground level. The farm is accessed via a London subway station, and if you brave the 129 steps deep into the darkness, you are rewarded with an astonishing sight – rows and rows of perfect green vegetables and herbs packed into clinical white shelving units.
- The farm uses specially designed lighting and watering systems – in fact, it actually uses 70% less water than conventional agricultural methods and 50% less energy. Unlike a regular greenhouse above ground, no extra heat or light is required during the winter months and the temperature in the underground garden is kept at a steady 16 degrees Celsius. And, as it is literally under its customers' feet, delivering the produce to the market and restaurants which it supplies causes very little pollution in terms of transportation.
- And you know what? There are eight huge shelters just like this one spread across the city, just waiting for entrepreneurs like Richard Ballard and Steven Dring – the creators of Growing Underground – to bring them to life.
- Equally intriguing is SubTropolis, an underground business complex in Kansas City. Like many areas in the American Midwest, it was once known for its booming industry, but over the past three decades, that has all changed. When the once-successful mining operations in Kansas closed in the 1940s, they left behind huge networks of caves and tunnels – massive, empty space without use or purpose. Twenty years later, the largest mine was bought by a local entrepreneur and converted into a sprawling complex of underground offices and commercial premises known as SubTropolis.
- Today, more than 1,500 people work there in a variety of businesses. Interestingly, the US Postal Service also stores two billion dollars'-worth of postage stamps in the facility! Like Growing Underground, the network of tunnels here maintains a constant temperature of between 18 and 21 degrees Celsius, so the whole complex uses very little energy, and businesses are able to save thousands of dollars on energy bills. It is also considered to be a very secure location for businesses as access to the site is limited. Food distributors find the site extremely useful because the constant temperature and humidity levels are ideal for storing products such as cheese, coffee and wine.
- But it's not just commercial operations that can benefit from building below ground. In Amsterdam, bicycles are a hugely popular means of transportation. This is obviously great for the environment, but bikes take up space, and it's becoming increasingly difficult for the thousands of people that ride bikes in the city to find somewhere to park. To address this, the city has recently constructed a huge underground bike park. Offering up to 3000 spaces for both local residents and tourists, the new facility is situated underneath one of Amsterdam's main train stations, making it ideal for anyone that needs to continue their journey by train. It also offers riders protection from vandalism and theft – both of which have become a serious problem in the city in recent years.
- For me, all of these projects represent a creative way forward for our cities. Since the last time I spoke on this stage,

overcrowding has arguably become one of the biggest threats to our society. If we continue building without thought to the millions of people that want to live and work in our cities, I'd argue that our way of life is under serious threat. It's only with innovative solutions, like the ones I've discussed today, that we can tackle the very real problems of urban development. Thank you.

UNIT 8

Lesson 8.4, Listening, Exercise B 8.5 P = Presenter J = Jo

- P: Hello and welcome to *The Book Group*. This week, we're talking about crime fiction, which recently became the best-selling genre in the US for the first time ever. In fact, over the past three years, sales of crime fiction have risen by an incredible 19%, meaning that one in every three books sold in the US is about crime. So, what is it that draws people to these stories of murder and violence? Here to help us answer that question is Jo Craig, best-selling author of *Without an Alibi* and creator of the ever-popular Billy Chandler detective series. Jo – welcome to the show.
- J: Thanks for having me, I'm always happy to talk about books.
- P: Well, you're in the right place. So, Jo – why do you think we love crime writing so much?
- J: Well, first of all, most crime novels tend to follow a fairly well-worn path: an unexplained murder is followed by a complicated trail of detection and discovery, led by an engaging central character. He or she might be a professional police officer – like the Swedish Kurt Wallander or, of course, my own character, Billy Chandler. Or they might just be a normal person who takes a lively interest in crime – like Agatha Christie's unlikely amateur detective, Miss Marple.
- P: These creations are often a bit different from a regular police officer, though, aren't they?
- J: Absolutely! The central character typically has unusual personal habits or quirks: Sherlock Holmes plays the violin and Adam Dalgliesh writes poetry.
- P: So, is crime writing just about following the same old formula?
- J: Well, good writers do also use the genre as a means to explore wider social themes such as poverty, race relations or gender roles. However, with a few exceptions, the genre doesn't experiment – what you see, or read in the cover blurb, is what you get. And in my view, that is what most readers are looking for and expect – a gripping plot which is guaranteed to keep them entertained for the few hours or days it will take them to read the book. Having said that, there are other factors which may contribute to the readers' interest in murder and the strange twists of the human mind.
- P: Such as?
- J: Well, in real life, we often see people, or groups of people, that we consider to be naturally 'bad', getting away with actions which we believe are immoral. From unjust or unfair situations in our everyday lives to serious crimes which affect the lives of thousands. Many of us – in a complicated, mixed-up, stressful world – would like to see a simpler reality in which good triumphs over evil, reason over senselessness. Rarely do we witness 'good' winning out over 'evil' in real life, but the crime

