

Photocopiable recording script

Unit 1, 1.1 Exercise 3

Speaker 1

I've had a really fantastic year. It all started last November, when I was dragged along to a party by a friend. I was in a terrible mood, I remember, and nearly didn't go. Anyway, I was wearing an outfit I'd made myself – in soft black leather and antique lace, quite an unusual combination! Kelly Johns, the presenter of a big daytime TV show, was there and my little number caught her eye. We got chatting and she asked whether I could come up with something original for her to wear on the show. I jumped at the opportunity. That was a real turning point for me and I was soon able to quit my day job and concentrate on the clothes side full time. Through Kelly's show, I've had lots of orders. I've just finished an exclusive range for a top designer and I've even taken on an assistant to help me. Just think if I'd stayed at home that night!

Speaker 2

People often ask me how I got to be where I am today, with sell-out concerts in big stadiums around the world, thinking that I've spent years playing in local clubs, but the truth is, I'm literally an overnight sensation! I don't mean that arrogantly. It was just one lucky break, all down to being in the right place at the right time. There I was, an absolute nobody, hanging around backstage with Arrowhead, when their lead guitarist tripped over a pile of speakers and broke his arm, five minutes before they were due on. I'd been telling them about my awesome guitar style, so naturally, they all turned to me and said 'Kid, help us out here ...' and I did. The place was packed and I can still feel my hands shaking as I played that very first solo. It went OK though, and the rest is ... history.

Speaker 3

I was in Milan visiting friends, trying to cheer myself up after a dismal few months – my long-term boyfriend and I had broken up, plus I'd left a job without another to go to. My money was running out and I was planning to leave a few days later. Anyway, my friends suggested that I should take a look at Verona before going back home and told me what time train I could get from Milan. Well, for some reason, I ended up on a slow train going south, without realising my mistake – both trains had left at the same time. I fell asleep in the compartment and woke just as the

train arrived in Bologna! I had a wander round and fell in love with the place, and knew it was where I wanted to be. Everything just fell into place – I found a teaching job, took a room in a beautiful flat and settled in immediately. I lived there for six years and I go back regularly.

Speaker 4

It's funny how you can hit a run of bad luck: one moment, things are moving along quite normally in your life and then, bam, something comes out of the blue and knocks you sideways and then, wham, something else. I'm OK now, but I've had a difficult couple of years. My problem was quite simply that I'd been living beyond my means for a long time and some debts finally caught up with me. Even then, I thought I'd be OK; I arranged to pay them off little by little from my salary, monthly, you know. But then, the place where I was working cut back on its workforce, and they let me go. Well, that was it, I suppose I panicked, I wasn't thinking straight, you know. So I just packed a bag, got on a coach and left town for London, where my life went downhill fast. I got in with a bad crowd, and one thing led to another. It's a miracle my brother ever tracked me down, but he's got me back and sorted, with a roof over my head and a new job on the cards.

Speaker 5

It could be a story in *True Romance*, but it really happened just like this. Almost twenty years ago to the day, I was waiting for a bus after another mind-numbingly awful day at work, no bus in sight, of course. I was in a rut, my job was going nowhere. Anyway, there I was, staring gloomily at my reflection in a puddle, feeling utterly sorry for myself and thinking: is this really all there is to life? Then I saw two things in that puddle, one imperceptibly after the other. The first was no surprise, huge splashes of rain, as the heavens opened yet again, but then, this enormous red umbrella, appearing behind my head as if by magic! A gorgeous gravelly voice to my left said did I mind, it was big enough for two and he didn't want my hair to get wet. Very fortunately, it was another fifteen minutes before the bus finally turned up and hooray, it didn't stop raining! His name was Terence, though he's been Terry to me ever since – and Dad to our three wonderful children.

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Unit 3, 3.1 Exercise 2

Sue: Good morning. Now, the huge growth of interest in environmental issues has led to a careful re-examination of all kinds of traditional lore. With me today, I have Peter Watkins. He's written a best-selling book *The History of Weather Folklore*, which explains country sayings and the role of animals and birds in forecasting the weather. Sayings my granny used to come out with like, *Birds flying low, expect rain and a blow*, which I've always felt rather sceptical about.

Peter: Well, Sue, the way in which animals and birds can apparently predict changes in the weather before we can has always fascinated people and, for that matter, still does. If it didn't, the sayings wouldn't still be in current use, and of course, nowadays the weather is anxiously studied because of climate change.

Sue: But is there any truth in these old sayings? Given that there are so many, apparently 500 at the last count, and they've been around a while, presumably they should be fairly accurate?

