Unit 7 Weird, wild and wonderful

Further practice in listening

Short conversations

Scripts

Conversation 1

W: We offer some very exciting tours plus the best luxury hotels. The most popular places are Thailand and India. Have you got any id ea of where you’d like to go?

M: Well, we were thinking of flying to a small island where we can enjoy some special local food.

Q: Where does the conversation most probably take place?

Conversation 2

M: Have you ever tried diving in the sea? No words can describe the beauty of the sea. You lose track of time down there!

W: No, I’m kind of frightened. I mean I hear all these stories about getting sick from going up too fast to the surface and dangerous fish.

Q: What makes the woman scared of diving?

Conversation 3

W: Many people are concerned about the rising costs of fuel.

M: I think they are a little short-sighted; they should look on the bright side. With higher costs, people will be forced to use less energy. We can thus save more energy, which is good for the environment.

Q: What does the man think of the rise of fuel costs?

Conversation 4

M: I’ve never been to the mountains before. I’m not much of an adventurer, you know.

W: Well, join us. It’s great spending some time with friends and just being close to nature. And when you come back, you’ll be a new person, relaxed and ready to study again.

Q: According to the woman, what can the man benefit from going to the mountains? Conversation 5

M: Look! The sun is shining. We haven’t seen the sun for age s. It’s been raining for a week! It’s much too beautiful a day to waste indoors reading, cooking or cleaning. W: You are right. Let’s make the most of it.

Q: What are the man and woman probably going to do?

Long conversation

Scripts

W: I just saw a great movie about the true story of Christopher McCandless’ trip to the Alaskan wilderness in 1992. It was so inspiring! His love of nature was so beautiful.

M: Well, I read about his story. He was foolish and just threw his life away!

W: Why would you say that? It’s a shame that he died, but at least he lived doing what he loved. Can you imagine living in Alaska alone, eating only the plants you can gather and the animals you can hunt?

M: No, that’s just it! He died in the wilderness because he thought nature was magical and kind. He needed to realize that nature is powerful and full of risks! Christopher was completely unprepared for the many dangers of the Alaskan wilderness.

W: Like what? He found shelter and he had a gun to hunt!

M: He did not use his map of the area – there was a boat where he could get help only a quarter of a mile away! He didn’t have any emergency food supplies! Most of all, he had no emergency communication equipment. Any one of those three things would have saved his life!

W: Yes, he should have been more prepared, but I still admire what he was trying to do.

M: It’s not romantic! Five famous outdoor specialists were interviewed. They all said he should have lived. He died because he was unprepared!

W: Still, I admire his spirit for trying!

Q1: What are the man and woman talking about?

Q2: What can we learn about Christopher?

Q3: What does the woman think about Christopher taking the trip to Alaska?

Q4: Which of the following is NOT mentioned as something that would have saved Christopher’s life?

Passage 1

Scripts

Within five seconds of taking off, an avalanche can move at 80 miles an hour, so people rarely have time to run out of the way. But these days, avalanches don’t often strike skiers at official skiing zones because the ski patrol makes sure the skiing areas are safe.

An avalanche occurs when one entire area or layer of snow slides off another layer below it. When a layer starts to slide, anything on top is carried along, and the avalanche picks up whatever lies in its path as it moves down a slope, including rocks, trees and people. When a person starts to travel across an area of unstable snow, their weight can start a slide.

As long as skiers stay in the official ski areas, they don’t have to worry. “We control the hazard, so it is unlikely you’ll get caught,” explains Mike, a snow safety expert. “We do that by pressing the snow together to make it more solid, and we use explosives to make an avalanche move or to test an area to see if it is unstable.” This work can be dangerous, so ski patrol members look out for each other and keep the public at a safe distance.

Mike and his colleagues also dig holes in the snow to study the layers. After they go back, they enter measurements into a computer; a special software creates a chart showing how the different layers are holding up. If an area looks risky, the ski patrol closes it.

Q1: What speed can an avalanche reach within five seconds of taking off?

Q2: According to the passage, under what circumstances may an avalanche occur?

Q3: What are skiers advised to do to avoid being caught in an avalanche?

Q4: Why does the ski patrol use explosives?

Passage 2

Scripts and answers

Anna was awarded a special day out for herself and her family after taking part in a competition run by a magazine in April, beating over 2,000 people who 1) participated in the event.

Anna’s wild day out will include a special tour of the city’s nature park, with exclusive 2) access to areas of the site that are not usually available to the public. During her visit, Anna is likely to see some natural wonders including rare birds feeding their young and a 3) tremendous number of newly hatched chicks. Anna may also see a great flamingo 4) currently nesting at the nature park after it escaped from the zoo last year.

The most 5) incredible thing is that Mike Dilger, a well-known wildlife reporter for BBC, will 6) accompany the family throughout the day. Mike is an experienced

biologist, so he is ready to share his experiences and knowledge of the natural world every step of the way.

Henry, manager of the nature park, says, “Visiting a nature park is a 7) remarkable way to learn more about types of wildlife that you just can’t see in your daily life. It’s an 8) amazing time of year for a visit –the hatching season is well underway, so there are lots of chicks hatching across the park, and as parents take regular trips to find food for their young, there is a very good chance of 9) catching a glimpse of some of our very rare birds. Anna will have a great day; we are really 10) looking forward to her visit.”