

**Progress Test 1****Diego**

I think one of the proudest days of my life was winning an international essay writing competition. We had to write about life on another planet. My parents had always said that I was a natural at writing. I was top at English throughout my school years, and I was also fascinated by space ... so the competition was a great fit. I heard about it through my school and my teacher encouraged me to put myself forward for it ... I felt a bit intimidated really ... I mean, it was open to entrants from all around the globe ... but I thought, what's the worst that could happen? Well, it turned out the best happened. I exceeded everyone's expectations and got first place over tens of thousands of others. The prize was out of this world ... I got to visit NASA! I took my dad as my 'nominated adult' and we stayed in Florida for a week, and went to the Kennedy Space Centre, which is a huge NASA facility. The tour was amazing, but also very daunting for my ten-year-old self. Space seemed like fun when I was a kid, but I realised it's actually pretty serious business. It is mind-blowing how much work goes into the design of rockets and training for space.

The visit didn't put me off my love of space, but it certainly made me realise that being an astronaut isn't my cup of tea. If my choice at that age was between space and writing, then that visit clarified everything for me. While I was there, I got to feel what it's like to live without gravity. Let me tell you, it's a bizarre sensation. I was only in the machine for a few minutes, but that was more than enough ... it made me go a bit green, to be honest.

I remember raving about it to everyone when I got back to school. Of course, as you do when you're that age, I gave them a rose-tinted version of my trip, and I skipped the bit about me not being able to cope with weightlessness! I'm sure I came across a bit too big-headed for my own good, but they weren't at all mean ... well, I WAS living out every boy's dream at that age!

Now I'm an editor on a science and tech magazine ... I get to approve the odd space article every now and then, and it makes me reminisce about that visit. I've even managed to write my own feature in the magazine about it! It was so good to take myself back to that time and reawaken all that excitement I felt.

**Zofia**

I'm not a particularly competitive person. I actually feel quite embarrassed when I win something and equally embarrassed when I lose! I just don't think it's for me particularly. I'm prone to falling apart when I'm under pressure like that, and I hate everyone watching me. In fact, I can only remember one time that I've ever won anything without it being a rather daunting experience. It was a competition, and I thankfully didn't actually have to do anything that involved talent or skill. I think that's why the experience wasn't an ordeal in the way other competitions are for me. It was purely down to luck, so nobody could judge me and I couldn't judge myself.

I can remember the whole thing like it was yesterday. I was watching a music show when I was about 16, and my favourite band, Jam Rats, were on it. They'd only just hit the scene really – they'd been around almost a year. Anyway, they'd just kicked off their first international tour and they had five pairs of tickets, and backstage passes, to give away for their final show in the run. All you had to do was to write your name and address on a postcard and send it in! Well, I went straight to the newsagents and wrote my card on the spot and sent it. Incredibly, a week later the show got back to me ... I'd won! I took my mum with me to see them. The actual concert was incredible, but I was a bit disillusioned by the whole experience in the end ... I got cold feet going backstage ... I was really apprehensive about meeting my idols. Just in case I got stuck for words or something, but I needn't have worried ... although the guitarist was pretty friendly, the others were completely uninterested in their fans. I was so disappointed. After all, in my mind I'd built up this picture of them as amazing people, not just in the way they played music, but in real life ... they certainly came across like that in shows.

All things considered, I suppose I learnt a valuable life lesson from the experience ... and that is how misleading images of famous people can be. What you see is not always what you get! I still listen to their music, but now, with any famous band or actress, I try to just like them for their work, because you never really know what they are like behind the image.

### Progress Test 2

#### Section 1

**Angela:** So, Nicholas, one of the topics our listeners are always searching for top tips and advice on is how to tackle cooking a three-course meal for a dinner party.

**Nicholas:** It sure is, Angela. And to be honest, it doesn't surprise me in the least. I mean, for novices in the kitchen and people who aren't accustomed to preparing such a large quantity of dishes, a three-course meal can be terribly daunting. Even now, after what feels like a lifetime of experience, I have to ensure that I'm fully concentrating, even if I'm cooking for friends and relatives who tend not to judge my cooking like my customers would.

**Angela:** I couldn't agree more, Nicholas. I cannot stress enough to our listeners how much attention to detail and careful consideration this volume of cooking requires. We all know that TV chefs make it all look really straightforward, but it's precisely because they have planned everything meticulously and thoroughly considered what could go wrong, that they make it look so effortless.

**Nicholas:** And let's not forget about the importance of timing. I wouldn't want to embark on a three-course meal if I didn't think I'd have plenty of time to take things slowly and methodically. Rushing when cooking is guaranteed to result in cutting corners, which inevitably leads to being distracted and that's when things get burnt or any number of other potential disasters occur.