Peter: Mm, well generally, there's a better chance of their being right for short-term weather forecasting rather than long-term. Of course, the most interesting natural weather forecasters are the birds, which is why there are so many sayings relating to them. Birds depend on the right weather conditions for flying and, in particular, birds that fly very high, like swifts and swallows, stand very little chance of survival if they get caught in a bad storm. They are also insect feeders and when the weather is fine the insects are high and the birds will follow them. Insects have good reason to dive for cover if rain is imminent as they are covered with water-repellent hairs. It actually doesn't take much for them to get completely soaked, so they respond quite rapidly if there's a drop in temperature or a rise in humidity.

Sue: Oh, so there's an element of truth in that one. Now, I used to live off the coast of Scotland and they had a saying on the islands about a bird called the red-throated diver. They used to call this bird the rain goose, and the saying went pretty much like this: *If the rain goose flies to the hill, you can put your boat where you will, but if she flies to the sea, you must draw your boat and flee*. I must say that I used to be rather puzzled by this saying, as I didn't understand why it would fly out to sea when the weather was getting worse. Anyway, one time when I was out in a boat the wind started to get up. We tuned into the radio and it said a gale was due from the north. We saw the geese everywhere flying around and heading out to sea. So despite common sense telling you otherwise, the saying of the local people seemed to be true.

Peter: Yes, and we still don't know the reasons for its strange behaviour. But you know, not all weather lore is about misery. Some birds can predict when things are about to brighten up. Certain geese set off for their breeding grounds in Iceland when the weather is fine – you just have to wait and watch and then plan your harvesting or house painting!

Sue: Not very practical! However, if there is some truth behind these weather sayings, do they ever have any practical use?

Peter: Obviously, weather lore had a very important application in the farmer's world. Farming and weather are intrinsically linked and the ability to predict, or at least think you could predict, was very important to them, although of course, they weren't the only ones with a vested interest in weather forecasting. One of the things about human beings is that we do not like to feel that things are happening with no purpose whatsoever. Weather lore makes a connection between something that is happening and something that is going to happen – we need to feel we're not simply the victims of chance and circumstance. Although it's very difficult to put dates on these sayings, many of them probably go back thousands of years. Some of them work and some of them don't, and some of them don't even make sense. Many actually negate each other.

Sue: Quite. So, how reliable are sayings which predict the year ahead, if we can't even rely on ones predicting the weather the next day?

Peter: Mm, well, I find it very difficult to believe that you can tell the rest of the winter from the way birds are flying or how your cat behaves in the autumn. By putting our own interpretations on how nature works we can get it completely wrong. For our ancestors the weather was a life and death situation – not just an inconvenience – and I think that had they had anything more reliable, they wouldn't have had to base their predictions on this kind of thing. They were really clutching at straws when they observed animal and bird behaviour and linked it to the weather, but they really had no other choice.

Sue: My thanks to Peter Watkins. Next week we'll ...

Unit 4, 4.1 Exercise 2

Unlike many modern families, mine still holds to the tradition of large family meals at times of celebration or crisis. I use the word 'large' of both the group and the amount of food on offer. The pattern is always the same: endless phone calls weeks ahead of the occasion to mobilise distant cousins and elderly aunts; on the eve of the event, the preparation of excessive amounts of food by the host family member, which never fails to be stress-inducing for all concerned; and then, on the day itself, we slip into our well-established roles, devouring all that is set before us and expressing the joy and contentment that convention demands. Once the wine has started to flow, the praise of succulent dishes gives way to another, more sinister part of the ritual: snide comments on family members not present, the surfacing of ancient grudges and petty family rivalries. This in turn leads to the more general but equally predictable debates on politics and the world at large. Manners always prevent us from actual bodily assault, but the verbal gloves are certainly off at this late stage in the proceedings. As the insults start to fly, the host hurries away to prepare coffee, hunting out chocolates and jugs of ice-cold water, in a valiant attempt to restore calm. Ritual behaviour dictates that all hostilities cease at this point and so, finally, peace prevails. After his second cup of coffee, handing down a final blessing to the assembled group, the most senior member takes his leave, signalling that it is time for others to do the same. Another memorable family occasion draws to a close.

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Unit 5, 5.1 Exercise 3

Paula: Good morning. On the programme today we have Mike James, a familiar face on television as the champion of consumers' rights. Mike, you've been doing *Pricewise* a long time now, is it something you set out to do?

Mike: Far from it Paula. It all began in 2002, when I was a reporter on a nightly news programme. They wanted a consumer slot, so I took it on. It wasn't until nearly ten years later that it became a programme in its own right. Now, we regularly get more than ten million viewers.