novel allows people to reverse that trend – even if it's only in our imaginations.

- P: So, it gives readers the chance to see bad people pay for their actions?
- J: Exactly. It actually reminds me of one of the characters in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* who says, 'The good end happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what fiction means.' I think that's certainly what we expect from the crime novels we read. I would also argue that the messiness of ordinary life is something which drives us to reach for the murder mystery. We can never predict what's going to happen in our own lives: work, family, relationships, poor health – all of these can make day-to-day living a tough proposition.
- P: So, why would people want to read about something depressing, too? Wouldn't they try to find something more uplifting or positive?
- J: Well, crime fiction always solves a complicated web of events. By the time you turn over the last page, you've been given answers to all the puzzles which were posed while you were reading the book. Rarely are we given such an opportunity in our own lives, and maybe that's what we find comfort in – a puzzle whose pieces all fit neatly into place in the end. It has also been observed that readers' appetite for crime fiction increases in times of economic hardship. This would seem to reinforce the idea that people look for certainty in times of difficulty: human courage and patience winning out in a difficult world.
- P: If only that were so in real life!
- J: Yes, exactly!

UNIT 9

Lesson 9.4, Listening, Exercise B 9.5 N = Narrator R = Receptionist H = Helen F = Flora L = Logan

Conversation 1

- R: Good morning. Welcome to Ann Arbor Recreation Center! How are you today?
- H: Not very well, actually.
- R: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. How can I help?
- H: Well, I booked a racquetball court for seven o'clock and somebody else is using it!
- R: Oh, really? That's odd. Let me take a look at this morning's reservations. OK. Can I have your name, please?
- H: It's Helen. Helen Jackson. Listen, is this going to take long? This really is going to upset my schedule. I'm already running at least ten minutes late. The 8:36 – that's the train I usually catch to work – will be leaving soon. At this rate, I'll be lucky to get the one at 8:54. Either way, I'd be lucky to make it into work by 9:30 and, frankly, it'll be all your fault!
- R: I really am terribly sorry to have held you up Ms. Jackson, but if you'll just give me a minute to check. It shouldn't take too long.
- H: Frankly, it's already taken too long. A single, 45-minute session is what I booked. I received a confirmation email about it last week.
- R: OK, so it says here that you reserved the court for seven o'clock and it's now seven fifteen.
- H: And?

- R: Ten minutes is all we allow for late arrivals, I'm afraid. Anyone more than ten minutes late may lose their reservation to a walk-in customer. It's company policy, I'm afraid.
- H: Ridiculous is what it is. There was nothing about this policy in my confirmation email.
- R: Actually, it's clearly stated in the terms and conditions at the bottom.
- H: I see. Well, that doesn't help me now. I expect a full refund.
- R: Uh, I'm afraid we cannot offer refunds to customers that missed their sessions.
- H: This is absurd!
- R: We can, however, book another session for tomorrow morning. Maybe you can make it in for seven this time?

