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Over the years, I've interviewed hundreds of candidates for jobs at many different levels. The point of every job interview is to make sure a candidate has the skills necessary to do the work. Hiring the wrong person can be an expensive mistake. But, apart from references, how can you determine if the candidate actually knows what he says he knows? A very effective way to sort out the good candidates from the bad is by asking 'How did you do that?' and 'Why did you do that?' at appropriate stages in the interview.

Practice Tests

Practice Test 1

Listening Section 1

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- A: Good morning – Dave Smith speaking.
 B: Hi – could I speak to the organiser of the Preston Park Run?
 A: Yes that's me.
 B: Great – um – I was talking to some friends of mine about the run and they suggested I contact you to get some more details.
 A: Sure – what would you like to know?
 B: Well – they said it takes place every Saturday, is that right?
 A: Yes it does.
 B: OK – great!
 A: Do you know where the park is?
 B: Oh yes – I've been there before. But it's quite big and I'm not sure where to go.
 A: Well there's a circular track that goes right around the park. The run starts at the café, goes past the tennis courts then twice around the lake and finishes back where it started.
 B: OK and what time is the run?
 A: Well the actual run begins at 9 am but the runners start arriving at about 8.45.
 B: OK – so I need to get up early Saturday morning then. And how long is the run?
 A: Well it used to be three kilometres but most people wanted to do a bit more than that so we lengthened it to five kilometres – we now go round the lake twice and that adds an extra two kilometres.
 B: Right – not sure I've ever run that far so I'd better start doing a bit of training.
 A: That's a good idea. But it's not a race, it's really just for fun and the best thing would be to take it easy the first few times you do it and then see if you can gradually improve your time.
 B: Is the run timed then? How do I know how well I've done?
 A: When you cross the finish line you'll be given a bar code and you take this to one of the run volunteers, who will scan it. Then you can get your time online when you go home.
 B: Oh – I see. You collect all the results.

- A: Exactly.
 B: I see – that's great. So how do I register?
 A: Well there are several ways. I could take your details over the phone but it's much easier if you do it using the website.
 B: OK – good. Um, I think that's probably all I need to know for now. Oh yes – does it cost anything to register or do you collect money each week?
 A: Well it doesn't cost anything to register but we do charge for the run. In fact we have just increased the charge to £1.50. It used to be a pound but because we were making a bit of a loss we have had to increase it by 50p.
 B: OK thanks. I think I have enough information on taking part in the run.

[pause]

- B: Um – you mentioned volunteers. I have a friend who is interested in helping out. Can you give me some details so I can pass them on to her?
 A: Sure – well you need to ask your friend to contact Pete Maughan. He manages all the volunteers.
 B: OK – I didn't quite catch his surname – was it Morn – M-O-R-N?
 A: No – just a bit more complicated – it's M-A-U-G-H-A-N.
 B: Right – thanks. And could you give me his phone number?
 A: Yes – just a moment. It's here somewhere – let me just find it. Ah I've two numbers for him. I think the one that begins 0-1-2-7-3 is an old one so use this one: it's 0-1-4-double 4-7-3-2-9-double zero.
 B: OK – got that. Can you tell me anything about the volunteering? Like what kind of activities it involves?
 A: Sure – well we need volunteers for basic stuff like setting up the course. We have to do that before all the runners arrive.
 B: OK – so that's a really early start!
 A: Yes that's right. But if your friend would prefer to arrive a bit later she can also help with guiding the runners so they don't go the wrong way.
 B: I see. I believe you do a report on some of the races.
 A: Yes that's right. In fact we do a weekly report on each race and we always try to illustrate it.
 B: OK – well my friend really likes taking photographs. She's just bought a new camera.
 A: Actually that would be great. I don't know whether Pete has anyone to take photographs this week.
 B: Oh, I'll let her know.
 A: OK good. Could you ask your friend to phone Pete and let him know?
 B: Yes I will.
 A: OK thanks. Goodbye.
 B: Goodbye.

Listening Section 2

▶ 40

Thank you for calling the phoneline for the Pacton-on-Sea bus tour. This is a recorded message lasting approximately four minutes and it provides general information on the town bus tour.

Pacton-on-Sea is a beautiful west coast town and has attracted tourists for many years. One of the best ways of getting to know the town is to take the bus tour, which provides a wonderful viewing experience from one of our open-top buses. The tour is a round-trip of the town and there are a total of 4 stops where passengers can get on and off the bus. A lot of people start at the first stop which is at the train station as this is where many tourists arrive in the town. The next stop after the station is the aquarium which is famous for its dolphin show and which has recently expanded to include sharks. This is well worth a visit and is very reasonably priced. Leaving the aquarium, the bus tour goes along the coast road and after a few kilometres comes to the Old Fishing Village where you can get off to stroll along the waterfront. There are some original buildings here but most of the area has been modernised and is now used as a harbour for all kinds of sea craft including yachts and some amazing power boats. The tour then heads off to the last stop and this is where most of the shops are. So for those of you keen to do a bit of shopping this is the place for you. Our advice is to go to this part of the town in the morning when it is relatively quiet. It does get very busy in the afternoons, especially at the height of the season. This area of the town includes an ancient water fountain where many people like to have their photograph taken – so do look out for this.