Paula: Where do the stories you look into come from?

Mike: Well, from you, the public. We get thousands of letters, phone calls and emails that tell us about poor service, ridiculous small print, malpractice and the need for information. We actually read all the correspondence and we follow up some stories immediately but most are filed for future use on our database.

Paula: What happens when you get a particularly juicy story?

Mike: We check it out thoroughly of course, and then we contact everyone involved, write the script and arrange filming. Sometimes we use actors and sometimes real people. Of course, it's essential that our lawyers check the script over. It's all done to very tight deadlines.

Paula: Do any particular stories stand out in your memory?

Mike: Oh, yes, many. There was one about an advert which promised to give you a title for anything up to £1,000. So, Bob and Trace became Lord Robert and Lady Tracy de Vere. You also get a piece of land but that only measures 20cm by 20cm. One of our researchers handed over the cash and tried to find out if being a lord would help him out in London.

Paula: And did it?

Mike: He went to Harrods, the department store, and they were very nice to him, but then they're nice to everyone. He then tried to book a table in a trendy restaurant and he got one – but not in a prime position next to the window – but by the kitchen door! So, really, it won't do you a lot of good being a lord nowadays.

Paula: Any other interesting stories?

Mike: Well, we did a programme not long ago about shopping on the Internet. The big supermarkets will deliver to your door if you order online, as you know.

Paula: Yes, it's a great idea, but I've not actually tried it out.

Mike: Well, it does usually work well. However, we did find that some customers hadn't received quite what they'd ordered. One poor man had asked for apples and got hairspray! The supermarket was very apologetic when we pointed out these problems and sent the customer some shopping vouchers.

Paula: Do you think consumers are more ready to complain these days?

Mike: Oh, yes. Research has been done that shows that attitudes have changed remarkably in the last forty years. Take a well-known brand of trainer. You could understand if they leaked, but actually these particular ones squeaked. Now, as they cost upwards of a hundred pounds, people weren't prepared to put up with this, but when they returned them to the shop, the shop didn't want to know.

Paula: So they wrote to you for help.

Mike: Yes. We bought a pair of the trainers and sent them to be inspected by an expert who said that some of the glue inside the shoe had come unstuck. We contacted the manufacturer with evidence of the problem and they were more than happy to back down and refund the money paid by the purchasers.

Paula: Another success then.

Mike: Yes, it's funny how quickly manufacturers and retailers react when they think they might attract bad publicity.

Paula: Indeed! It just shows what a good job you're doing. Now next week ...

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Unit 8, 8.3 Exercise 2

Interviewer: OK, well there are three people sitting in the studio with me now – Sally, Meg and Kevin – who are about to embark on a rather unusual ‘lifeplan’ as they call it, something that will bring about a change of gear for all three of them. By way of introduction, we need to go through some recent history, and I’m going to start with you, Sally, because it’s your discontent about where you’re living now that has played a large part in all this. Sally, tell us where you and Meg call home at the moment.

Sally: It’s a tiny village in the Welsh hills, which no one will have heard of. Last November we quit London and headed for the border. Mum and Dad decided to go their separate ways, you see – I think Mum took this literally, she wanted to get as far away as possible from Dad at the time.

Meg: It wasn’t quite like that, but yes, the divorce had a lot to do with needing to get out of the city and start again.

Interviewer: So out of the blue you chose a remote Welsh village?

Meg: Not quite, I had good friends there ...

Sally: Who have since left.

Meg: Yes, but, well, anyway, as Sally will tell you, it hasn’t quite worked out for her, though for me at the beginning, winding down was a godsend, it gave me the chance to rethink my life and decide on priorities.

Interviewer: Mm, so, Sally, why has it been less than perfect for you?

Sally: I’m 15 now and I left really good friends behind me, some I’d known my whole life. Plus, I’ve had to learn Welsh to even function at school and that’s been hard. And as you can imagine, there isn’t exactly a lot to do where we are – most people of my age just hang around the village green or go to each others’ houses. It’s not that great. Fortunately, I’ve been staying some weekends at my Dad’s place – so I can meet up with some of my old friends, go to clubs, you know.

Interviewer: Mmm ... so the country idyll, not such good news for you, but for you, Meg, you’re content with your life there?

Meg: Yes and no-o. I have to confess that once the honeymoon period was over (a rather unfortunate term in my case) well, you know after a while I woke up and realised that this wasn’t right for me either. It’s hard to pin down exactly why – I don’t suffer from boredom, and I still get a rush out of the sheer beauty and calm that surrounds us, but I ... I feel that I’m missing out too, that I should be working, socialising more, going to exhibitions, all those things I used to take for granted, but which are totally out of the frame at the moment.

