

Lesson 31: Aging

Stephanie is worried about her grandmother, and confides in her friend Jane. Listen to their conversation and answer these eight comprehension questions:

Listening Comprehension

1. Stephanie says her grandmother...

- a. is going blind
- b. should move out of her house
- c. was in a car accident

2. Jane's family experienced a similar situation with Jane's...

- a. father
- b. grandfather
- c. great-uncle

3. When Jane's mom pointed out the difficulty, this person...

- a. became angry
- b. didn't take it seriously
- c. was willing to listen

4. Eventually, Jane's relative...

- a. got injured while at home
- b. couldn't afford the rent for his house
- c. needed health care around the clock

5. Now, Jane's relative is...

- a. depressed
- b. happy
- c. no longer able to speak

6. Stephanie's grandmother has a disease that affects her...

- a. brain
- b. heart
- c. lungs

7. Jane suggests that Stephanie's grandmother should...

- a. be more physically active
- b. go out for cake and ice cream
- c. visit Jane's relative

8. Stephanie thinks her grandmother...

- a. only has time on the weekends
- b. will enjoy it
- c. won't want to go out

Conversation Text

Jane: Hey girlfriend, how are you doing?

Stephanie: I'm fine. Just a little worried about my grandmother.

Jane: How come? Is she OK?

Stephanie: Well, her health is starting to **deteriorate** and **odds are** she'll have to go live in a retirement home.

Jane: Oh no, I'm sorry. Getting old can really be a **drag**. But moving into an assisted-living facility is **par for the course** when you start **getting on in years**.

Stephanie: The thing is, she really **prizes** her independence, so convincing her to move will be **an uphill battle**.

Jane: My mom was in a similar **predicament** with my grandfather – he could barely walk anymore, much less go up and down the stairs – but he absolutely refused to move out of his third-floor apartment.

Stephanie: I suppose people tend to get **set in their ways** when they get older. So what did your mom do?

Jane: Every time she **pointed out** how much difficulty he was having in his home, my

Vocabulary

deteriorate = get worse

odds are = there's a good chance; it's probable

a drag = (slang) a burden

par for the course = something to be expected in that situation

getting on in years = getting older

prizes = loves, values highly, appreciates

an uphill battle = a very difficult task

predicament = a difficult/complicated situation

set in their ways = continuing with the same habits/routine and not open to change

pointed out = brought a fact to someone's attention

grandfather would **shrug it off** and say he could handle it. My mom would try to argue, but he just **wouldn't budge**.

Stephanie: So did he end up staying in his apartment?

Jane: No – but it took an accident to make him **see the light**. He slipped when getting out of the shower and broke his **hip**. After that, he **grudgingly** admitted that an assisted-living place would be better.

Stephanie: Ah. And was he able to get used to the new place?

Jane: That's the funny part – once he moved in, he loved it! Now he tells everyone that moving there was the best decision he ever made.

Stephanie: Haha, that's great! I hope we can convince my grandmother to move. She's in the early stages of **Alzheimer's**, and her memories are starting to go.

Jane: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

Stephanie: We're afraid she might mix up her **pills** or **wander** out of the house and get lost – so it would really be better for her not to live alone.

Jane: That's understandable... Hey – I have an idea. Why don't you bring your grandmother to visit my grandfather? He **speaks so highly** of the place where he lives, I think he could talk anyone into moving there.

Vocabulary

shrug it off = dismiss or ignore it as if it weren't important

wouldn't budge = wouldn't change his belief

see the light = understand clearly

hip = the bone on the side of your body, where your leg joins your torso

grudgingly = reluctantly, without wanting to

Alzheimer's = a disease that makes you lose your memory and thinking/reasoning abilities

pills = capsules of medicine that you swallow

wander = go without a specific destination

speaks so highly = says so many good things about

Stephanie: That's **brilliant**! She hardly ever leaves the house, so it would be a fun **outing** for her. And if your grandfather can talk her into moving, that would be **the icing on the cake**.

Jane: Let's plan it for next weekend.

Vocabulary

brilliant = very intelligent

outing = a short trip outside the house

the icing on the cake = an extra good thing

Vocabulary Quiz

Complete each sentence with a word from the box. Two words are not used.

an uphill battle
budge
drag
grudgingly

icing on the cake
odds are
outing
par for the course

pill
pointed out
prizes

shrugged off
spoke highly
wandered

1. He was mortified when I _____ that there was a mistake in his presentation.
2. I can't believe we have class at 7 AM on Saturday morning - what a _____!
3. The sky is starting to darken. _____ it'll rain pretty soon.
4. I tried to explain to the police officer that I was only parked illegally for a minute, but he wouldn't _____ - he said I still had to pay a fine.
5. The doctor said to take one _____ every morning for the next two weeks.
6. Needing to use a lot of sunscreen is _____ when you live in a sunny, tropical climate.
7. Our neighbors _____ of the play at the local theater; they said we should go see it.
8. The shirts were two for the price of one, and we got an extra discount of 10% for paying in cash - that was _____.
9. He _____ his collection of antique furniture; he spends hours taking care of the pieces.
10. The team captain _____ the loss and said they'll do better next time.
11. We have 5-year-old twins, and getting them ready for school every day is _____.
12. I _____ agreed to pay for my sister's lunch when she said she'd forgotten her wallet... again.

Speaking Task

Talk about one of your grandparents, older relatives, or another elderly person who you know. What is this person like? What have you learned from him/her?

Record your answer at www.speakpipe.com/espressoenglish or send the MP3 to homework@espressoenglish.net for feedback!

Answers

Comprehension Questions

1. b
2. b
3. b
4. a
5. b
6. a
7. c
8. b

Vocabulary Quiz

1. pointed out
2. drag
3. odds are
4. budge
5. pill
6. par for the course
7. spoke highly
8. icing on the cake
9. prizes
10. shrugged off
11. an uphill battle
12. grudgingly