AUDIO SCRIPTS

UNIT 1 Recording 1

A = Alan B = Bea C = Clara

A: So, we've talked a lot about the importance of building a team rather than expecting it to happen naturally. What we haven't talked about is leadership. Every great team needs an effective leader. So, I was wondering, what do you guys reckon are the top three attributes of a great leader?

B: Three, eh? Erm … OK, well the first that comes to mind is vision. Without that, you've got no innovation, no goals, nowhere to lead your team.

C: And the vision needs to inspire others, because … let's face it, it's the others who'll be doing all the hard work.

A: It's the only way to unite a team, isn't it? To have a vision everyone works towards. OK, so we've got one.

B: Resilience is another. You can't get far in business if you give up every time something knocks you down.

C: True, but isn't that the case for every member of a team? A team's only as strong as its weakest link … so if it's to succeed, then all the members need to be resilient – to be able to get back up when something knocks them down. It's not just confined to leadership qualities.

B: Hmm. Fair enough.

A: I think if we're going to have vision as one of our top three, we also need to have communication skills. It's all very well knowing exactly where you want to go and how to get there, but if you can't get that across to subordinates, you're going nowhere. As you said, Clara, it's the team members that have to achieve the vision.

C: Sure, and I'd …

B: That's vital if … go on.

C: Well, I'd add transparency to that, too. Not as a separate attribute, but included within communication skills. If you're not transparent about what you're doing, rumours fly around and miscommunication occurs.

A: I'd also impress on leaders the need to listen more than talk when communicating. It's not just about telling people what you want them to do, but also hearing their ideas, their concerns, their challenges.

B: You're right. Leaders that ignore others do so at their peril – they miss out on potential ideas. But it's not its own category, is it? It falls into communication skills … You know, … talking about dealing with changes makes me think of flexibility. Is that one of our top three?

C: It's really important. You've got to adapt to changes. Being rigid gets you nowhere.

A: I've got one that I think is more crucial, though.

C: Oh. What?

A: Empathy. If you can't connect emotionally to the people around you, you can't lead them successfully.

B: Some people would see a leader as strong … tough.

A: They would, and they'd be wrong! I mean, it's good to look strong and in control so people have faith in you. But you don't need to be tough in the sense of not caring about people's feelings.

C: I agree. Empathy helps people to recognise conflict and find some kind of resolution. Without it, teams can fall apart. Relationships with partners can collapse and so on.

B: More than that, actually, it helps you to consider all the ways your vision and decisions along the way will impact on people. You can prevent conflict and other problems before they even arise. I think you're right. That's really key to great leadership.

C: OK, you've convinced me! What about other things though, like charisma, or curiosity or …

B: Charisma can be very useful. A leader with charisma can draw people's attention just by walking into a room, but is it necessarily true of every great leader? I'm not sure.

C: Me neither.

A: OK, so we're happy with the three we've chosen then. Great! So, let's think about some specific leaders then. Which leaders do you think demonstrate or have demonstrated our top three attributes … ?

UNIT 2 Recording 1

Something that fascinates me is our perpetual desire – no maybe that's unfair – our perpetual ability to overestimate negative things in our society. If you ask people to estimate the number of crimes that are committed each year, for example, they'll always think the figure is much higher than it is. The same goes for estimating homelessness, poverty and so on. And yet, the truth is we live in an era where we're generally better off than previous generations were. Is society perfect? No, not by a long shot. There are challenges and clearly some people are struggling, but in general, overall, society is better than it used to be.

So, we have a propensity to assume society is worse now than in the past. But why? An obvious reason for this is the news. We're constantly bombarded with stories of violence and other negative stories about society, and with a 24-hour news cycle these days, stories which wouldn't have been given much airtime before, well, they are now dwelt on and repeated to fill time. It's clear there's a correlation between the way the news is reported and our frequently negative perceptions of society today. Having said that, one study found that people were much more able to accurately identify crime statistics in their local area than across the country. Local news often examines topics not covered in the national news such as housing developments, new businesses, charity events and so on, so it doesn't tend to be quite so negative. This may contribute to the more realistic view many people have of issues in their local area.