Interviewer: And that’s where Kevin comes in ...

Kevin: One lucky break all round ...

Sally: Well, it’s pretty flukey. Basically Mum and I sat down one night and agreed we had to get back somehow ... but we realised that there was no way we could expect to move back to London as easily as we’d left.

Meg: Selling the cottage wouldn’t be easy, and nor would finding somewhere in our price range in London.

Sally: Mum had this real brainwave. She decided to look for anyone who might be interested in changing places, house swaps, that sort of thing.

Kevin: And thanks to the power of the Internet, they tracked me down.

Interviewer: And everything’s fallen into place. But what’s in it for you, Kevin? You’ve already told me you have a large flat in a very desirable part of London, a good job, ...

Kevin: What I’ve got is a nice flat I hardly ever see, a high-profile, high-stress job in share-dealing, no girlfriend, ‘cos she dumped me a month ago, so life’s not exactly a bed of roses. But I’ve been very successful and can afford to negotiate my future. Well, I want to get out for a while but not burn my boats completely, so Meg’s proposal is perfect.

Interviewer: And how is this lifeplan going to unfold now?

Meg: In a nutshell, we’ve agreed to change places for three months initially, swapping everything – we leave the car, the furniture, the tins of soup in the kitchen ...

Kevin: Not the clothes though!

Meg: If we’re all happy, then we’ll extend to a year, which will give Sally and I a wonderful base in London and Kevin some peace and quiet to realise his dream.

Interviewer: Which is?

Kevin: I’ve got an idea for the next bestseller, a racy paperback on city slickers.

Interviewer: Ah, plenty of first-hand experience to draw on – sounds promising! And Sally, you’ll get back your social life, but isn’t it potentially disruptive, to your schooling and so on?

Sally: We’re going to be moving at the start of a new school year, so there’s a natural break anyway. And if things don’t pan out, I can always move in with Dad.

Meg: But I think we’re all quietly confident that it *will* work out.

Kevin: Yeah, ‘cos it’s what we all want deep down. And if I make it as a writer, well it might end up a permanent arrangement, you know, six months on, six off, the best of both worlds.

Interviewer: Well, they say *the grass is always greener*, but you seem to have things pretty much sorted out. Meg, Sally, Kevin, the very best of luck.

All: Thank you.

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Unit 9, 9.1 Exercise 5

Speaker 1

When I left school, I was taken on by an environmental charity. I turned up in a suit, but instead of being stuck behind a desk, I was out on the streets, fundraising. My boss at that time was a bit of a rebel. She had quite a funky hairdo and tended to wear ethnic stuff she'd picked up on her travels. I guess she came across as something of a hippie. We got on really well and I thought I'd opt for the same kind of outfits – I can't remember anyone saying anything to make me do that but, to be honest, I think the others at work saw me more as one of them. But I do remember my mother not recognising me when she saw me in the street!

Speaker 2

I play in a metal band called Zandroid. I have a dragon tattoo on my face and wear a leather jacket with a dragon on it. It does mean that people can spot me immediately and I'm constantly getting asked for autographs when I'm out which is great! It makes me feel loved by the fans I guess! I had the tattoo done properly by this guy who I really respect and it wasn't cheap, I can tell you. It was funny how my look came about – I was on the train to a music festival and I picked up one of those free papers. There was a whole thing about dragons in it. I was hooked on the idea in a flash.

Speaker 3

The dress code at my school is fairly formal so I have to wear smart clothes, but I go for tops and trousers rather than suits and high heels. I wouldn't want to raise too many eyebrows among the other staff members so no jeans. Not that the school is super posh or anything, but very casual clothes wouldn't go down too well. What I wear is great really because I have to spend quite a bit of time delving into cupboards. I tend to go for high-end clothes which aren't skin tight – ones that move with me. And they should last – if they were cheap, they'd soon come apart.

Speaker 4

When I left university, I had long hair and wore old jeans. Job interviews were coming up and I didn't want to get up any interviewer's nose and lose out on a good job. There was this job advertised which seemed perfect as a designer at this factory making cars, so I got myself a suit and tie and landed the job. I realised later that I'd got hold of the wrong end of the stick as no one was the least bit bothered, but there you go, better safe than sorry. Anyway, one thing I've found is that suits are good as there's only a minimum outlay and now we have dress-down Friday I can still wear my jeans then.