[pause]

Now some details of the costs and timings. A family ticket, which includes two adults and up to three children, costs £30. An adult ticket costs £15, children under the age of fifteen are £5 and student tickets are £10 as long as you have a student card. All tickets are valid for 24 hours, which means that you can get on and off the bus as many times as you like within a 24-hour period. So you could, for example, start the tour in the afternoon and complete it the following morning. The first bus of the day leaves the station at 10 am and the last one of the day leaves at 6 pm. Buses leave every thirty minutes and each tour takes a total of fifty minutes. There are many attractions at each of the stops, so wherever you get off the bus there will be plenty to do. The bus tour tickets do not include entrance to any of these attractions apart from the museum which is located near the aquarium. Some buses have local guides, who will point out places of interest and will provide information on the town. However, we cannot guarantee that every bus will have a guide and so we also have an audio commentary that has been specially recorded for the bus tour by the tourist office. Headphones are available on the bus and these are easy to operate. There is no extra charge for these – just plug in, select the required language and adjust the volume.

Due to the winter months being rather cold and wet in Pacton-on-Sea, the bus tours only operate from March to September. The weather is usually warm and sunny during these months so remember to bring some sun protection, especially on hot days. And of course, it does occasionally rain here in the summer so if the weather looks bad, remember to bring some rainwear. The bus tours are available no matter what the weather.

At the height of the summer the tours can get very busy so you are advised to book. You can book tickets online, over the phone and also at the station and at any of the other tour stops. When booking over the phone you can collect your tickets at any of the stops at the start of your tour. When you do it online you can print your e-ticket which you must remember to bring with you.

Thank you for calling the Pacton-on-Sea phonenumber and we look forward to seeing you soon on one of our tour buses.

Listening Section 3



Randhir: Hello – I'm Randhir Ghotra from the technologies department.

Dave: Ah yes. Good. I'm Dave Hadley. Thanks for coming to see me.

Randhir: That's OK. I believe you want us to do some work for you?

Dave: Yes that's right. Um, I'm responsible for student admissions to the college and I use a computer system to help process student enrolments and to do the timetabling. But it really doesn't suit the way we work these days. It's over ten years old and although it was fine when it was first introduced, it is just not good enough now.

Randhir: OK – what problems are you experiencing?

Dave: Well. 20 years ago, the college was quite small and we didn't have the numbers of students or tutors that we have now.

Randhir: So the system can't handle the increasing volumes ...

Dave: Well, there's a lot more data now and it sometimes seems the system has crashed but, in fact, it just takes ages to go from one screen to the next.

Randhir: Right. Is that the only problem?

Dave: Well that's the main one, but there are others. In the past, doing the timetabling was quite simple but now we have a lot more courses and what's made it complicated is that many of them have options.

Randhir: Right – but the system should allow you to include those.

Dave: Well no, it doesn't. It was supposed to – and a few years ago we did ask someone from the technologies department to fix it, but they never seemed to have the time.

Randhir: Hmm ... are there any other issues with the system?

Dave: Well – I've been given extra responsibilities and so I have even less time to do the timetabling. If there was anything you could do, Randhir, to make the process more efficient, that would be really helpful.

Randhir: Well it sounds like you could do with an assistant but that's obviously not possible, so what about having an online system that students can use to do their scheduling?

Dave: How would that work?

Randhir: Well – it may mean less choice for students but we could create a fixed schedule of all the courses and options and they could then view what was available ...

Dave: ... and work it out for themselves – that sounds great.

Randhir: OK, so ... um ... we'll need to decide whether

or not to improve the existing system or to build a completely new system.

Dave: Well I'd much prefer to have a new system. Quite frankly, I've had enough of the old one.

Randhir: OK – that'll probably take longer although it may save you money in the long run. When were you hoping to have this in place?

Dave: Well it's January now and the new intake of students will be in September. We need to start processing admissions – in the next few weeks really.

Randhir: Well it will take more than a few weeks, I'm afraid. As an initial estimate I think we'll be looking at April or May to improve the existing system but for a new system it would take at least nine months. That would be October at the earliest.

[pause]

Dave: What are the next steps if we are to have a new system?

Randhir: Well, the first question is – do you have support from your senior management?

Dave: Yes, I've already discussed it with them and they're also keen to get this work done.

Randhir: OK, because I was going to say, that's the first thing you need to do and without that we can't go ahead.

Dave: Yes, I've done that.

Randhir: That's good.

Dave: Actually, they mentioned that there's probably a form I need to complete to formally start the project.

Randhir: Yes – that's the next thing you need to do. I'll send you an email with a link so you can fill it in online. It's called a 'project request form'.

Dave: OK, great. And then what happens?

Randhir: Well, I have a list of things but I think the third thing you should do is see Samir. He's our analyst who will look at the system and identify what needs to be done.

Dave: OK – can you send me his contact details and I'll set up a meeting with him.

Randhir: OK that's good, so we should soon be able to get a team together to start the work. Some members of our team work in different locations so it's not easy to have face-to-face meetings.

Dave: That's OK – I'm used to having conference calls providing they are not late at night.

Randhir: Right – so I'll send you details of the team and if you could set up a call that would be great.

Dave: OK, I'll do that.

Randhir: Thanks.

Listening Section 4



Hi everyone – today I'm going to be talking about the origins of ceramics. So, first of all, let's start off with – what is a ceramic? Well, generally speaking, ceramics are what you get when you apply heat to certain inorganic, non-metallic solids and then allow them to cool. And examples of ceramics are everyday things like earthenware pots, crockery, glassware and even concrete.

So how did it all begin? Well it all started around 29,000 years ago when humans discovered that if you dig up some soft clay from the ground, mould it into a shape and then heat it up to a very high temperature, when it cools the clay has been transformed into something hard and rigid. And so – what did those first humans do with their discovery? Well – they created figurines which were small statues and which depicted animals or gods or any shape that the clay could be moulded into. And all this activity was centred around southern Europe where there is also evidence of ceramics that were created much later.

