

Listening skills practice: The fear factor – exercises

Listen to the extracts from different radio programmes talking about fear and phobias, and do the exercises to practise and improve your listening skills.

Preparation

Match the vocabulary with the correct definition and write a–h next to the numbers 1–8.

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|--|---|
| 1..... to faint | a. threatening or that seems bad or evil |
| 2..... to freak someone out (informal) | b. to laugh repeatedly in a quiet and uncontrollable way |
| 3..... sinister | c. to lose consciousness |
| 4..... flight | d. to make someone feel extremely angry, excited or worried |
| 5..... to pose a threat | e. to cause something to start |
| 6..... to giggle | f. escaping or running away |
| 7..... to trigger something | g. causing great emotional shock or upset |
| 8..... traumatic | h. to be potentially dangerous |

1. Check your understanding: grouping

Write the things that are mentioned in the correct extract.

a. A fear of heights	b. The difference between common fears and phobias	c. Symptoms of phobias	d. Why we like to be scared	e. A memory of fainting at the doctors
f. A fear one person has suffered their whole life	g. The fight or flight response	h. Why people develop phobias	i. The importance of context and danger	

Extract 1	Extract 2	Extract 3

2. Check your understanding: multiple choice

Circle the best answer according to the radio programmes.

1. Extract 1
 - a. All anxiety disorders are called simple phobias.
 - b. Most people have a phobia of some type of animal.
 - c. Exaggerated or irrational fears are phobias.

2. Extract 1
 - a. Friendships can suffer as a result of phobias.
 - b. Most of us will feel dizzy and sweat when we see a tarantula.
 - c. Phobia sufferers are difficult to live with.

3. Extract 1
 - a. Children inherit phobias from their parents.
 - b. Scary encounters we have as children can cause phobias.
 - c. Most people who have a fear of dogs also suffer from aquaphobia.

4. Extract 2
 - a. Everyone screams when they feel scared on a roller coaster.
 - b. Many of us feel frightened during a horror film.
 - c. We prefer watching horror films as teenagers.

5. Extract 2
 - a. We can't control the reaction in our body when we're in danger.
 - b. The more dangerous the situation, the more likely we are to use critical thought.
 - c. When faced with danger our body produces either high levels of energy or pain-blocking chemicals.

6. Extract 2
 - a. Our bodies can't distinguish between real and false danger.
 - b. Our bodies can distinguish between false and real danger.
 - c. It depends on the person whether the body can distinguish between real and false danger.

7. Extract 3
 - a. Liz suffers physical symptoms because of her fear.
 - b. Liz always loses consciousness when she sees a needle.
 - c. Liz first remembers her fear while watching a horror film.

8. Extract 3
 - a. Abi had been diagnosed with coulrophobia by her doctor.
 - b. Abi prefers clowns that smile.
 - c. Abi feels just as scared now as she did as a child.

9. Extract 3

- a. Ben has fewer fears now than he used to.
- b. Ben avoids situations that cause his fears.
- c. Ben is having therapy to overcome his fears.

Discussion

Do you have any fears or phobias?