As well as overestimating negative aspects of society, people often say in polls that they think society is getting worse. It's not as good as it used to be, it's more dangerous, people are less kind, and so on. No matter how much you want to avoid sounding like your grandparents, the truth is that as we get older, we all find ourselves repeating the same cliché we heard from them, that things aren't what they used to be. The psychology of this is called 'declinism' and there are some interesting psychological phenomena at play. Firstly, there's the 'reminiscence bump'. This describes the fact that when we're older, we tend not to remember as much from the age between 30 to 60 as we do from our childhood and early adulthood, as that's when our lives had lots of changes and new experiences. We tend to reminisce about those memories more, and through their retelling, we strengthen them so they're at the forefront of our minds.

Then, there's the 'positivity effect'. This describes our use of rose-tinted glasses – those metaphorical spectacles we put on

when remembering the past. They filter out all the bad and make us think everything was all warm and cosy back then. This refers to both our own personal lives and society around us. Finally, there's the 'status quo bias'. This relates to the fact that we like life as it is now and don't want change, which means we have this sense that any changes in the future will be bad. So, this reinforces in our minds the idea that as times change, things get worse.

Combine the positivity effect with the reminiscence bump and the status quo bias and you've got people who look back primarily on their lives before they hit the age of 30 and see only the good, with this notion in the back of their minds that society never improves as it moves forward. So, it's no wonder we think things are worse today than they were. And even though we know all this, we're all destined to fall into the same trap as those before us. So, no matter how hard we try, we'll end up sounding just like our grandparents.

UNIT 3 Recording 1

E = Ethan A = Ashley

E: You know those kitchen hacks that pop up online all the time, Ashley?
A: What, like those videos of recipe cheats and stuff?
E: Yeah, those. Well, I'm a bit obsessed by them. I don't go looking out for them, but they seem to find me and once I start watching them, I can't stop.
A: I know what you mean, it's not as if I cook that much, but somehow those videos suck me in.
E: Have you ever actually tried any?
A: What? Course not, Ethan. I don't have time for that!
E: Eh? But you have time to watch videos about them?!
A: Oh yeah ... but, er ... no, I've never even thought about trying them to be honest. I just like watching them.
E: Well, I gave some of them a go this weekend.
A: And?
E: I did five all in all. I cut an avocado in half, had one half for my lunch and poured lemon juice on the other half before sticking it back in the fridge.
A: Why?
E: So it wouldn't go brown.
A: Oh, right. And did it? Go brown, I mean?
E: It did actually, yes.
A: Great hack!
E: Then, I got a caramel sweet and fried it in a pan so it'd melt into a flat circle – a kind of caramel wheel that I could stick in a bowl of ice cream ... a gorgeous-looking caramel wheel, if the video was anything to go by. Well, I burnt that and it looked like something that had got stuck on the bottom of my shoe.
A: Ah, I'm starting to get the picture now ...
E: Then, I tried to make a mug pizza.
A: Well, that doesn't sound like something that would ever work out.
E: Yes, you'd think I'd know better, but in my defence, the video made it look really easy to make. Anyway, I shoved all the dough ingredients into the mug and then microwaved them to make the base. Then I added in my chopped tomatoes, grated cheese and a few other toppings and microwaved it again.
A: Sounds quick and delicious.
E: It couldn't have been faster. Shame it looked and tasted like a dog's dinner. The dough was soggy and, well, still pretty raw and the topping just looked like sludge.
A: Sounds gross. Why did you eat it?
E: I thought it might taste better than it looked. I was wrong. I chucked most of it away. I did eat all of the microwave risotto I made though. The rice was moist, but not underdone and the flavours were good – something I've never managed when doing it the usual way. It only took ten minutes, too.
A: One win, then.
E: Yeah, I was also hopeful that the cake topping made from strawberry ice cream would work, but it just wouldn't whip up. I mean, I whipped it A LOT.
A: So, all these things we're watching are total rubbish, then?
E: I wouldn't go as far as to say that. I may have just picked the wrong ones, but I'm certainly more sceptical of them now.
A: I don't understand. What's the point of making beautifully shot videos that probably aren't cheap to make and take ages to put together if the hacks are fake? Are you sure it wasn't just you and you were doing it wrong?
E: Maybe, but I'm pretty proficient in the kitchen so in all honesty, I think it's about the clicks.
A: You mean click bait?
E: Yeah, I think some sites are under a lot of pressure to get people clicking onto them since it translates into advertising revenue, and that's how most sites make money. So, they have to keep producing enticing videos with new ideas to get people watching, but I guess there are only so many new ideas.
A: So, you're going to stop watching them?
E: Hmm, I'd like to say yes, but ...
A: I doubt I will. There's something mesmerising about them. After a long hard day in the office, they're kind of a good way to switch off.
E: I know what you mean, although I suspect my kitchen disasters will take some of the shine off those videos for us!

