

Examiner: Do you think it is important to read novels and poetry?
Candidate: Well, my teachers always told me it is. But reading, I can take it or leave it. I can't remember the last time I picked up a real page-turner. I don't think it's important to read. You can be entertained by films and you can be educated via the television, watching documentaries and so on. So, I don't feel I'm missing out on anything.

Track 52

Sample answers:

Candidate: One of my favourite hobbies is going shopping. I've always loved it. I think I get it from my mum, who used to take me to the nearest town every weekend to visit shops and boutiques. She taught me about buying a few quality items that you may pay a premium for but that last a long time so are a good investment. She also taught me about how to check for the quality of a garment by looking at the way it's sewn together and also creasing the fabric to see if it stays creased or not. If it stays creased then it's a poor quality fabric. Another thing I learnt from her is how to find a bargain. You need to shop around and not be afraid of trying the smaller boutiques where you're more likely to find a shop owner who's happy to offer a discount. I've been shopping on my own since I was a student. Then, I could not afford to buy many things but stuck to what my mum taught me and kept my eyes open for a quality bargain. The rest of the time, I would window shop. Nowadays I can afford designer clothes but I still love the sales, when I hunt for a bargain and the odd top-designer item. One thing I hate, however, is trying things on because there are always long queues and it means you have less time for shopping. It's not a problem, not trying things on, because if something is not the right size I can take it back to the shop as long as I've kept the receipt.

I go shopping every week. I find it therapeutic. It always makes you feel good to get your hands on a nice quality piece at a bargain price, and if I'm feeling a bit down there's nothing like a bit of retail therapy. I find shopping exciting as well. You spend time in the poshest part of town where you can mix with fashionable people. There's a buzz and it's busy and noisy and colourful. Shopping lets you keep up to speed with the latest trends. So all in all, I think it has a lot of benefits and I love it.

Examiner: What's the best bargain you've ever got?

Candidate: I once bought a designer coat, 100% cashmere, absolutely beautiful, for 25% of the full price. It was in a closing-down sale.

CD 2

Track 01

- 1 How long have you lived here?
- 2 Have you ever eaten Italian food?
- 3 What has happened in the news today?
- 4 What have you done so far today?