The early humans also found a practical use for their discovery, such as storing things like grain – although there were drawbacks. The pots were porous so that, although they could carry water in them, it wasn't possible to store it over a long period. And also, they were quite brittle and shattered very easily if they were dropped.

But despite these problems, it was many thousands of years before there were any improvements. In China at around 200 BC, they discovered that by adding minerals to the clay they could improve both the appearance and the strength of the ceramics. But it took nearly a thousand years before they perfected the process to produce high-quality ceramics known as porcelain. And once they had perfected the process, they kept it a secret – for another thousand years! Compared to the first ceramics, porcelain was lighter, finer, harder and whiter and became an important commodity in China's trading with the rest of the world for hundreds of years. In fact, it became so valuable that it was known as white gold and spies were sent to China to discover what they did to the clay to produce such high-quality merchandise.

It wasn't until the eighteenth century that the secret began to unravel. A German alchemist called Johann Friedrich Bottger was asked by the king to make gold out of lead. Unfortunately, Bottger failed to achieve this and soon gave up, but in order to please the king he attempted to make high-quality porcelain. And after many years of experimentation, he discovered that by adding quartz and a material called china stone to very high-quality clay he managed to get the same results that the Chinese had been achieving for the last 1,000 years.

We'll now look at another ceramic which is made from mixing sand with minerals and heating to over 600 degrees Celsius. When this mixture cools the result is of course glass. The main difference between ceramics made from clay and glass is that clay is made up of crystalline plates which become locked together in the cooling process whereas glass cools too quickly for crystals to form. Apart from that, the process of heating up naturally occurring materials to transform them is the same.

The origins of glass date back to 3500 BC but it wasn't until the Roman Empire, 2,000 years ago, that the art of glass-blowing and the practical uses of glass became more widespread. One of the more innovative uses was to use it in windows as, up until then, they had just been holes in walls. It must have been very draughty in those days!

The Romans were also responsible for inventing concrete. And although the origins are uncertain, experts think that this is largely due to the high level of volcanic activity in the area. The Romans observed that, when volcanic ash mixes

with water and then cools, it gets extremely hard and almost impossible to break up. The chemical reaction that follows is very complex and continues for many years, and the concrete just keeps getting harder. Evidence of this is the numerous Roman remains that are still standing, many of which are almost completely intact.

One of the most important facts about concrete for the Romans was that it can be created underwater. As the Roman Empire grew, the Romans needed to take control of the seas and for this they needed to build harbours capable of holding a fleet of ships. Pouring concrete mixture into the sea immediately started the hardening process and rather than just dissolving in the mass of water, the substance was tough and long-lasting. This strange characteristic of concrete made a significant contribution to the success of the Roman Empire.

Practice Test 2

Listening Section 1



- A:** Good morning. Dave speaking.
- B:** Oh hi. I'm phoning about a short story competition. Um, I saw an advert in a magazine and I was just calling to get some details.
- A:** Yes – certainly. I'm the competition organiser so I should be able to help. What kind of details are you looking for?
- B:** Well – erm – does it cost anything to enter?
- A:** Yes – there's an entry fee of five pounds.
- B:** OK – that should be fine.
- [pause]
- B:** It's a short story competition – so how many words is that?
- A:** Well – we want to give people a reasonable amount of freedom but the guidelines are around 3,000 words.
- B:** Oh – that sounds quite a lot.
- A:** Well – it's not as much as it used to be. We did have a limit of 5,000 words but some people thought that was too many so this year we've reduced it.
- B:** Right – and does the story need to be about anything in particular?
- A:** No – you can write about any topic you like. But the main point of the competition is that it has to have a surprise ending.
- B:** Oh – I see. That sounds interesting. I don't think I've ever written a story like that before.
- A:** Yes – it's something we've introduced for this year's competition.
- B:** Right. Um – I'm eighteen. Is there any age limit?
- A:** Yes – you need to be sixteen or over, so if you're eighteen that's fine.
- B:** Great. So you have the competition once a year. Is that right?
- A:** Yes – we start advertising in January and the competition takes up a lot of the year. We give people a few months to write their story and then it takes quite a long time to judge all the entries and to announce the winners.

- B:** I see. So when is the closing date for the competition? It's already April – I hope I'm not too late.
- A:** No you've still got plenty of time. You need to submit your entry by the 1st of August. After then it will be too late, although you can always enter next year's competition!
- B:** OK good. So how do I enter?
- A:** Well we have a website and the best way to enter is to complete the entry form online. We also have more details of the competition on the site. Shall I give you the web address?
- B:** Yes please.
- A:** OK – it's www dot C - O - M - P - 4 - S - S dot com. And that's the number four not the word four.
- B:** OK – thanks. I've got that. So – I can complete the entry form online but how do I send the story? Do I print it out and send it to you?
- A:** Well you may want to print the story out so you can review it but don't post it to us. When you've finished your story you will need to email it to us. The email address is on the website I gave you.
- B:** OK – that's fine. [pause] Um can you tell me a bit about how the competition is judged and what the prizes are?
- A:** Yes of course. Well, once we have all the entries I send them to all the judges. Our competition is quite popular so we are lucky to be able to use famous authors who are very interested in the competition.
- B:** That's fantastic. It's great to know that someone famous will be reading my story!
- A:** Yes that's right. It takes them quite a while to read through the entries but eventually they decide on the top five stories.
- B:** I see – and what happens then?
- A:** Well, they will be published online so everyone can read them. They will not be in any order at this point. They will just be the five stories that the judges think are the best.
- B:** And do all the top five stories get prizes?
- A:** No – it's just the top story and the runner-up.
- B:** So how is the top story decided?
- A:** Well once the top five stories are available, it will be the public who will vote for their favourite story.
- B:** Right – I see. So I need to get all my friends to vote for me then!
- A:** Er, yes – that's a good idea.
- B:** And what is the prize?
- A:** Well, the runner-up gets a prize of £300, but the winner gets a trip to Spain to attend a workshop for writers.
- B:** Wow – that's brilliant! I'd better get writing straight away.
- A:** Yes – good luck!
- B:** Thanks.