UNIT 4 Recording 1

M = Magdalena R = Ruby J = Justin S = Sebastian

M: This might sound a bit odd, but I was thinking the other day about how I visualise what I'm reading in a book and I wondered if we all see the same things. Justin, you read a lot.
J: I don't know, Magdalena, I guess I see what I'm reading, like a movie.
M: What, like you're in the cinema and you're ... the actions are playing out in front of you?
J: Yeah, it can be really vivid, like if there's a house or something I can walk around it and see it with as much clarity as my own home ... but other times, the scene's a bit sketchier. I just see an outline – not sure if that's my mind or the description in the book's a bit thin. Same for you?
M: Hmm. I don't see moving pictures, just bits and pieces from the story, almost like snippets of paintings. They kind of flash in and out of my mind. And they can be pretty fuzzy, like washed-out watercolours, and just outlines, too, like you?
J: Wait, Magdalena. You don't see the whole story unfold in your mind?
M: No, not like you. I do hear the sounds quite clearly in my mind though, as if they're real.
J: Really? That's cool. And what about you, Ruby? Do you see the stories, like me, or hea rthem like her?
R: Not exactly either.
J: What? Then ... how? Sebastian, tell me you see things like I do ... .

S: Actually, I don't tend to see much at all in the way of … well, I just see words that I'm reading. They kind of float past … and I hear them, too.
J: Hear them? No pictures?
S: No. I find it quite easy to remember texts when I've seen them through – I can quote books really well.
R: Oh, I've always wondered how you do that!
S: I do sometimes get a sense of hovering on the shoulder of a character, but I can't see them. I sense their emotions more than anything, and even though I'm on their shoulder, I can't quite grasp what's in front of me – or them I should say.
J: Woah. I'm blown away by this.
M: Me, too. So, back to you, Ruby.
R: I'm probably a cross between you and Justin. I see images and they look real, as if it's a memory, and I might picture every scene in my mind, but it's more of a still than a movie. You know, I don't really pay much attention to the descriptions in the book, I tend to skim read and get to the good bits, which for me is the dialogue. Maybe I should read plays! Anyway, my mind definitely makes up the detail. It really irks me when I read something that contradicts what's in my mind and then I have to adjust it. Often, I'll revert to my original image very quickly.
S: So, you view the scene in the third person.
R: Er, yeah … but there are times when I'm really close to the people – a bit like you said. It's like I'm a shadow of them, or they're a shadow of me and we're so close that we're almost as one.
J: Now I think about it, if the book's in the third person, I see it as if the camera's panned out and I'm watching from afar, but if the book's in the first person then it's me in the scene. Also, you know I said earlier that I see things in detail. Well, I'm pretty sure I transpose something I'm already familiar with onto the scene – it'll be a bit like the house I mentioned – it'll look like somewhere I've lived or has some kind of bearing … my mind fills in the blanks with these … some point of reference I had as a kid or something.
R: I think I tend to view the main female protagonist as looking like me, even if the book describes something different. I don't mean exactly like me, but if they say she's tall, skinny and blonde, I still picture her as average height and weight with brown hair.
M: I guess it's your way of connecting to the character.
R: Must be.
J: Well, this is amazing, and may well have ruined books for me forever. I can't help thinking that I'll be so focused on how I'm visualising the book from now on, I won't take any of the story in!