Conversation 2

- F: Morning, Logan. Please sit down. I take it you got my note?
- L: Yep – all done. There was a little problem, though.
- F: Oh, really? What was that?
- L: Well, the photocopier ran out of paper, so I was only able to print 720 copies of the report.
- F: 720? 100 copies is what I asked you to print, Logan. One for each person attending the presentation.
- L: Wait, what? But ... but ... I thought ... I'm sure the note said 1,000 copies.
- F: A thousand copies would be ridiculous, Logan. Never mind, at least we have enough for the presentation. I take it you did check the spelling as I asked?
- L: Of course, boss. Look ...
- F: *'Diamond Electrical Services* wishes to thank you for your customer loyalty over the last 12 months.' Months, Logan?
- L: Uh, that's right.
- F: Months is what it's supposed to say, Logan. Not months! Every single one of these reports will now have to be thrown away.
- L: I ... I ... I'm really sorry. I guess I just didn't ...
- F: ... didn't what, Logan? Think for two minutes? Why you don't take more care with your work, that's what I don't understand. Just give me the pile of envelopes. I'll take the reports out and redo them.
- L: Um, how are we going to take the reports out? I mean the envelopes are all sealed.
- F: Sealed, Logan? Sealed? I specifically wrote, 'Do not seal the envelopes' in my note. I wanted to check everything first, because, frankly, I thought you might make a mistake and, sadly, I was right.
- L: I ... I don't know what to say.
- F: It's fine, Logan. Just go and find some more paper for the photocopier, will you?

UNIT 10

Lesson 10.4, Listening, Exercise C 10.6 L = Lecturer

- L: Thank you. Now, I'd like to start by telling you a little bit about my daughter. She, like most teenagers in this day and age, is completely addicted to social media. It's where she gets her news, how she connects with her friends, what she turns to for advice. And for the most part, I'm fine with this. It's not my thing,

but as long as she's happy, I'm happy. But what does interest me is the ability of social media to shape our view of reality. In fact, I'd argue that in recent years, social media has blurred the lines between what's real and what's fake.

Let me give you an example. One of the latest influencers taking the fashion world by storm is 19-year-old model, Miquela Sousa. Better known as Lil Miquela, her profile first appeared on Instagram in 2016 and has since gained well over a million followers. 1.5 million to be precise. This success landed her a contract with the fashion house Prada and she is now the face of their 3D-generated advertising campaign.

Her Instagram account itself is fairly typical for someone of her age – endless selfies of her modeling trendy streetwear or posing with celebrities. She's also fairly outspoken on current affairs, is regularly involved in fundraising campaigns and has a burgeoning music career. In other words, she does everything that other influencers do.

Yet, her rise to fame has caused a media storm. People are outraged and have expressed their anger in no uncertain terms online. Why? Because Lil Miquela is not real – that is to say, not flesh and blood real. She's the world's first 'virtual influencer' and was created as part of a digital art project by Sara Decou and Trevor McFedries.

What I think is most astonishing about all of this is not that someone would choose to create a virtual persona like this – it actually makes sense from a marketing point of view – but that people would react so passionately to her very existence. When she first appeared on the scene, furious debates erupted on social media – a story that was actually picked up by mainstream news outlets – with some commenters, often in the most unpleasant or abusive language, branding her as fake. Others, with equal relish, leapt to her defense. She seems to arouse as much feeling as a living, breathing person. For me, this just goes to show how much social media has distorted our view of reality. What I mean is – her very existence seems to have made us question what we mean by 'real' when it comes to online content.

But is Lil Miquela really so different from the rest of us? Don't we all use Instagram pages, blogs, YouTube channels and Twitter feeds to present an idealized version of ourselves, not necessarily who we are? I mean, seriously, does anybody really believe that those beauty vloggers actually look like that in real life? The right lighting, the best digital equipment, clever make-up tricks and editing can make anybody look like a model of perfection – an image utterly unrelated to the real, living, breathing person. What I'm saying is – our online persona often bears very little resemblance to our real self.

And for me, this is where the dilemma lies. I'm happy for my daughter to take inspiration from the people she follows online, to aspire to a different lifestyle. But are influencers setting an impossibly high bar? They seem to have the perfect life. But is this because they don't actually share the boring parts? You don't get likes or retweets for pictures of you locking the front door or taking the trash out. You're expected to present the best version of yourself – the one that goes on glamorous vacations and eats in expensive restaurants. But most of us aren't celebrities, and sometimes our lives aren't all that great. And surely, that's OK, too. What I'm trying to say is that in a world where the difference between 'real' and 'fake' is almost impossible to distinguish, perhaps it's more important than ever to teach our children it's OK to be themselves.