Speaker 5

I'm Indian, but I live in the US, doing research in a university. For years, I've worn western clothes, mainly skirts and blouses. I'd always steered clear of the sari as it seemed to me to be not quite right for the workplace, although some other colleagues wear them. Something changed for me last year when I went back to India to see my relatives. The women in saris looked so elegant and I realised that the only person who was stopping me wear one was myself. Now, when I put on my sari, I feel pride in my heritage and realise that what I wear is not going to come between me and promotion or being accepted by others.

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Unit 11, 11.1 Exercise 3

Interviewer: Last week, Steve came into the studio to prove to us that life still has some happy endings. Here's his story ... So, Steve, your relationship with Abby has been through some ups and downs but is definitely on a high now?

Steve: That's right, and we're finally tying the knot next month. Just over five years ago, I met this bubbly little lady – Abby. We went out, shared some laughs, and pretty soon, I knew she was the one for me.

Interviewer: And was it love at first sight for her too?

Steve: She was happy enough to spend lots of time with me, but treated me more like a big brother, if anything – she even told me about another guy she was hoping to get together with. At which point, realising I would get nowhere romantically, I decided I'd better cast my net elsewhere. I met a nice girl called Samantha, very down-to-earth – the opposite of Abby – and we started seeing each other once in a while. We had well-paid jobs and money to burn. After a good holiday in Spain, we decided to move in together. I think we both understood that it wasn't true love, but we rubbed along fairly well. Unfortunately, quite soon after that, Abby made up her mind that I was Mr Right after all, and made this very plain to me, though not to Samantha.

Interviewer: How did you take this bolt from the blue?

Steve: It was baffling. I actually wondered whether she was joking, she used to do that, but I knew deep down she wouldn't pull that trick any more. I rationalised it as her whipping up a fleeting fantasy – she had time on her hands, as she'd been fired from her job and was on her own a lot – her then current boyfriend worked long hours.

Interviewer: And there were displays of obvious jealousy, weren't there?

Steve: Yeah, we'd be at the same pubs and there would be anguished looks from Abby across the room, deep sighs if she was ever standing next to me at the bar, that sort of thing – I misread the situation for ages – she's always had a streak of theatricality.

Interviewer: What was your reaction once you realised it was genuine?

Steve: Well, it dawned on me that I was calling the tune now; if I wanted it, Abby and I would have a life together – otherwise, things would stay the same. It wasn't straightforward, there was Samantha to consider. She'd always been very supportive and loyal. For a while, I couldn't decide what to do. To fend off the problem, I threw myself into my job.

Interviewer: And did colleagues at work pick up on anything different about you?

Steve: Very much so – I'd never been that keen and efficient before! Although my daily routine was much the same, I was glad to get to work, because it distracted me – but I made sure I kept my private life out of our usual conversations. As time went on, there was growing pressure on me to do something – for all I knew, Abby might give up in disgust.

Interviewer: Then, one summer's day ...

Steve: Yes, one beautiful morning last June, I couldn't keep up the pretence any longer. I sat Samantha down at the kitchen table and blurted everything out. She was terrific, far from holding back tears, she didn't even seem mildly phased by the revelation that I'd been carrying a torch for someone else and it was over. Just rolled up her sleeves and started sorting out my life for me: phoned my office to say that I was at death's door and wouldn't be coming in, then told me to get round to Abby's place pronto, preferably with a big bunch of flowers – she let me buy those myself.

Interviewer: And so Samantha walked out of your life and Abby walked in.

Steve: Yeah. Abby and I rented a cottage out in the country. Last summer was idyllic, and, well, it matched our mood. We got to know each other properly, spent every evening gazing into each other's eyes at sunset and ... well, I'm sure you can picture the rest.

Interviewer: Absolute rapture, straight out of *True Romance* ... how wonderfully slushy! So when did you finally pop the question, Steve?

Steve: I was at a big family wedding, one of my cousins, and Abby hadn't come, I think she had flu. Anyway everything seemed to fall into place at that event. I managed to sit down with my mother and talk about Abby – Mum'd been giving me the cold shoulder, as she'd really liked Samantha and, social norms being what they are, had seen her as a prospective daughter-in-law. Anyway, she came round after our heart-to-heart and I went off to offer a lift to my cousin's old schoolfriend, who lives in the States – I hadn't seen him for five years. Well, he looked me between the eyes and said, 'You've always loved Abby, so how come you're not married yet – get a grip, Steve.' So I did, leapt in the car without him, drove back and proposed. It's funny though, it had taken someone at one stage removed from my life to state the obvious.

Interviewer: Well, Steve, I wish you and Abby every happiness – you certainly deserve it.

Steve: Thank you.

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Unit 12, 12.3 Exercise 3

Interlocutor: Now, in this part of the test you're each going to talk on your own for about two minutes. You need to listen while your partner is speaking because you'll be asked to comment afterwards.