UNIT 5 Recording 1

M = Mila J = Jack I = Izzy

M: Anyway, I liked it, Jack, even if you didn't. OK, shall we move on now to talk about some of the summer releases?
J: A superhero film or two, no doubt. We can't go for more than a few months without popping up on our cinema screens. You know, I remember when stories like these were confined to the bookshelves of nerdy kids. I mean, what happened, Mila?
M: The nerdy kids grew up and morphed into … not superheroes … but successful adults with a continued fondness for good versus evil stories.
I: Not to mention some of those nerdy kids morphed into film producers, scriptwriters and directors.
M: Maybe Izzy, although I can't help but think some of these films are more about money than a fondness for the stories, which leads me to believe they're not made by comic-book lovers.
I: Ooh, that's cynical.
M: Tell me I'm wrong.
I: You're wrong! Well, I guess it's hard to say without knowing the backgrounds of the film-makers. I'm sure some of them have an appreciation of the stories.
J: I must admit I do get sick and tired of the same old stories all the time. It does sometimes feel like a money-making scheme.
I: I'd dispute that – about the stories I mean. Some might be formulaic, but others have shown something different, something deeper that …
J: Deeper? Yeah right, let's get my checklist out – baddie tries to take over the world – tick. Hero and baddie have a huge fight – the baddie wins – tick. CGI buildings get smashed to pieces to no avail – tick. Hero finally finds a way to overcome the baddie – tick. Hero gets the girl …
I: OK, OK, we get the message …
J: It's always the same old tropes.
I: I wouldn't go as far as to say they're all like that. A few of the films have taken a much darker look at the world. You could even say they're allegories about society today. *Logan* springs to mind. It was a bit downbeat and made me cry, but it doesn't tick the boxes on your checklist. It's a shame really, as the characters in the comic books tend to be more nuanced than in the films and that doesn't always come across.
M: I blame the viewing public.
I: What do you mean?
M: They want candy floss viewing – or is that popcorn viewing? I don't know … films that entertain without requiring more than a few brain cells. They're escapism, pure and simple.
J: To be fair, although I've been quite critical, I'd much rather watch a magic hammer being thrown at a blue giant than some intellectually demanding historical drama, any day of the week.
M: Well, there's the answer to your original question then! That's why they're so popular. Because of you and your three brain cells!
J: Actually, joking aside, I think there are reasons that go beyond them being easy viewing. Wherever we look these days – TV news, social media – people are at odds with each other, there are such polarised opinions on pretty much every subject, plus there are weak economies. For lots of people, the world's a pretty depressing place. It's not really a surprise that they might enjoy seeing good prosper over evil. I think those kinds of stories help us to believe that everything will work out in the end.
I: You know, these stories were hugely popular in the 1930s – that was the time of the Great Depression when the economy collapsed, so there's something in that.
J: See! I do have more than three brain cells when I choose to use them. I can quite honestly say though, that I'd be happy not to see another superhero film for a while.
M: I don't think you're the only one. I think now some of the storylines have finished, we'll see people starting to lose interest in these films. Not that they're not interested in superheroes as such, just that starting again with fresh stories feels a bit like going back to square one and maybe people will want something completely new.
I: There are new ones coming out, though. I guess they'll have to up their game to keep you watching, Mila.
M: They certainly will. So, Izzy, do tell. Will any of them get my attention?
I: Well, in the summer, we're going to see the release of …

UNIT 6 Recording 1

We've all done it: downloaded an app that's seemingly free, only to discover somewhere along the line that we need to pay for access to the rest of the content. The 'freemium' pricing model as it's known, due to some content being free and the rest being paid at a premium … well, it's been described as unethical by some. To explore this with me today is Annie Browning, an app designer who feels the freemium model is fair, and Imran Alvi, a consumer rights expert who takes a different view. Imran, let me start with you.

