Listening Script for TPO Test 11 Speaking Task 6

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Narrator
Listen to part of a lecture in an interior design class.

Professor
So we're talking about interior design…uh…specifically the basic principles typically used in home and office decoration in the United States. Effective designs create a delicate balance between two things: you need unity and you also need contrast which is essentially a break in unity. Now this might seem a little contradictory, but let me explain why we need both of these for an effective design.

So for the first principle: we need unity in our design. Think of it as consistency. Well, an easy and very effective way to do this is by bringing together similar elements. A common example is by matching colors. You pick a color and use it for different parts of the room. Say you pick green and then use a light shade of green for the walls and maybe a somewhat darker shade for the fabric on the sofa, and finally complement that with a matching green in the rug. When elements match, the room is unified and gives its residents a sense of order and comfort.

OK, but there is such a thing as too much unity. Remember you need a balance of unity and contrast. If all you do is focus on unity, the result will be a boring room. So what do you do? Well, you apply the second basic principle of design, which is contrast. Contrast serves to disrupt or break up the unity in places, but in a careful intentional way. Um, well, let's continue using color as an example. To create contrast, color contrast, you need to abruptly change your color scheme once in a while. Ah let's see, you could throw white-red cushions on your dark green sofa, for example. Contrast makes things stand out. The green will look even greener next to the red. So, now your room is more interesting, not completely the same. But watch out. Too much contrast is also dangerous, just like too much sameness is. Too much contrast will make the room feel busy, chaotic.