Listening Section 2



OK – so hi everybody and welcome to the Sea Life Centre. Before you start on your tour I'd just like to give you some information about things to look out for as you go. Well first of all, I guess some of you may have been here before and may be surprised to see the name has changed. We are not called World of Water any more – since the beginning of this summer we've been re-

named, and we've also made a few other changes. However, the main attractions like the aquarium, the crocodiles, the penguins and so on are still here. But we have a new restaurant and picnic area and the latest thing that we have – and it was only finished last week – is the splash ride. This is an exciting new area of the centre and is pretty scary and of course you do get a bit wet so make sure you're not wearing your best clothes!

As I said, the main attractions are still here and the most popular thing that everyone wants to see is feeding time, especially for the crocodiles and the seals. We used to have the main feeding time in the afternoon at around 3 pm but we found that some of the animals got a bit hungry waiting until then and so we now have it at noon. They seem much happier with the new time – although it's a bit difficult to know what they're thinking!

Now – I'd like to mention something new that we've introduced this year that we're very excited about. It's called a VIP ticket. The VIP ticket costs an extra £2 per person and you will be amazed at what it allows you to do. With this you'll be allowed to feed the sharks. Now I know that for some people this might be quite a frightening thing to do, but it is perfectly safe. For those of you who are a bit unsure, we do have a video you can watch to see what happens. It's a great experience and your friends will be very impressed!

Speaking of friends, I'd just like to remind you that the Sea Life Centre will be more than happy to organise a birthday party for you and your family and friends. If you need more details you can speak to me afterwards and there are also forms at the entrance that you can fill in.

I'd also like to bring your attention to the good work that the Sea Life Centre is doing in support of animal conservation. I am sure you're all aware of the worrying situation with a large number of species facing extinction. Here at the Sea Life Centre we're taking action by asking as many people as possible to sign a petition. Once we have over 5,000 signatures we are planning to send it to the government in the hope that more people will begin to take it seriously.

Right – well there's obviously a lot going on at the Centre, and a lot of things to discover. At all the attractions there is helpful information so please read as much as you can and, if you want to see what you've remembered, please do the quiz after your visit. There are no prizes of course, but I'm sure you'll be surprised by how much you've learnt.

[pause]

So before I leave you all to start your tour, I've just got a few tips. There are a large number of attractions and you may not have time to see them all. Of course, there are the old favourites like the Aquarium and the Crocodile Cave but if you don't have time to see everything make sure you visit Turtle Town, which is beyond the Aquarium and the Seal Centre. This is very special and has a large number of endangered species, and as it's at the far corner of the Sea Life Centre it often gets overlooked. I also have to apologise for the Penguin Park. This has needed some urgent work to be done and so will not be open for the next week. We are very sorry about this but I'm sure you'll find the Seal Centre which is directly opposite it will keep you entertained just as much – if not more!

We're also very busy today as you may have noticed on your way in. Everyone starts here at the Aquarium but as it's so big, there's no waiting to get in. But today we're expecting a lot of people to want to see the Crocodile Cave as a couple of eggs have hatched out. So expect delays there and, if you like, move on to the Seal Centre first and then go back when things are quieter, towards the end of the day.

So I'll leave you now but if you have any questions I won't be far away and have a great time at the Sea Life Centre!

Listening Section 3



Martina: Oh hi George, how's it going?

George: Hi Martina, it's going well. How about you? How's university life?

Martina: Well it's great – apart from the studying of course.

George: Yeah – me too! What are you studying? I seem to remember that you were going to do Art. That was your best subject, wasn't it?

Martina: No – not really – I just liked the teacher. He was French and had an amazing accent. My favourite subject was History but I couldn't see what career that would give me.

George: Ah, right. So what did you choose?

Martina: Well I found it really difficult to decide. I was really good at Science but I must admit I never really enjoyed studying it. So, in the end I decided to opt for English which was my second favourite subject and I thought it would be more useful to me than studying anything else. So – that's what I'm doing. Um – how are you finding university?

George: Well – it's a bit of a challenge I suppose.

Martina: Are you finding it difficult?

George: Well, some of it. I'm doing Mechanical Engineering which is really interesting but it covers quite a lot of areas like materials science, machine design, physics and of course mechanics – and they're all fine. But it's maths that I'm struggling with. It's a lot harder than it was at school.

Martina: I can believe it. It all sounds very difficult to me. But then I never was very good at mechanical things. I suppose it must involve some practical work?

George: Well – not at the moment. Currently, it's nearly all theory, so it's a bit heavy-going.

Martina: I guess you need to start with that so that you can get a grasp of the concepts and learn a few facts before you start putting it into practice. It must be a lot different to the course that I'm taking.

George: Yes – but in a few weeks we'll be having a lot more practical experience. In fact, I've got a great assignment this term working on jet engines which means I'll be going on a few field trips to a nearby airport.

Martina: Oh – that's great. It sounds like you're going to be very busy.

George: Yes I'm not sure how I'm going to cope with the work. We have a lot of lectures – and that's fine. The lecturers are very knowledgeable and I learn a lot from them. But we also have a lot of seminars and I find with so many people

expressing their views it can get quite frustrating. It would be better if we didn't have so many of those.

Martina: Yes – it's the same for me. *[pause]* Um – how are the students at your place?

George: Well I haven't really met anyone yet. They all seem a bit quiet.