UNIT 6 Recording 2

P = Presenter I = Imran A = Annie

P: Why aren't you very keen on in-app purchases?
I: Well, aside from the fact they get in the way of our enjoyment by asking us to stop and pay at a pivotal moment, it's how they can exploit our impatience, like in those apps where you can either wait for something to be unlocked or pay for it straight away. It's not quite a scam, but it's an idea designed to make as much money as possible.
P: Annie, would you like to comment on that?
A: Sure. I mean, you're obviously talking about specific apps that unlock the next part of a story or next level of a game after a certain amount of time, well, unless you pay. I see what you're saying … there's definitely psychology involved regarding typical behaviour and yes, it might seem calculated, but the fact is the user does have a choice. They don't have to pay in that instance. They can wait until the content's unlocked for free.
I: But the app wouldn't make any money if everyone did that, …
A: Yeah, but the choice is still there. The fact is that the freemium model might not be perfect, but it's better than many alternatives. Advertising is a notoriously unstable method of payment and irritates users. Paying up front brings in less money …
I: Which is …
A: Hold on. It brings in less money and the more money developers make, the better the products they create and they produce more of them, too, so it's a win-win for everyone.
P: Are there any better models out there?
A: Not to my knowledge. I mean, there's the subscription model of course, which is less for game apps and more for things like music. With subscription, people make regular payments for access to content, and can stop paying when they want, usually after a notice period. If customers subscribe over a long period, the developer can make as much money as they can with the freemium model.
I: Not more?
A: Well, it's possible I guess, but not necessarily. It depends on how long they can keep hold of their customers.
P: It sounds like consumers are better off in terms of choice with the freemium model. I mean, they get to try something out before having to commit, unlike with the subscription model.
I: Yes, and I do appreciate that consumers have the power to make decisions with the freemium model and I wouldn't want to take that away. I just feel that developers benefit more. One problem is when users don't realise there's a cost until it's too late and then are forced to pay because they've invested too much time and effort to stop by that time.
A: That's a fair point and I think developers have sometimes failed to clearly signpost in-app purchases. The industry has been making a concerted effort to clearly signpost them as a result, but perhaps not everyone will notice them.
I: It's the kids that rack up huge bills buying in-game purchases without their parents' consent that worry me, too. Maybe they do know what they're doing, maybe they don't. But what about things like 'loot boxes', where you pay for a kind of lucky dip. You might get something really cool, or something you've already got. It's basically gambling for kids, and a huge con if you ask me. Things like that support the case for full payment at the start.
A: And others would agree, which is why they've been taken out of some games.
P: There's one practice I really don't understand and it's the practice of making games really long with lots of side quests, so that people pay to avoid them and get to the end faster. They're literally paying money to have less content.
A: Well, again … it comes down to the choice of the consumer. They don't have to do that.
P: Do you think that a different model will come into use at some point?
A: I can't see it, personally.
I: Unfortunately, I don't think they're going anywhere any time soon, although I hope to be proved wrong.
P: So, let's now move onto a slightly different argument and that's …

