

Listening practice for TOEFL

Conversation Test 3

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Conversation

Narrator

Listen to a conversation between a professor and his assistant.

Dr Abercrombie: Good morning, Hanna. Thanks for coming in. How was your holiday?

Mr Fitch: It was very good, Professor, thanks. A week in the Appalachians is really therapeutic. Nothing to do but eat, sleep, and listen to nature. It's beautiful up there in the spring-- the countryside is so green-- and the people are so friendly and laid back. A good place to unwind.

Dr: I envy you. I've just got too much to get done to get away at all now. I must get this book finished, for one thing-- my publisher's getting impatient. I've outlined the last two chapters, though, finally, so it won't take me too much longer, I hope. Maybe I'll be able to go somewhere at Christmas. But, um, what I wanted to talk to you about is our syllabus for this term, Hanna. I know this is short notice, but I'd like to make a couple of little changes to it.

Mr: Uh oh! I know your idea of "little" changes!

Dr: (laughs) No, no, I don't think it'll be that bad this time. What I'd like to do is, uh, cut Lectures Two and Three-- the ones on Old English and Middle English-- down to half their length and then meld them together into a single lecture. Then, with that extra ninety minutes, I want to add a lecture at the end on World Englishes. I think it's time we dealt with that more thoroughly, don't you?

Mr: Yessir, I certainly do. That's a good idea. So I guess I just need to cut down the quizzes to match and add a new one for World Englishes. Do you know when I'll be able to see your revised OE and ME notes?

Dr: I've already done a good bit of that revision, Hanna, and I think I'll have them ready for you before Lecture One. That's April eighth, I think?

Mr: Yes, Tuesday the eighth.

Dr: I've taken the segments on pronunciation out-- I think we can lose those easily enough. Nobody really needs to recite "Beowulf" or the "Canterbury Tales" any more-- no matter how much fun it is.

Mr: And that means you probably won't be discussing orthography much either?

Dr: I suppose not. I just want to be sure to point out clearly the main ways in which Modern English has developed from its predecessors. You know, the Great Vowel Shift, and so forth. Saving ninety minutes is not going to commit Old and Middle English to total oblivion, after all.

Mr: (laughs) Not if you can help it, certainly! So I can eliminate the phonetics quiz completely, then?

Dr: Yes, I think so. I'll still give them a reading just so they can get a flavour of their ancestral tongue, but they can get as much of the phonetics as they want out of the textbook-- and it's rote learning anyway, really.

Mr: Now, what about your new lecture, then? Can I get started on any of that?

Dr: Yes, that's where I could really use your help in the next couple of weeks. I need you to research 'pidgins and creoles' for me. I've never paid enough attention to them, and I'd like an idea of the number there are, uh, their distribution, and uh, what linguists are saying about them these days-- are they English dialects? Derivative languages? What? See if you can find me some interesting examples and some specific quotes, will you?

Mr: Yes, of course. I think I know the kind of thing you're looking for. I'll take a look for internet sources this afternoon and then see what the library has later.

Dr: Thank you, Hanna, I'd appreciate that. And while you're there, would you see if they've got a copy of Burnley's source book on the history of English? I can't seem to find mine.

Mr: Oh. Uh... that's because you lent it to me last term... and erm, I haven't returned it yet.

Dr: Ah. Well. Get it back to me sometime soon, then, will you? I need to refer to it for my revisions.

Mr: Yessir, of course. Anything else on the syllabus?

Dr: Just that we'll need the student handout revised to reflect the changes. Who was in charge of that last time?

Mr: The department secretary has the file. I'll draft a revision, let you check it, and then give it to her, shall I? Shouldn't take long, and we just need to get photocopies before the first class.

Dr: All right, I'll leave that in your hands too then, Hanna. Just let me know if you need anything. And I'll see you at the faculty meeting tomorrow afternoon.

Mr: Oh, yes. Yes. The faculty meeting. Oh, and if you need any anecdotes on Appalachian English dialect, I'm your man-- I've just picked up a wealth of contemporary examples!

Dr: (laughs) I'll keep that in mind. Thanks, Hanna.

Questions

Narrator:

Now answer the following questions. You may use your notes to help you.

1). What is the purpose of this meeting?



(A) To renew a program

- ☐ (B) To review a subject
- ☐ (C) To reschedule a lecture
- ☐ (D) To revise a course

2). Why did the assistant go to Appalachia?

- ☐ (A) For research
- ☐ (B) For fieldwork
- ☐ (C) For relaxation
- ☐ (D) For samples

3). Why will the professor give the students a reading?

- ☐ (A) So they can hear Old English
- ☐ (B) So they can write Old English phonetically
- ☐ (C) To fill out his lecture
- ☐ (D) To satisfy the requirements of the course

4). What will the assistant probably do next?

- ☐ (A) Go to the library
- ☐ (B) Return a book
- ☐ (C) Attend a meeting
- ☐ (D) Surf the Net

5). Why does Henry say this: "Not if you can help it, certainly!"?

- ☐ (A) He thinks the professor should teach less Old English.
- ☐ (B) He thinks the professor should teach more Old English.
- ☐ (C) He thinks the professor considers teaching Old English important.
- ☐ (D) He thinks the professor considers teaching Old English not so important.

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