

## LISTENING PRACTICE

- Man: Today, I'm talking to teenage surfer Abby Fielding. Abby, welcome. Tell us about how you started surfing.
- Abby: Well, my family have always loved going to our local beach, and my dad became = like keen on surfing. He wasn't very good, but he really wanted to show me how to do it, and my mum offered to buy me a board. I still wasn't keen, but then I started watching surfing competitions near home, and when I saw the standard of the surfers, I just felt I could do better!
- Man: Very confident! How easy was it to get started?
- Abby: Well, it's free to practise, once you've got the equipment. But it can cost quite a lot to buy what you need. I went to the local surfing school for a bit too. I was lent some boards before I bought one, to see which type I liked best – that was useful.
- Man: So do you go surfing all year round now?
- Abby: Yes – even in winter when it's cold! The sea is actually warmer than the land. I just wear the same wetsuit as I do in the summer – although sometimes I do add gloves! You'd be surprised how many people are out there surfing with me.
- Man: And your biggest achievement was surfing an enormous wave!
- Abby: Yeah! That kind of wave only comes along a couple of times a year. I borrowed a large board, as mine wasn't big enough, and I was nervous – the waves were a lot bigger than they look from the beach. People say it hurts if you fall off in those conditions – but I didn't have time to think about that!
- Man: So – any advice for other teenagers taking up surfing?
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- Abby: Well, you're never too young to start – not on big waves, of course, in case you have to swim back to the beach. But in many places, you need to know how to surf whatever the waves are like – good and bad. And surfing schools are OK, but watching other surfers is just as useful – and practising yourself, of course!
- Man: So . . . you're still young – what next?
- Abby: Well, I'm going to miss the next big competition, as I've injured my ankle, but my future's definitely in surfing, so I need to investigate what opportunities there are. There's a course in surfing science you can do at the university here, but I'm not sure that's the right path for me at the moment.
- Man: Well, thank you Abby.

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Caspar: My name is Caspar and I'm the youngest child in a circus family. My parents and brother and sister are all performers. My mother wears wonderful costumes and dances across a **rope** about fifteen metres above the ground. Sometimes she plays a violin at the same time . . . Incredible!

My brother is ten years older than me, and my sister's sixteen. They're part of an act where up to **20** people balance on a motorbike and ride round the ring. The performers stand on each other's shoulders, with my sister at the top.

My dad's the ringmaster, or the boss of the circus. He's good at his job because he's **tall** and has a loud voice. He introduces the performers and makes sure the acts start and finish on time.

I'm not allowed to perform until I'm fifteen, but I march beside my dad ahead of the **band** at the beginning of the show, and lead everyone out at the end. I have some great costumes, and I love being in the ring. I can't wait to start training to be a performer.

We don't have horses or dogs. In fact the only animal in the circus is a **rabbit** who doesn't do much but is always the star of the show. The children love him. The performers have a lot of other jobs to do. We have to clean out the circus tent between each show, make the costumes, and repair the equipment. I check the audience tickets, and sell **ice-cream** at half-time.

We only work for eight months, during good weather, and we travel around from place to place. It's a great life.

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- Lisa: So, Sam, have you finished that book we had to read for school, *Lime County*?
- Sam: Oh, hi, Lisa. Yeah, just last weekend. It took me a long time to **get into** it. The first chapter was difficult. But in the end I couldn't put it down.   
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- Lisa: I liked it from the first page. I've never finished a book so quickly, and normally I don't like reading fiction.
- Sam: The main character in the story, Paul, was interesting. He hurt his leg badly and couldn't play football with the other kids. But the author didn't make you **feel a pity** for him.
- Lisa: Yes, that was because he was such a strong character. He couldn't do anything active, but he used his time to think about game plans for his team. They depended on him in the end.
- Sam: He was almost like a coach.
- Lisa: I thought the book was well written and it had a **good plot**. There was a bit of mystery about Paul's brother. Did he cause Paul's injury? Was he jealous of Paul? You don't find out until the very end.   
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- Sam: I didn't care so much about that. It was the football matches I liked, seen through Paul's eyes. I could imagine exactly what was happening.
- Lisa: The author was **clever** **thong minh** because when Paul was unhappy, the whole story – the weather, the background – sort of got darker, so the reader could feel what Paul was feeling.
- Sam: There was quite a lot of detail about the **techniques** of football. I think the author got that just right.
- Lisa: Any more would make it too long, and boring for people who weren't mad about football. That side of the book was about right. For me, the **best part** was that Paul realised what's important in life and how to deal with tough situations. He really grew as a person.   
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