UNIT 7 Recording 1

1

All right, so make sure you've got everything you need – a pump, a patch or new inner tube, a cloth and a tyre lever. You need to push the tyre off the metal rim of the wheel with your tyre lever so you can pull out the inner tube. Of course, that's after you've taken the wheel off the bike by either using the quick release lever or a spanner. It'll be much easier to handle that way. So, peel the tyre away from the rim, starting opposite the air valve. Once you've done that, you can then pull out the inner tube. If it's ripped, you'll spot it immediately and you'll need to throw it away and replace it with a new one. But, if the hole isn't easily visible, use your pump to fill the tube with air and feel around for where the air's escaping. If that doesn't work, stick it in water and see where the bubbles appear. Take your patch and stick it over the hole. That should last as long as the inner tube does. Once that's done, you can pump some air into the tube and pop it back in the tyre. Actually, before you do that, it's a good idea to clean around the tyre to make sure there are no harmful objects that could puncture the tube again. When the tube is back in the tyre, bit by bit, work the tyre back onto the wheel rim until it's good to go and you can fix your wheel back onto the bike.

2

So, you need a cable detector, a drill, a spirit level, a tape measure, a pencil and your shelf and brackets. The first thing is to check there are no cables or pipes running down the area where you're going to drill. This is where your detector comes in. Run it across the wall and see what comes up on the screen. If you're fine to continue, put the first bracket where you want the shelf to be and draw a line at the top of it in pencil on the wall. Measure across and mark where the second bracket should go and draw a line. Use a spirit level to make sure the lines are both level, or else the shelf could be wonky. Put the brackets back against the wall and draw circles in each hole where the screws will fit. Then, pop your goggles on, take out your drill and drill holes in the wall where your circles are. Insert plastic wall plugs, as these will ensure your screws fit in nice and tight.

Lightly tap them with a hammer if necessary. Now, place the bracket on the wall and screw in each screw into the wall plugs. Repeat the same procedure with the second bracket and then place the shelf across both brackets. Voila! There's your shelf.

3

So, tip 600 grams of strong flour into a bowl and mix in about seven grams of fast-action yeast with a tablespoon of salt. It's best to keep that and the salt separate at this stage as the latter can kill the former. Now, pour in 350 millilitres of warm water – it can be quite hot to the touch but not boiling. Also add a couple of tablespoons of sunflower oil and a dollop of honey. Use your hands to mix everything together to make a dough. Sprinkle some flour onto your work surface and knead the bread for ten minutes. That means folding it over and pushing it down again and again so it gets air into it. If you find that your dough's a bit wet, add a bit more flour, but be careful not to add too much or you'll just end up having to add more water again. Put the dough into a bread tin and cover it with plastic wrap. It's a good idea to add some oil to the inside of it so the dough doesn't stick. Put it in a warm place for one or two hours until it's risen. Knead it again and leave it to rise a second time, this time for just half an hour. Stick it in the oven at a temperature of 200 degrees celsius or 180 for fan ovens for around half an hour. To check it's baked, tap the bottom and it should sound hollow inside. Leave to cool and then slice and serve.