**Angela:** Yes, of course. You know, I sometimes think that when people have spent a considerable amount of time hunting for all the ingredients needed for a more complicated meal, that they often run out of energy when it comes to the actual cooking part. That could be why people sometimes get distracted. I mean, it's incredibly tiring to concentrate for that amount of time. But unfortunately, it's necessary because sometimes taking your eye off what you're doing for even a minute can result in a completely ruined dish.

**Nicholas:** I couldn't agree more! Well, I'd advise people to take their time to read the recipe and fully absorb the instructions, then get out all the equipment needed. It might also be worth weighing out all the ingredients beforehand as if you were a chef on a TV show.

**Angela:** Absolutely! I find that makes the process of cooking so much simpler, and writing down how long you think each stage will take also helps. There's a reason why this type of meticulous planning, you know, minute by minute almost, happens in restaurants. It's intended to help all the kitchen staff see where mistakes might be made so that they're ready for every eventuality and don't panic if something suddenly goes wrong. It's like a form of brainstorming and problem solving and even beginners should apply this kind of thinking. Just because you're not an expert in the kitchen doesn't mean you can't think like an expert.

**Nicholas:** Exactly. It's definitely the approach everyone should follow as far as I'm concerned, because if you start to panic when cooking a three-course meal, you increase the likelihood of it going wrong and you giving up. I've heard many tales of people who decided that cooking was not for them because of one disastrous dinner party, but in my view a three-course meal is like any other complex task – you've got to prepare for it properly and if you're not successful the first time, you've got to sit down and consider where things went wrong in a rational and logical manner.

**Angela:** Well, that seems like a good place to pause that topic and move on to another listener's question ...

#### Section 2

**Anthony:** I'm Anthony Freeman and today I have psychologist Dr Katherine Goodson with me talking about decision-making, and in particular what insights the game 'rock, paper, scissors' can give us on this topic. Hello Katherine, please tell us more about this fascinating topic.

**Katherine:** Hi Anthony, well, thank you for having me on the show. Let me start by saying that the game 'rock, paper, scissors' is often thought of as a random game like flipping a coin. However, that is far from the case. In actual fact, it involves, or can involve, a lot more strategy than people might think. Observation, manipulation and emotional intelligence are just a few of the skills that can be employed in this game in order to affect your chances of being victorious.

**Anthony:** So, you're suggesting that rather than being a game of chance, 'rock, paper, scissors' is more of a thinking, tactical game and that successful players are making specific decisions based on evidence?

**Katherine:** That's correct. And we're aware of this due to a study conducted at a university in China which analysed 360 students who played over 300 rounds of the game. What the researchers there noticed was that the students utilised a variety of strategies to either maximise their strengths or exploit the weaknesses of their opponents.

**Anthony:** How exactly did this come about? Were the players trying to cheat or distract their opponents in some way?

**Katherine:** Actually, the strategies employed were all very positive. They were observing, reacting and then planning their next moves. There was nothing at all devious about their behaviour. They were simply using what's known as 'conditional response'. Say, for example, you played 'rock' and lost. I could predict that you're unlikely to repeat this as your next move and therefore I have a higher chance of beating you in the next round by playing it. So, rather than being random, my choice is affected by a specific observation that I made.

**Anthony:** I see. So, by studying this game, we can start to deepen our understanding of decision-making. For me, what I find most fascinating is the way in which people are using these strategies for other 'in the moment' decisions. I mean, we can only observe and weigh up the available evidence, can't we?

**Katherine:** Absolutely ... And this encourages us to think more broadly about how people make decisions in a semi-competitive environment. Take the workplace, for example, where there is a tension between people collaborating and competing.

**Anthony:** I see what you mean. When we struggle to understand why our boss made a specific decision, we can start to analyse the strategies he or she used to reach that decision, and this may help us to view it from a different perspective, perhaps one we hadn't previously considered. We may also be able to discern patterns in the decision-making of our colleagues. I suppose this means that we could gain some insight into how to enhance our working relationships.

**Katherine:** Yes, that's certainly true. I'd like to finish with one more insight. The University of Tokyo has a robot hand which wins 'rock, paper, scissors' every time it plays it because it has a high-speed camera which can identify the shape that their opponent's hand is forming a millisecond before they make their play. This shows us that people are aware they can't always win, but they're making the best possible decision at the time based on what they know, or assume they know.

**Anthony:** That's a great moment to end, I think ...

### Progress Test 3

#### Extract 1

**Rick:** Hey Samantha ... Wow! You look amazing ... Have you changed your hair?

**Samantha:** No, I've actually started a new diet. Since I've been on it, it's been so easy to get my 'five a day'. I'm eating so healthily.