Martina: Perhaps they're working hard – they don't appear to be very studious here, but they are very friendly. I must say I've been doing a lot of sitting around and chatting over the last week or so.

George: Well, that's good. The only person I've spoken to really is my tutor. He's very approachable and seems to understand how difficult it can be starting university.

Martina: It's good to have someone you can talk to. And he may help you meet other students.

George: Actually that doesn't bother me. I'm bound to get to know some people sooner or later. It's more a question of finding out what I need to do, where to go and so on. I hope he can help me with that.

Martina: Oh I would have thought so. Well we certainly have a lot of work ahead of us. It seems like a long time, doesn't it – studying for three years.

George: Yes it does – but I'm sure it'll go quickly. You know I'm really dreading the first assessment.

Martina: Yes – for the course I'm doing we have to hand our first one in at the end of next month.

George: Really – so have you got the topic yet?

Martina: No – but we'll get it soon. I'm not sure how much we have to write yet – not too much, I hope!

George: I know what you mean. And it's hard to study especially where I am now.

Martina: Oh – where are you living?

George: I'm living in a hall of residence. I thought that would be a good idea as there'd be a lot of people around but I'm finding it a bit noisy. I can see that I'm going to have problems when I really need to get down to some work.

Martina: So I guess you need to be somewhere on your own then?

George: Yes – well I do like to have some people around me, so I'd prefer to live with a family somewhere in a house not too far from the university.

Martina: Well good luck with that.

George: Yes thanks – and good luck to you as well. I have to dash now. I've another lecture in ten minutes. Bye for now.

Martina: Bye.

Listening Section 4



Hello everyone. You've all been given an assignment for your Sociology course which will involve giving a presentation to the rest of the group. And so, today, I'm going to be giving you a few tips on how to prepare your presentations. This should help you with your current assignment – but a lot of the principles I'll be putting across will be general principles which will, of course, help you with all your future presentations.

So first of all, the most important thing to consider is your

audience and in this instance, your audience are the other students in your group. There are three points to bear in mind. Firstly, you need to ask yourself what they need to know; secondly, it's useful to consider whether they'll be supportive or not; and thirdly – will it be a small group, say three or four, a moderate gathering of twenty or so people (as for your current assignment) or will there be hundreds of people? *[pause]* Having said all that, what I'm about to tell you will apply equally to any audience.

So – how do you structure your presentation? Right at the beginning, you should tell them something that forces them to pay attention. This could be something surprising or even shocking but it needs to be relevant! After that, you need a list of items or topics showing them what you'll be covering – rather like an agenda – and then the main part of the presentation will follow. This main part will be the detailed information you'll be presenting and could include facts, statistics, personal experiences, etc. After this you should summarise what you've presented and close with what I call 'next steps'. For this assignment, you could simply point the group to other Sociology reference material. In other cases, you may want to suggest some actions that people can take.

Now – what about the design of the slides for your laptop? Well the important thing here is to be consistent. You need to have the same type of font and use the same colour and size for the same elements. For example, all headers need to look the same, all bullet points need to be presented in the same way. And don't just stick to words. Bring the presentation to life by adding graphics. These could be in several forms such as pictures, flow-charts, diagrams, histograms and so on.

And so – let's move on now to presenting. You have your presentation prepared and you're ready to start. Well – it's important to give a good impression from the start. So take three deep breaths, look at the audience, no matter how frightening they may be, and be enthusiastic and energetic. As you go through the presentation remember to provide some variety in the way you speak. So, for example, you can talk fairly rapidly for information that may be familiar, but then slow down for more unfamiliar sections. And change your tone as you speak – don't keep it at the same level all the way through. As I mentioned, look at your audience. Er, a good tip is to pick people out and look at them for around five seconds. Not looking at the audience gives the impression that you're either not interested in them or terrified of them. Looking too long at one particular person may make them feel rather uncomfortable. There may be points in your presentation that you want your audience to really absorb and in order to make important points stand out you may consider adding silence right after these. It will give people time to reflect on what you've just said. Also – you may be presenting complicated ideas or technical details but try to keep everything as simple as possible. Use simple words and as few as possible. And be clear. If you say something like 'this appears to be', it implies uncertainty. So using weak verbs such as 'appears', 'seems', 'could be', etc. needs to be avoided.

I'll just finish off with a few thoughts on questions and interruptions from the audience. You may choose to invite

questions from the audience as you go or ask them to wait until the end. Either way, questions should be encouraged as it provides you with some feedback on how interested the audience is and how well they're understanding you. When a question is asked you need to provide an answer that is as accurate as possible. So initially, my tip is to **repeat it**. This will ensure you have heard it correctly and will give you a few seconds to gather your thoughts.

Interruptions, on the other hand, can be unwelcome and you may get them for a variety of reasons. It's likely, however, that there's something in your presentation that's unclear or confusing. So my advice is to reduce problems by reading through your presentation beforehand and **predicting** potential points which could cause interruptions. You may then want to change that part of your presentation or, at least, you will be prepared if someone does interrupt you.

Now, do *you* have any questions ...