So Jana, I'm going to give you a card with a question written on it and I'd like you to tell us what you think. There are also some ideas on the card for you to use if you like.

All right? Here is your card.

Jana: Well, I don't have a scientific background, but I think science is something that affects us all nowadays. You can't afford to ignore what's going on in advanced science. There's a lot of media interest right now in the latest developments in, say, genetics and DNA profiling. Er, I do think it's worrying how genetic testing can be used, actually. For example, if you have a genetic disorder of some kind, you may not be able to take out life insurance ... or get a job even. But then, on the other hand, DNA analysis is helping to solve crimes, and that's good for society, so it's good and bad, I suppose.

The main problem centres around information. Most people don't know the facts and so naturally they're worried. So what is needed is more information in simple language for ordinary people to understand – and perhaps this needs to come from the government. Because I think the biggest worry of all is that the whole area of genetics is being driven by the business world. Much of the research going on today is backed by big companies – drugs co..., pharma... pharmaceutical companies and so on – and they're going to want something back from their investment. Which means that the research is not being done just as research, it's not pure, not independent. ... I think too, that they're not controlling this research.

The public needs to be properly informed. There are potential benefits, yes, but we must be told what's happening and why. You know, things are being pushed ahead at such an alarming rate and ... mm, I don't know, it seems to me, it's maybe not always going to be helpful for society.

Interlocutor: Thank you. Erik, what is your view on current career opportunities in science?

Erik: I'm actually in the final year of a biology degree so I can comment on that personally. We're always being told by our lecturers that more progress will be made in biology in the next five to ten years than has occurred in the last fifty. It's a fast-moving field. As Jana said, there are many new companies ... biotech companies springing up, so yes, job prospects are good for someone like me, I think, plenty of different directions to go in. So it's not all doom and gloom, far from it.

Interlocutor: What do you think, Jana?

Jana: Well, Erik is speaking from experience! It's good to hear his positive take on things.

Interlocutor: Thank you.

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Unit 14, 14.3 Exercise 2

Alice: Health scares – don't they make you sick! Or do they challenge your complacency? Every few days a new story appears in the newspaper about, first of all, butter is bad for you, then butter is good for you. Salt is bad for us, salt is good for us. You just have to pick up a cup of coffee and you're engaged in a health debate. With me today to discuss this issue is Professor Robert Atkins. Robert, what do you think about all this?

Robert: Personally, I'd rather have ten false health scares and one of them prove to be serious – then it leads to action, than the cynical sense that somehow all this is just a media confection. That's what I really object to.

Alice: Mm, but how often do health scares come true?

Robert: There are random events in which microbes do emerge. They can be extraordinarily lethal and these account for massive epidemics that have occurred in the past in human history and I think we would be arrogant in the extreme to think that such things may not occur again in the future.

Alice: You're thinking of bubonic plague, of course. But nowadays it seems is the best of times and the worst of times if you want to be healthy. This is a paradox, because, on the one hand, we live in a relatively healthy society. Our longevity is unprecedented. By historical standards communicable lethal disease is exceptionally controlled. Yet we seem to be getting better, but feeling worse. Why, if we're so healthy, are we so easily spooked?

Robert: If you were living two or three hundred years ago, you were in the hands of God or Fate and if you were struck down by a mortal disease you thought you'd been sinful, but you also had your beliefs to console you – you'd go to paradise or heaven or whatever. Nowadays, we have tremendously high expectations about long healthy life continuing and some of us no longer have an expectation of an afterlife. It's partly a matter of a crisis of rising expectations.

Alice: Um, so our health anxiety is like a big eater's gluttony or a rich man's miserliness. Health excites expectations of perfection. It's also an anxiety spread by commercial concerns, isn't it?

Robert: Indeed. The margarine industry, for example, is actually now a very powerful instrument in pushing the line that butter is bad for you and actually there's a strong industrial lobby that has a stake in making sure that we are all anxious and worried about our health.

Alice: And they're not the only players. If health scares sell pills they also sell papers. And what about the research community which keeps the health scare industry supplied with stories?

Robert: Health is always in the news. Sometimes it's the doctors themselves who are maybe responsible. In every branch of life there are people who like a touch of publicity and enjoy the turbulence. Others are often so convinced by their findings that they ignore the critical views of other doctors and have this urge to promulgate their ideas when it may not be appropriate to do so. If I wanted to avoid heart disease, I'd be taking aspirins, reducing my weight, I would probably frequent my local gym a bit more. I would eat this, that and the other and so on. Then there might be another disease I might get. What do I do then?

Alice: Mm, how much difference would it make to you if you made all those changes? Should you just discount what you read and hear?