**Rick:** I didn't know you'd started a diet. Why's that?

**Samantha:** Well, it's for health reasons really. I've had issues with my skin for ages, and nothing the doctors have ever given me has made a marked difference. Sarah at the tennis club follows someone online who has a diet that apparently works wonders on the skin. She showed me the before and after photos – they were unreal! So, I got her to make a note of the diet.

**Rick:** I see a lot of stuff like that on the internet ... I think they're just trying to get more followers. You can't ever really know whether they're making it all up.

**Samantha:** Yeah, I'm sometimes sceptical too, but the photos convinced me.

**Rick:** Well, they can be digitally manipulated, remember!

**Samantha:** Whatever you say, I've never felt better. I start every morning with a green juice. It contains loads of veg, so I've practically had 'five a day' for breakfast. I'm sleeping better and I don't get peaks and troughs of energy like I used to.

**Rick:** Don't get me wrong, I'm all for healthy eating. Just don't get too carried away with ideas from someone who doesn't have any medical training and who can't show you proof of its effectiveness. You need a variety of different food groups to remain healthy ... otherwise, you might get some vitamin or mineral deficiency and then you'll be in trouble.

#### Extract 2

**Ben:** Have you seen the new five-pound note that's just come into circulation, James?

**James:** No, well ... only on the news ...

**Ben:** Look. I think I've got one in my wallet ... here.

**James:** Ohhh ... it feels kind of waxy.

**Ben:** Yeah, it's polymer rather than paper like they used to be ...

**James:** Why bother making new notes though? Because they're waterproof? I don't usually go swimming with my wallet! It seems like a waste of money to me. Don't you think, Ben?

**Ben:** Actually, these notes far surpass their paper equivalents in many ways ... they don't get grubby so quickly and they're much more hardwearing.

**James:** How do you know so much about banknotes?

**Ben:** My brother-in-law works in a bank, and he's obsessed with currency from different countries. He's a bit of a broken record as he talks about little else, but he's nice enough. Polymer notes are also much better for hot places with high humidity because they don't absorb moisture, which can damage them. And of course, you can't tear them so easily! Do you remember when notes used to be taped up because someone ripped them? Crazy! Apparently, though, polymer notes didn't take off initially.

**James:** Really?

**Ben:** Yeah, it was the type of ink they used ... it faded quickly, and in some very hot places, it ran! Those initial problems didn't seem to have much knock-on effect though. They're now, by all accounts, the prevailing form of note in many countries.

#### Extract 3

**Polly:** I'm really getting into my photography. I used to take loads of shots on my phone but I've just bought a great SLR camera.

**Debbie:** So, what do you like taking photos of?

**Polly:** Wildlife mostly. I'm in my element sitting in the garden, snapping the birds. In fact, that's why I wanted to speak to you. You're an old hand at photography, aren't you? Any tips, Debbie?

**Debbie:** Well, Polly, I'd say there are six rules of good composition when it comes to taking pictures. The first one is to make sure you draw the viewer's eye to the main subject in the photo. You can do this by decluttering the background ... so think about where you're standing in the garden ... a hedge will make a far better background than the back of the house!

**Polly:** I'd never even considered that! I was aware of the rule of thirds though ...

**Debbie:** Yes, it's much better to follow that than just have the subject slap bang in the centre ... a photo like that is a sure-fire sign of an amateur. Look, I'll send you a link to the complete set of rules so you can have a look. One that I think is ideal for the kind of photos you want to take is to think about your perspective, shooting at a lower or higher height than the bird can really add an interesting dimension.

**Polly:** Great idea ... I might spend some time up by the bedroom window, see what I can get. I suppose I need to dedicate more time to it. At the moment, I tend to just pop out at breakneck speed if I happen to see something interesting out the window. I should probably get up earlier as I can always hear them chirping away in the mornings. That's probably the peak time, so to speak!

### Extract 4

**Amanda:** Hi Lucy. I'm just ringing to ask if you and Rosie can come to Ben's birthday party on Saturday. He's going to be six! We're going to do something in the garden.

**Lucy:** Wow! How time flies! Count us in! I don't think I've seen Ben since his fourth birthday, and I'm sure Rosie would like it ... She'll be turning six in a couple of months too!

**Amanda:** I can't believe how quickly Ben's grown. He's by no means a baby. He's shot up in just the past year and is always running about throwing and catching balls. I remember when I had to help him to walk! He's always been mad about sports, and now he can actually play them, he's a complete live wire!