Practice Test 3

Listening Section 1



- A:** Hi – can I help you?
- B:** Hello – yes, um, is your club taking on new members at the moment?
- A:** Oh yes – we're always interested in taking on new members. Just give me a moment and I'll get an application form. Right – here we are. So – let's start with your name.
- B:** It's Harry.
- A:** OK – and your surname?
- B:** It's Symonds.
- A:** Is that like Simon with an 's'?
- B:** No, um, it's S-Y-M-O-N-D-S. Most people find it rather difficult to spell.
- A:** I see – it has a silent D. I guess a lot of people miss that. [pause] Now let me see – can you tell me when you were born?
- B:** Yes certainly – the 11th of December.
- A:** Thanks – and the year?
- B:** 1996.
- A:** OK good. Now – are you thinking of becoming a full-time member?
- B:** Er, probably not. What kind of memberships do you have?
- A:** Well, we also have off-peak membership which is between 9 and 12 in the morning and 2 and 5 in the afternoon ... and then we do have a weekend membership.
- B:** So a weekend membership is just Saturday and Sunday?
- A:** Yes, that's right.
- B:** OK – well *that's* not going to work for me. It looks like I'll have to be full-time. I'm afraid off-peak membership won't do as I'm not free at those times and I don't just want to be restricted to weekends.
- A:** OK. I'll make a note of that. [pause] Right – we have several facilities at the club including a gym, a swimming pool, tennis and squash courts. What activities are you planning on doing?
- B:** Well, do you have badminton?
- A:** Yes we do.
- B:** And table tennis?
- A:** I'm afraid not – well not at the moment anyway.
- B:** Oh – OK. Well I'm also very keen on swimming so I'm glad you have a pool. I'll certainly be doing a lot of that.
- A:** OK – I've got that. Will you be using the gym?
- B:** No – I'm not interested in that.
- A:** OK. So just let me work out what the cost will be ... Yes – that comes to £450 for the year. You can choose to pay annually for the full year or monthly. It's up to you.
- B:** Oh, I'd prefer to pay regularly in small amounts, rather than have a large amount to pay in one go, if that's OK?
- A:** Sure – that's fine. Right, I've got the most important details for now.
[pause]
- A:** So – I'd just like to ask you a few questions about your lifestyle if that's OK with you?
- B:** Yes that's fine.
- A:** Um, do you do any regular exercise at the moment?
- B:** Yes I do a bit.
- A:** Good – and what do you do?
- B:** Well every few days I go jogging.
- A:** Yes – that's good. How long do you go for?
- B:** Well it varies. I guess it depends on how energetic I'm feeling.
- A:** Yes of course. Every little bit helps. Um, do you have any injuries at the moment?
- B:** Well, I did break a bone in my foot playing football a long time ago but that's all healed up now. But, in the last few days I've realised I have a bad ankle. I think I must have injured it last week and it's a bit sore now. But apart from that I'm fine.
- A:** Right – I guess you might need to rest it for a few days to let it recover.
- B:** Yes I will.
- A:** So – let me just ask you what you want to achieve by joining the club. Do you have any targets or goals?
- B:** Well I suppose my main aim is to build up my fitness level. Is that the kind of thing you mean?
- A:** Yes – that's fine. All the activities you're going to be doing should certainly help you with that.
- B:** OK.
- A:** And could you tell me what you do for a living?
- B:** Well – I was a student up until recently.
- A:** OK – so what are you doing at the moment?
- B:** Well – I'm a charity worker.
- A:** Oh that's fine. I'll write that down. OK – nearly done. One last question – can I ask how you heard about the club? Did you see it advertised or did you go to our website for example?
- B:** Well I've been looking for a health club for a while and I asked my friends for suggestions but they weren't much help. And then I was listening to the radio and your club was mentioned, so I thought – I'll go along and see what it's like.
- A:** Great – well we look forward to having you as a member.

Listening Section 2

▶ 48

Good morning everyone. I hope you're all feeling OK after the activities of the last week or so. I know you've all been working very hard recently and we've been exceptionally busy, especially with the wedding last weekend and the trade fair straight after that. And now we have only three days to prepare for the birthday party this weekend. The events recently have gone extremely well and the hotel is beginning to get a very good reputation, so we need to keep it up. At the moment, we don't have exact numbers of guests and though we usually only cater for groups of less than fifty, we will have quite a few more than that. So – as I said – not sure of numbers but of course we won't go over the maximum of 100. But it's likely that we will need all of you to work this weekend so if any of you can't, please let me know as soon as possible.

Right – so what time will the event start? Well the invitation says guests should arrive between 7.30 and 7.45 but our experience is that there are always a few who like to arrive early so we'll expect the first people at 7.15. As the numbers are quite large, this will certainly be the case. Food will be served at around 8.30 and then, depending on how long the meal takes, the entertainment will start about two hours later. Now, for this, we were expecting a live band for the occasion which is always fun, but apparently this has been cancelled due to illness. So – the hosts know someone who is a comedian who will be replacing the band. We had hoped that the resident magician who worked here through the summer would be able to help out but they weren't keen on that idea.

[pause]

So I'd just like to go through who's doing what when the guests arrive and I think we'll make a few changes from the last party held here. If I remember correctly, it was Olav who co-ordinated the task of providing the guests with drinks or was it Ahmed? (checking) Um, I'm not sure – but Gary asked to do it this time – so that will be his job. There's been no decision yet on what the drinks are going to be but I hope they decide soon in case we need to order something special. Now – for receiving the guests' coats and hats, it's important we have someone experienced doing this as we don't want guests losing their belongings. And Monica, last time this was your responsibility. Susan, I know you wanted to do this but as the numbers are quite high for this event I won't make a change here. Right – now last time there was some confusion as to where guests were supposed to go once they had deposited their things and we had guests roaming around the whole hotel. So Ahmed and Olav – I believe you discussed the problems with Susan and thought she would be good at guiding guests after they had arrived – and I'm fine with that.

Right – and now for some general instructions. Once the guests have arrived they will be in and around the lounge area and then at around 8.30 we need to get them to move to the restaurant for their meal. This often proves difficult and can take a long time so I will ring a bell so that everyone knows it's time to eat! Hopefully this will speed things up a bit. Also – for this event there'll be a seating plan, so the guests won't be

able to decide for themselves where to sit – they'll have to sit according to the plan. There'll be a plan on each table and I've been thinking about where to put the master plan so everyone can view it before they enter the restaurant. As they'll be spending quite a while in the lounge, I've decided to also put a plan there. This should speed up the start of the meal.