UNIT 8 Recording 1

A = Ahmed J = Jennie

J: So, let's play a little game. I'm going to name some famous historical events and I want you to tell me if each one happened or not.
A: All right.
J: So, Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas and proved the Earth wasn't flat.
A: Hmm, I'm not much of a history buff, but I'm pretty sure that's true. Didn't he sail the wrong way and think he'd landed in India or something? I'm not so sure about the Earth being flat bit though. I've got a feeling even the Ancient Greeks knew it was round.
J: Indeed, Pythagoras, Aristotle and others, they all talked about the Earth being a sphere and subsequent university texts saying the same thing were available in Columbus's time, so I doubt he worried about falling off the edge of the Earth as is claimed.
A: One point to me then. What about the other part?
J: That he discovered the Americas? Well, how could he discover a land where people already lived?
A: Oh come on, he discovered it for European people so it's not completely wrong. I think you need to be a bit looser with your understanding of 'discover' there!
J: Maybe but there's also the interpretation of America. If you think of it as the USA, then he never set foot there. He landed in the Caribbean, and on the central and south coasts. And what about Leif Erikson, the Icelandic explorer. He'd landed and settled in Canada 500 years earlier.
A: Ah ...
J: Exactly. OK, the next one's on the same theme. Was Ferdinand Magellan the first person to sail around the world?
A: Not a clue. His name rings a faint bell, but that's all. I'm going to say it's true.
J: His expedition was the first. Unfortunately, he was killed in a battle in the Philippines in 1521, so he didn't quite make it round.
A: But his crew did?
J: Yes, well fewer than 20 from the original 270, but yes. Juan Sebastián Elcano took over the reins.
A: I suppose it's fair enough to give Magellan the title.
J: What do you mean?
A: It would've been him who got the funding together, gathered the crew. If he got them most of the way, and equipped Elcano and the others to get home, then he deserves the credit.
J: I wonder if the surviving crew members would've seen it like that.
A: No idea, but Elcano may well have thought as I do, who knows?
J: I guess we'll never know. OK, next. Benjamin Franklin discovered electricity when he was flying a kite with his son during a storm.
A: Ah, well I think I'm getting the hang of this so I'm going to say no.
J: Correct. He apparently went out to try to prove the connection between electricity and lightning, a theory that had existed for hundreds of years. I should also add that the kite didn't get struck by lightning as is often bandied about, or else he probably wouldn't have lived to tell the tale!
A: Right.
J: OK, last one. Isaac Newton discovered gravity when an apple fell on his head.
A: OK, I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that despite it being a popular belief, it's a load of old rubbish. Am I right?
J: There's truth in it just as with the others. He had to leave college for a while because of a small, irritating problem known as 'the plague', so ... he went back to his childhood home and then one day, while wandering in the apple orchard, he saw an apple fall and it made him ponder the reason behind objects always falling down and not up or in some other direction.
A: So, it kickstarted the whole thing.
J: Exactly, but it didn't land on his head, and nor did the theory come to him in a flash.
A: So no sudden eureka moment then? And what about him shooting the apple off his son's head?
J: That's a different story, as well you know ...

UNIT 9 Recording 1

S = Sophie L = Liam

S: I'm off on a survivation.
L: A what?
S: A survivation – it's a, you know, like a holiday where you learn survival techniques.
L: Never heard of it. What are you doing that for then?
S: Dunno, I just thought it'd be fun. Something different.
L: That's funny actually, cos just the other day, I was thinking that if there was some kind of disaster, then I wouldn't be very well equipped to deal with it.
S: You mean, if there's not an app for it, you've got no chance?
L: Exactly! Horrible natural disaster, zombie invasion, whatever. I'd wither away just from not knowing how to feed myself.
S: Surely you've watched enough shows about stuff like that to manage.
L: Yeah, you'd think so, but no. So, what exactly happens on one of these survival holiday thingamajigs then?
S: Well, some of them test your skills from the get go without any training at all.
L: Sink or swim.

S: Yeah. I mean, it'd be pretty cool to test your wits to see how you'd do and I doubt they'd, you know, let you die or anything. They must track you or … there's this one where they literally take you anywhere in the world by private plane and drop you in the middle of nowhere and you have to find your way back to civilisation. Can you imagine?
L: It must cost a bomb.
S: Well it's all tailor-made so I expect so.
L: So, you're not doing that one, then.
S: No. I'm not going to be cast away on a desert island either. As nice as it sounds, I think I'd rather go somewhere like that to lie on the beach, not walk up and down it for hours on end picking up firewood. No, I'm off on an adventure at a survival training lodge.
L: A lodge? I thought you'd be sleeping under the stars. Sounds far too luxurious.
S: I'll admit, the accommodation looks pretty comfortable and with all mod cons – hot water, modern kitchen and the like.
L: Sounds like a bit of a cheat to me. Not so much survivalist as pretending to get a bit closer to nature.
S: Ooh, you sceptic you. It is my precious time off, I'll have you know, and I don't want to go back to work more tense than when I left!
L: I'm just pulling your leg. What kind of stuff will you do?
S: It's like navigation and being able to start a fire, forage for food and all that.
L: Well, they're all pretty handy skills in a dreadful apocalypse. Imagine being able to navigate via the sun and the stars, like in the olden days! Is that what you hope to get out of this whole thing then? New skills? I mean, I can see the attraction of being a little bit more independent. We rely so much on others for our very basic needs, and as I said before, it's a bit scary to realise just how dependent we are.
S: There's that, but I think I just want to connect a bit more with nature. I'm not trying to sound like some kind of hippy, but I spend a lot of time stuck indoors, it might be nice to get outside for a bit.
L: Sounds like human rewilding. Have you heard of that?
S: No, what is it?
L: It's basically what you've just described. You know how some people are putting wildlife back into areas where humans have created some kind of imbalance?
S: Not really, but I get what you mean.
L: Well, human rewilding's about trying to reconnect humans with the world around them, returning them to the natural world they used to inhabit but no longer do.
S: Huh, guess that's what I'll be doing on my trip then!