**Lucy:** Is he writing yet? Rosie has begun to write and her letters are really good. Her teacher said she was advanced for her age.

**Amanda:** I often think girls are a bit ahead in writing. Ben isn't quite there yet, but I've got no worries. He's so bright, and also, he's become a sensitive little boy, too. He's starting to understand the feelings of people around him and he's so empathetic! He always wants to make us smile.

**Lucy:** Well, that's the antithesis of Rosie – she's still mesmerised by herself in the mirror rather than anyone else around her. None of her friends are like that.

**Amanda:** My sister's girl was like that, too. She'll grow out of it in no time, I'm sure!

**Lucy:** Fingers crossed.

### Extract 5

**Harry:** I'm always floored by technology and how amazing it is. I still can't get over that we can see events happening around the world live on our TV! And don't get me started on things like 3D printing!

**Marsha:** Well, nothing you see is really 'live', you know, Harry. There's actually a slight time delay on everything you watch; it's often seven seconds.

**Harry:** Really? Well, that's a bit misleading. I suppose I shouldn't be surprised that things aren't what they seem. When are they these days? ... Why do they do that? Does it just take a bit of time to travel through the wires or whatever it does?

**Marsha:** No, it's actually intentional. They do it in order to prevent anything screening that might be frowned upon, shall we say, and give them a headache later, complaints wise.

**Harry:** I suppose that makes sense. And it's not really a lot of time ... it's almost live!

**Marsha:** Exactly. And that's why you sometimes see a live event suddenly cut out. Although it can be a problem with the technology, it can also be that there's someone who's decided to cut it. It actually started as a loophole! There was some radio show in Pennsylvania that wanted to do live phone ins, but at the time, it was prohibited to broadcast a live call. So, they produced a six-second delay, meaning that the call was actually a playback rather than live. Technologically, it was very difficult to do, but they managed it, and the rest, obviously, is history.

### Progress Test 4

#### Speaker 1

You know, it's startling to think that until recently as a journalist, I'd have had to come into an office every day, yet nowadays, I work almost exclusively from home. I'd like to have a bit more interaction with some of my colleagues, but now that newspapers are struggling to make ends meet, they can't justify spending a fortune on huge shiny premises for everyone anymore. Anyway, the transformation has been astounding – since I'm able to start work without a stressful subway trip, I've been able to fit in more work and get things done quicker. My manager is delighted, but it doesn't surprise me in the least.

#### Speaker 2

Years ago, when I started out as a computer programmer, it was all about writing quality software, whereas now IT is driven by marketing, unfortunately. If I had my way, I'd definitely return to concentrating more on the technical aspects. Anyway, back when I started, the computer industry was growing at an extraordinary rate. In my first job, we were basically told to get our heads down and write code all day every day. If I'm honest, it wasn't a particularly pleasant environment to work in and everyone was stressed, especially those higher up. Nowadays, the whole tech environment has changed beyond recognition and we're given a lot more positive feedback from the directors and team leaders.

#### Speaker 3

As an accountant everything I do revolves around my calendar, since financial reports and so on have to be produced at certain times of the year. Last year, the company invested in some new software which, while apparently a real time-saver, had a reputation for being difficult to get your head around. I really wish they'd think in more depth about how to prepare everyone for changes like these as there wasn't any time set aside for staff to be trained thoroughly. Anyway, I felt pretty underconfident, so I devoted every evening for a couple of weeks to trying to understand how it all worked. It actually really paid off. I can pace myself more in relation to our submission dates and I don't feel under nearly as much pressure as I used to.

#### Speaker 4

Our family business imports luxury food products from overseas. As the shop manager, my day-to-day work in the past was mostly to do with checking stock levels and liaising with suppliers. However, modern computer systems do most of that these days, which has allowed me to move into other aspects of the business, such as researching alternative suppliers. Whereas before, I used to spend the vast majority of my time in the store itself, I'm involved in a greater range of tasks these days. I do miss the interaction with customers though. I'm trying to think of ways to integrate that back into my work more, but so far, I haven't come up with very many viable solutions.

#### Speaker 5

A new director joined the company recently, and she's been a breath of fresh air. Don't get me wrong, I love my job, but I'm horrified by the amount of time we waste in pointless meetings. It turns out that Caroline, the new director, is in complete agreement and she's proposing we address this through learning about each other's roles. She's decided to allot some of the budget to this aspect so everyone takes it seriously. Next week, for example, I'm going to spend a week with the sales team, finding out about the challenges they face and how their work connects with mine. I'm really excited about this learning opportunity and I'm convinced it's going to have a huge impact on our productivity and how we work together as a cohesive unit.