Once the meal starts, you'll all be very busy waiting on the tables and I'm sure I don't need to tell you to be good-humoured and polite to all the guests. The organiser of the event will be saying a few words and so will two of his colleagues. So when the speeches start all activity must stop in the restaurant so that the three people giving them can be heard. This shouldn't take long – and it should be towards the end of the meal. After that, the guests will move back to the lounge for the entertainment.

So – I think that's it. Any questions – come and see me later.

Listening Section 3

▶ 49

Alan: Hi Melanie – what did you think of the assignment that we got today? It looks interesting, doesn't it?

Melanie: Yes Alan, I've always been interested in recycling but there's a lot of research to do.

Alan: Yes – there are a lot of things I'm unsure of so it's going to be good working with you.

Melanie: OK – well why don't we start by making a flow-chart from the notes our tutor gave us?

Alan: Yes, um, so ... on one side we could have the paper production cycle – here on the left – and on the other side the recycling.

Melanie: Good idea. Let's start at the top with the production. The first step in the process is to get the raw materials.

Alan: Yes – and they tend to come from pine forests.

Melanie: OK – and then the bark is removed from the outside of the tree and after that the wood is chopped up – that's the first three stages.

Alan: It sounds a bit complicated after that. Um, it says water is added and then the mixture is heated and made into pulp. This will be the thick paste that is used to make paper.

Melanie: Yes – you're right because after that they use a machine to make the paper and we can put that right in the centre of the flow-chart because it's also where the recycled paper joins the process.

Alan: Yes. So once the paper has been produced in the machine, what happens then?

Melanie: Well, I think we should write 'print' as the next step because this is when newspapers, magazines, etc. are produced. And we could also add that they have to be distributed to stores and people's homes.

Alan: Right, then the recycling bit starts. The old paper's collected and then it says it's taken somewhere so that someone or something can sort it. I imagine there are different kinds of paper – or things like paper clips that need to be removed.

Melanie: Yes. Let's have a step after that. Now, how did our tutor say they do this? Oh yes – it involves chemicals, so – how is your chemistry?

Alan: Well – not very good I'm afraid. But this is how they remove ink so – this is definitely going to need a bit of research.

Melanie: Right – the last step in the recycling section is similar to the last step in the production process with heating and pulping – before the cycle begins again.

[pause]

Alan: So I think going through the processes helped. Now we need to decide how we're going to do this assignment.

Melanie: Yes. I guess what we need to do is take the processes and divide them up between us. But we could start thinking about an introduction.

Alan: Yes, OK ... well I can start doing that. I think I have enough to go on already.

Melanie: Good. And there are a few areas where we need a lot more information. I think I'll start with something easy – let's say the paper collection. I could go to the resource centre to do some research.

Alan: Well I think a better idea would be to approach someone who's involved in the process. What about contacting the council?

Melanie: Oh – good idea. Yes – I'll do that instead. They're bound to have some information. And I know just the thing to add to our work to make it even more interesting.

Alan: And what's that?

Melanie: Well – in my last assignment, I added a few pictures and the feedback I got was that this wasn't 'academic' enough. So what might really bring it to life would be to include some data – provided we can find some.

Alan: Yes – that sounds excellent. Well – we certainly have a lot to do and not much time to do it in.

Melanie: You're right. I think we have about five weeks so I suggest we create a plan of work today. The end of the month is nearly three weeks away and then we have a few days' holiday.

Alan: Yes – so let's see if we can get the first draft done by then so we can take a short break.

Melanie: OK – then after the break we'll have just over a week to complete it. I wonder if we could get someone to review our work for us a few days before the deadline so we can make some final changes. What about your friend Henry?

Alan: Well – the best person would be our tutor. Henry's very good but he's taking a whole week's holiday and there won't be enough time when he returns.

Melanie: OK, then. That's fine.

Listening Section 4



Good morning and welcome to this lecture on hair which is a part of the human biology course. This lecture covers a number of facts about hair – its structure and what can affect the general health of hair.

So, first of all, what is hair and why do we have it? If we look back at our ancestors, we'll see that they had a lot more hair on their bodies than we do now. And there are – or were – two

main reasons for having hair. One is to provide warmth ... but as humans have worn clothes for many years, body hair has significantly reduced. The other is for protection – and again this isn't as significant as it was once, but hair does still benefit areas of the body such as the head and around the eyes.

Now hair, whatever it is for and wherever it is on the human body, is composed mainly of a protein called keratin. This, by the way, is also found in fingernails. In fact, it's keratin which makes them flexible and without it they would be very rigid. Another interesting fact about hair is that it is very strong – as strong as iron in fact. One single strand can support a weight of up to 100 grams. This may not sound all that much, but a full head of hair can support up to 12 tonnes, which is the equivalent of a couple of elephants, which is simply amazing – though I advise you not to put this to the test!

Humans lose up to 100 strands of hair a day, but we do have quite a lot of hair to start with. There's some variation depending on hair colour but for an average adult the strand count is 100,000, so losing 100 a day is not too bad. Although this is the average, people with red hair have around 80,000 strands, black or brown hair 100,000 and blondes have about 120,000.

So hair used to be important for the reasons I mentioned earlier but nowadays I'd say the main importance of hair is the fact that it is big business. Apart from the money involved in haircutting, shaving, trimming, etc., a fortune is spent just on hair products. In the UK alone, consumers spend over five billion pounds each year on these.

