

### Listening (script)

**Task 1. You will hear an interview with a woman called Farza Abad who runs an online business selling house plants. For questions 1-6, choose the best answer (a, b or c). You will hear the recording twice.**

**Now you have 30 seconds to look through the items.**

[pause 30 seconds]

**Now we begin.**

**M:** Today I'm speaking to Farza Abad, the founder of an online house plant company. Can you tell us how you got the idea for your business?

**F:** I grew up in a capital city, surrounded by huge apartment buildings, and didn't really have any green space around me – not that I noticed as a child. As I got older, I explored the world a bit more and I went backpacking, until I found work on a farm for a year in Australia. There, I learnt a lot about growing food. When I came back, I was looking for work, and gained employment selling house plants in an independent high street business. A short while later, I launched my own business doing something similar, but online.

**M:** And has the business grown quickly?

**F:** Absolutely. My online shop has expanded so fast with hardly any paid promotion. I was really lucky that I had a media personality in the shop who posted their plant online, then things took off. They now shop with us regularly! I think in future, though, I'll have to pay more attention to my social media account and post more, so I can continue to grow the business.

**M:** Can you tell me who can start a business?

**F:** Although some say you need good decision skills and to be a strong leader, I personally believe it depends on what your business is. The simple answer is anyone. But you need to be able to adapt to different situations because things might happen which are beyond your control.

**M:** That's really good to know. Now, you've had your business for some time, what would you say you enjoy most about being your own boss?

**F:** If you'd have asked me this question a year ago, I'd have said it's having no limits to my earnings, but I now realise money isn't why I do this, really. It's about discovering myself and what I'm capable of. I enjoy finding out that I can do things, even if it takes me a while to understand or teach myself how to do them. You'd imagine it would be having as much free time as I want, but unfortunately, it's the opposite!

**M:** And what would you say is the most challenging thing about running your own company?

**F:** There are many challenges, and I would say that for some people, it's tempting to make comparisons between your business and a similar business. That's just not me though – I like to think we're different from our competitors. For me, I tend to doubt myself and my choices, and I don't think that will ever go away, but I've also heard other business owners say they've lost a lot of money if they haven't had the right support around them, so it's important to learn who to trust.

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**M:** What do you look for in an employee?

**F:** Typically, business owners check out a person's certificates and what they studied at university, but none of that matters to me, as long as you're passionate and show enthusiasm for what we do. I also don't care about someone's experience in a shop like ours, because our business is unique.

**M:** What's your ambition for your company in the near future?

**F:** Well, as we've just taken on four new members of staff we won't need new employees in the short term, but maybe in a few years' time. I'd like to expand our product range, so we not only sell house plants but also seeds so people can start growing their own vegetables, and maybe some outdoor plants as well. My mum suggested I open a bigger shop in the centre as we currently only sell online, but I'm unsure I want to make that jump!

**Now you have 20 seconds to check your answers.**

[pause 20 seconds]

**Now listen to the text again.**

[Text repeated.]

**Now you have 20 seconds to complete the task and transfer your answers into the answer sheet.**

**Task 2. You will hear five short extracts in which people are talking about their learning experiences. For questions 7–13, choose from the list (a–h), what each person found difficult about studying as an adult. There is one extra point which you do not need to use. You will hear the recording once.**

**Now you have 30 seconds to look through the items.**

[pause 30 seconds]

**Now we begin.**

**Speaker 1**

**M:** I was in my early thirties, and I'd been working abroad as an English teacher, when I decided to retrain as a primary school teacher. I was fortunate that it was quite an academic course, because I needed to learn more about the theory side of things – I'd already had quite a lot of first-hand experience with students. But there was one thing that I struggled with and that was keeping up with the enthusiasm of primary teachers who had already qualified. They were constantly smiling, coming up with fun activities, and playing with the young students. I was exhausted after the second day!

**Speaker 2**

**F:** I don't honestly recall what made me do it, but I wanted to learn a new language when I retired and keep my mind active, so I took up Japanese. I didn't really want to spend time learning in a group or from a teacher, so I searched for some words on the internet and stuck notes around my house. Because I saw them every time I went to the fridge, I eventually managed to remember some by heart, but it took months. I wouldn't say it improved my fluency in speaking the language, nor would I consider myself bilingual, but I can certainly say one or two words and that's fine by me.