Robert: Who knows? Some health scares can actually seriously damage your health – they lead to stress, deprive us of the comfort of eating chocolate and clog up doctors' waiting rooms. There is clearly an information overload and unfortunately, when the real thing comes along, people might have difficulty distinguishing it from all the background noise.

Alice: And of course it's difficult to disprove something once a claim has been made, however fallacious that risk is. Thank you, Professor Robert Atkins.

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Unit 15, 15.1 Exercise 3

Interviewer: Diane Webber, you've switched careers more than once during your own working life, and you now run a highly regarded employment agency for media high-fliers, where, above all, you advise your clients, both companies and applicants, to be fully flexible. You seem to see this as a fundamental principle, if your agency slogan – 'Keeping your options open' – is anything to go by. Is that a fair assessment of how you operate?

Diane Webber: Absolutely. I know that not so very long ago we used to see jobs for life as the norm, with unquestioning company loyalty, and a golden handshake at the end of it all – which, nine times out of ten, probably wasn't in actual fact deserved – but things are very different now. And yes, there does seem to be something positive in all this, despite the obvious question mark over security. Successful players in the current job market cut their teeth in one firm, and are willing to step sideways more than once to gain fresh experience. Unlike their predecessors, they may only progress up the rungs when they land their third or fourth job, or even later in their career. This increased movement brings benefits, not just for them, but for the companies they work for, too.

Interviewer: In spite of the instability? Surely it's important to have some continuity?

Diane Webber: Well actually, it's a mixed blessing. Individuals can get terribly stale if they stick in one place for too long, especially if they report to managers who fail to challenge them. That implies a hierarchy riddled with complacency and under-achievement, which can no longer be tolerated in today's fast-moving, dog-eat-dog world. Also, much of today's work consists of fixed-term projects, done in teams, and if one or two members drop out along the way, it really doesn't matter, provided that the team remains an entity. The one exception to this is the team leaders themselves, who are not only the driving force, but the guardians of the project, who hold important historical detail in their heads, so yes, continuity is important there. But even then it's a clearly defined cycle. We're frequently approached by highly-experienced team leaders who, having completed one project, decide they can't face even the slightest whiff of repetition and so come to us seeking fresh challenges.

Interviewer: And they manage to find work?

Diane Webber: Oh, they're snapped up! Because generally speaking, a project-based job can easily demonstrate a track record, it's there in the successful completion of the project.

Interviewer: And these people would have no problem getting references from the employers they're essentially walking out on? I would have thought that that could be an issue ...

Diane Webber: Employers don't view it like that at all. Their mindset is different now, as I said earlier, and companies actually take steps to foster a more dynamic environment, as they feel this yields better productivity, though the jury's still out on this, in my view. Nevertheless, with a flow of people, there's a quantum leap in terms of the ideas generated, not to mention the chance of new ways of problem-solving imported from elsewhere. These effects are tangible and they're often very attractive because they're perceived as lean and efficient, instant solutions, even if they generally turn out to be only quick fixes which later have to be reversed.

Interviewer: Ah, but isn't that the nub of it all, that this shifting and fragmented approach leads to poor decisions? Of course, the perpetrators are never taken to task, as they've already made a quick exit and are knocking on your door for another job!

Diane Webber: That's a bit unfair! For one thing, there've always been bad decisions. No company can rely on its personnel to make the right choices one hundred per cent of the time – even with the help of highly-paid outside consultants, staff will continue to get it wrong from time to time. However, I'd argue that it's the mediocre employees, who just want to keep their heads down, who are far more likely to cause problems than the risk-takers, who, don't forget, are only as employable as their last success.

Interviewer: Ruthless ...

Diane Webber: Pragmatic!

Interviewer: Which brings us neatly back to your slogan, doesn't it? Keeping your options open. How far do you encourage people to go in this?

Diane Webber: With new opportunities opening up all the time, the sky's the limit really. It's certainly never too late to contemplate a move, and so the maxim has to be, don't rule *anything* in or out.

Interviewer: We'll end on that positive note. Diane Webber, thank you.

Diane Webber: It's been a pleasure.

Unit 16, 16.3 Exercise 3

Speaker 1: If I had to single out one book from the many I read last year, it would be *The Dumas Club*, by Arturo Pérez-Reverte – that's in translation from the original Spanish. Although I read the opening couple of chapters quite slowly, I soon got completely immersed in the subtleties of the plot, so much so that I quite literally could not put the book down until I had finished it. Some books have this compelling effect on me, and not just detective stories like this one. What is so skilful about the way *The Dumas Club* has been constructed is that there are two strands to the plot, and as a reader, you assume these are interwoven and all the time you're engaging with the text on this basis, making links and suppositions of your own. Well, without giving anything away, there is a masterful twist, which makes this an exceptional book.