UNIT 10 Recording 1

P = Presenter N = Nessa

P: Before we can even think about games design, we need to understand the psychology behind games – what they are, why we play them and what keeps us playing them. So, I'm here with lecturer in games design Nessa Parks, to find out more about this. Nessa, can we start right at the beginning? What exactly is a game?
N: Well, there's a well-known games designer called Chris Crawford, and he says that a game has an objective, as opposed to a toy, which doesn't.
P: OK, that makes sense.
N: But when a person works towards that objective alone, it's a puzzle because there's no conflict. It's only a game when it's done with others. And you have to be able to influence those others in the game, otherwise, it's just a competition like a race.
P: OK, well that's new, I've not thought about it that way before.
N: No, but you need to know if you want to be an effective games designer.
P: So, Nessa, why do we play games? Is it the objective that motivates us, then?
N: Er … there are suggestions that we play to develop physically to, you know, prepare us for whatever challenges come our way, but without risking threats of injury. I'm not sure how appealing that theory is. It could be to develop mentally, but I favour the argument that games create situations where we can achieve something and feel good fast. In the real world, goals can take a really long time to achieve. We might plug away at something for ages before we get any kind of positive feedback, or achieve success.
P: I personally think games are a good stressbuster, too.
N: Yeah, games can push us into a state of mindfulness, as we shut everything else out and focus on the here and now. That's a good way to alleviate stress, although of course that's assuming you don't keep suffering humiliating defeats!
P: As is usually the case with me!
N: And there's the fact that games can raise levels of optimism and joy. Actually, one thing that I don't think's talked about enough is the improved hand-eye coordination we get when playing video games. Did you know that in certain medical circles, surgeons who play games regularly can be quicker and make fewer mistakes than others?
P: No, but that's really interesting! OK, let's talk specifically about video games then, now you mention them. Are video games like other games, is it about having an objective?
N: Hmm, achievement is a key motivation, sure, but there's also competence to consider. One theory says that's only achieved through what's called 'flow' – that's the complete mental focus that a person achieves when they're so engaged they want to keep playing, but not challenged so much they feel disheartened and give up. It's that optimal combination that games designers really need to think about.
P: I imagine that's hard.
N: Yes. There's also social interaction of course, and cooperation, especially in multi-player games. Plus aesthetics.
P: What do you mean by aesthetics?
N: It means, like emotions. There's a pivotal paper from 2004 that identified eight 'aesthetics' that players experience, like the ability to create whole new worlds in your mind, voice your opinion, get involved in the story, discover new lands. Designers tend to focus primarily on the game mechanics, like the actions, the visuals and the processes involved, whereas those things should really come after thinking about what aesthetics they want to inspire among gamers. Those should then help to determine the mechanics. I think some games would have been a lot better if the developers had done it that way.
P: Well, that's certainly a different way of thinking about it. By the way, back to those surgeons who play video games, …