**Speaker 3**

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**F:** I've been into crafts and making things with my hands since I was a little girl, so it was no surprise to my husband when I told him I'd signed up to a candle-making course to give myself some 'me' time away from the family. The issue I had was that the instructor was so focused on talking about herself that she didn't really ask the students why we were there or what we were hoping to gain. She didn't even acknowledge that she'd heard any of the questions I asked. I just didn't hit it off with her, and because of that, I struggled to learn and found the whole thing quite unenjoyable.

**Speaker 4**

**F:** I was already quite a sporty guy who enjoyed working out, but I had lots of questions about what I was putting into my body, so I signed up to take an online course in nutrition. It required around 10 hours a week of computer study, after which I'd get a certificate at the end of the six-week course. I was excited, so I got my laptop and notebook ready. Then reality hit, and I realised I was expecting to be able to do this alongside my full-time job, with two young children and looking after my elderly parents. I don't know what I was thinking! I simply didn't have the flexibility I had when I was younger.

**Speaker 5**

**M:** My employer put me through a management training course, so going back to school wasn't really my choice and something I didn't think I had enough time for, but I was open to the opportunity, and I was looking forward to meeting a new group of people with similar interests. Anyway, as soon as I started the first class, I wondered whether I'd actually have the enthusiasm to stay on the course, never mind pass it! Although I was in the physical classroom with other students, the lessons were virtual, which meant the teacher was being broadcast on a screen. It was too high-tech for me. What an odd way to learn! I unfortunately had to tell my boss it just wasn't for me.

**Now you have 20 seconds to complete the task and transfer your answers into the answer sheet.**

**Task 3. You will hear an interview with a podcast host called Brian Felthmore. Mark statements 14-20 with "T" if they are true and "F" if they are false. You will hear the recording once.**

**Now you have 30 seconds to look through the sentences.**

[pause 30 seconds]

**Now we begin.**

**F:** With us today is the podcast host, Brian Felthome. Can you tell us about how you got into podcasting, Brian?

**M:** A few of my colleagues used to listen to true crime podcasts, and my brother's company sponsored him to host a show to promote their business, so I knew a bit about them. I never thought I'd have my own, though, until I read a news story that I wanted to investigate for myself. I just needed to know more about how it would end. The story became so unpredictable I just had to spread the word.

**F:** Fascinating. Now you've moved onto other crime stories, where do you find out the details that you share with your listeners?

**M:** Well, initially it was searching on the internet or listening to other shows, though I found they often only shared one side of the story. It's important to hear different perspectives, so these days I tend to speak to people in person who were involved in the case and are legally able to share information with me.

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**F:** What do you love most about your job? I'm sure there are many things.

**M:** You're right, and you're probably expecting me to say that it's learning fascinating things from the people I interview, which of course is great, but it's actually improving my technical abilities and knowledge. I have to use quite challenging editing programs. Oh, and I'm sure I'll get used to listening to my own voice, which I hate, eventually as well!

**F:** Oh, you'll never get used to that! Is there anything you find tricky about podcasting?

**M:** Some people might say it's finding inspiration for episodes, but personally, it's the fact that episodes take a while to plan, conduct, and edit, and this is something I have to do alongside a full-time job. Others though have said it's coming up with questions, so the interview is engaging.

**F:** If a listener was thinking about starting their own podcast, what would your top piece of advice be?

**M:** Well, I'm really into crime documentaries so it was a logical decision for me to launch a true crime podcast. I think it's ok to find your passion along the way, as long as you have a general theme, ... and you don't really need to listen to podcasts to make your own ... so, maybe that podcasting can be costly. By that, I mean there's equipment you'll need to purchase. That's something to be aware of.

**F:** Where do you make your podcast episodes? Is there a specific room or building you use?

**M:** Every host is different, but I do all my interviews online, which means I don't need to be in the same room as my guests. This has allowed me to chat to people from all over the world much more easily. Having said that, I've recently moved house, so my car is the studio while the desk in my room is set up! I think that as long as you set up your location correctly, anywhere will give you just as good of a sound as a recording studio would.

**F:** Can you tell us about what you've got coming up on your next show?

**M:** Well, I'm always looking for inspiration for future episodes, so listeners could call in and make suggestions of things they want to hear about. Firstly, though, and something we have got lined up, is a highly reported news story that was quite controversial. There's someone who was actually involved in the case who may come and chat – no guarantees!

**Now you have 20 seconds to complete the task and transfer your answers into the answer sheet.  
[pause 20 seconds]**

**This is the end of the Listening task.**