[pause]

So next, I'd like to just give you a quick overview of the structure of hair. As you can see, along the length of the hair, there are three main parts called the bulb, the root and the shaft. A single hair is fixed at one end below the skin in the bulb. The bulb acts rather like a cap – it encloses the end of the hair in the head. The next part of the hair is the root and this is the part of the hair which lies just beneath the skin and, in terms of hair production, is the most important. This can be considered the control centre for each strand of hair and is where the glands are found. These produce oil which flows along the length of the hair and the health of the root determines the overall health of the strand of hair. The last part is the shaft and this is the hair which is above the skin and is, of course, what we can see. Fortunately, this is not active and I say 'fortunately' because otherwise it would be very painful to have your hair cut!

And finally I'd just like to go over a few factors that impact on the overall health of hair. Like every other part of the body, our diet – that is what we eat – is extremely important to the condition of our hair. But whereas a change in your diet to, for example, eating unhealthy foods will soon be noticeable in your skin, changes to your hair will take a lot longer. A change in diet today could take several months to have an effect on your hair. And so – what is the key to healthy hair? Well – eating a balanced diet is the most important thing. There are a number of vitamins that are vital for good hair health, the main ones being vitamins C, D and E, and in a balanced diet all these vitamins should be readily available. If you need a

boost of vitamin C, for example, one of the best things to eat are blueberries. For Vitamin D, the best examples are fish, mushrooms and eggs and for vitamin E, nuts and seeds.

Right so let's go on to ...

Practice Test 4

Listening Section 1



Woman: Hello. Eastwood Community Centre.

Man: Oh, hello. My name's Andrew Dyson. I'm calling about the evening classes you offer.

Woman: OK, Mr Dyson, are there any classes in particular that you're interested in?

Man: Yes, you've got a class called 'Painting with watercolours', I believe.

Woman: That's right. It's a popular class so this term it'll be moving to the hall, so they've got more room.

Man: Right. I know it's on Tuesdays but what time exactly?

Woman: It was 6.30 last term, but let me just have a look at the details. OK, it'll be 7.30 this time, probably it suits more people.

Man: Well, it's my wife who's really interested and that'll be good for her because she's home from work by 7.15 – that'll give her just enough time to get there. Um, what does she need to bring?

Woman: OK, well paints are provided by the tutor, I know that. Um, the information says she'll need just a jar for water – and some pencils for drawing. There are also lots of aprons here, so she needn't worry what she's wearing. And the cost for four classes is £45, including paints, as I said.

Man: OK, now we're both quite keen on the Maori language class.

Woman: There are spaces on the next course, so you could join that.

Man: Oh, good. Which room will that be in?

Woman: When you come in through the entrance of the community centre building, you'll need to go straight up the stairs in front of you, all the way to the top. And it's the small room you'll find there.

Man: I see. All right, and let me just check when it's starting. I heard from someone that the July course has been delayed until August.

Woman: I'm afraid so. And we're halfway through the June course at the moment so there's not much point you taking that.

Man: I guess we'll have to wait, then.

Woman: Well, when you do come, the tutor recommends bringing a small recorder with you just so you can listen again later, and er, the cost for five classes is currently £40.

Man: OK, useful information to know. Um, there's one more class I'm interested in – that's the digital photography class.

Woman: Oh, I've taken that class myself. The tutor's very good. That'll be in room 9 and it's starting in two weeks' time – in the evening – every Wednesday at 6 o'clock.

Man: Um, obviously I need to bring the camera with me. I suppose it'd be useful to have the instructions that go with the camera, too.

Woman: I'd say so. Um, some people bring along a lot of accessories like extra lenses, but there's really no need for this class. It's mainly focusing on composition really, and getting the most out of the basic camera.

Man: That's exactly what I need. And how much does it cost?

Woman: Let's see. For four classes, it's £35, but if you take eight, it works out as £55, so you're making a bit of a saving – £15 that is.

Man: I see.

[pause]

Man: OK, now just another question for the watercolours class: I've just remembered that my wife asked me to find out about the level – who's it for?

Woman: OK, well you don't have to be very skilled or anything like that. It's designed for beginners, actually. People who might see art as a hobby rather than as a professional opportunity.

Man: That sounds like my wife. And er, who do I talk to if I want to find out some more about the Maori language classes?

Woman: Probably best to talk to the tutor directly. He'll be in the office in about half an hour. His name's Jason Kahui. That's K-A-H-U-I.

Man: Good – I'll give him a call.

Woman: Oh, if you do decide to come to the photography class, don't forget to look at your camera battery and make sure it's charged. I know it sounds obvious but I've seen a few people suddenly find the camera's stopped working right in the middle of class.

Man: Yes, I can imagine it'd be easy to forget that. Oh, that reminds me, in the final week of the photography course, is it right that there's a visit to a show in the local area? I work in the city, you see, so I might have to come home early for that one.

Woman: Yes. They'll decide the date once the class has started. Is there anything else I can ...

Listening Section 2



Good morning – it's great to see so many people here. Thank you all very much for coming. Well, as you know, the community gardens at Hadley Park are really not looking as good as they should, quite bad really, and although the local council has a budget to deal with *some* of the problems, we do need volunteers for other tasks. If you don't mind, I'm going to divide you into two groups. So, everyone on this side of the room is Group A, and the rest of you are Group B. So, Group A, there are a couple of things we'd like you to help with. Um, first of all, don't worry about any litter or empty bottles you see lying about – one of the local schools has offered to help out with that as part of their own environmental project. The priority for you will be to give us a hand with the new wooden fencing – it needs constructing along parts of the bicycle track, as there are parts which have now fallen down or broken – as