Speaker 2: I read loads of travel writing, partly because I have a penchant for travelling myself. That said, I do expect a lot more than straight description and first-hand observation from a truly great travel book. Redmond O'Hanlon's masterpiece *Congo Journey* does not disappoint! Will Self – the author – named it as one of his books of the year and said he felt like starting it again the minute he'd finished it, which is praise indeed! I'll certainly re-read it at some point. It's got brilliant insights into what is a really remote region of our planet. There's meticulous detail on its wildlife and superb use of dialogue ... brings the whole thing to life. And then much more besides – it's funny, moving – so you're reading it on many different levels. Above all, though, you marvel at his sheer guts in enduring such a difficult and dangerous journey. Epic stuff.

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Unit 17, 17.1 Exercise 3

Speaker 1

Well, I suppose I would visualise certain snapshots in my life, fleeting moments when I was on cloud nine – the birth of my second child or, more recently, a forest walk on a beautiful morning with the birds singing their hearts out – at times like these, you sort of step outside yourself and think, yes, this is as good as it gets. So it's not about having material possessions or a huge income, though if you have any worries on that front it surely rules out the chance of happiness. It's more to do with personal satisfaction and inner peace.

Speaker 2

For me it's not necessarily a transient feeling. I can recall whole periods of my life when things were basically going right, especially in my career, and I think a positive experience like that works as a catalyst. I suppose I can't have been in the same state of ecstasy from dawn till dusk, but looking back, perhaps through rose-tinted spectacles, it certainly feels that way. But if I had to pick just one event, it would be the elation I felt aged nine on receiving a silver trophy at my first judo contest, something beyond my wildest dreams.

Speaker 3

In my book, it's all to do with shared positive vibes, like infectious laughter rippling through a close family group. Being in a loving relationship is key, as this provides stability. And happiness can be found in small things – the security of a comfortable sofa, curled up with a good book while the wind's howling outside – that's something I remember from my childhood. It may be an old cliché, but it's true, you can't buy it, not at any price.

Speaker 4

Sometimes I've felt a surge of joy in the midst of a perilous situation, and one moment I'll always treasure occurred in the Andes with two fellow-climbers, handling a tricky descent in appalling weather conditions. I hadn't known them that well when we set out, but in that situation, you put yourself on the line and make the impossible happen through mutual trust and cooperation. Others might claim well-being is a mental thing, but that's not what really counts. If you're feeling under the weather, you won't experience emotional highs, so it's vital to stay in shape. Well, that's my view, anyway.

Speaker 5

Locations have always been important to me – they seem to contribute so much to a person's mood. A few years ago, I was studying marine activity on a coral reef, part of a close-knit research team on an otherwise unpopulated and stunningly beautiful island. There was one particular day when I'd done three dives, the last at night, and although I was exhausted, I couldn't turn in. So I went back to the beach alone. I lay on the ghostly white sand, gazing at the canopy of stars above me, and saw the most awesome meteor shower – an absolute first for me. It doesn't always take much to tip the balance in favour of happiness, does it?

Unit 18, 18.2 Exercise 2

Two-and-a-half million animals are used in Australian medical research every year, half a million in Victoria alone. They justify the obscene waste of life like this: animals must be used in order to trial new drugs and treatments safely. But a growing number of doctors and scientists have challenged this line, saying that in fact, animal research is counterproductive. It could in fact be damaging to human health. This is because animals are not like us – their bodies are different, they suffer from different diseases and obviously their reactions to drugs are also different. So animals cannot be used to find cures for humans.

Why does animal testing continue? Answer: it's a huge industry. There are many, many vested interests in animal research, from the big pharmaceutical companies themselves to the manufacturers of the cages that these poor dumb animals end up in. Then, apart from those obvious commercial interests, there are the many scientists who have chosen to base their careers on animal experiments. They would lose their jobs tomorrow if animal testing was stopped, wouldn't they?

Basically, animal research is the ultimate quick fix. In general, it requires many years to monitor the progression of a human disease. Obviously laboratory animals, with their shorter lifespans, tend to decline more rapidly. This means that research projects can be wrapped up quickly. Papers presented, trials successfully concluded, bam, new drugs hit the market. It can't be scientifically sound. But what should have been done – full-scale controlled monitoring within a human population – is ruled out as uneconomic. The hard truth is that just about every medical advance has come about either independently from, or despite, animal research. You shouldn't believe everything you hear, right?