

Progress test Unit 1

- Interviewer** So, Professor Travers, what's with this obsession people seem to have these days with tracing their family history? I don't remember it being such a popular pastime when I was younger.
- Professor** It's difficult to know the exact reasons for people's increased interest. I mean – people have always been interested in learning about their roots – it's something to do with having a sense of identity – of knowing who you are and where you come from. And in today's world where people have been uprooted and settled in different countries, even continents, family records get lost and so more people are looking for other ways to trace their ancestry. And quite simply I think more people are doing it because it's got that much easier to do!
- Interviewer** You're right. There's a whole range of free websites out there that can help you find out what your great-great-granddad did!
- Professor** And there are a lot that will do all the donkey work for you – at a price!
- Interviewer** As always! I also suspect this sudden interest may have something to do with the rash of TV documentaries we've been exposed to recently about the subject, don't you think?
- Professor** Yes – the power of TV! I've noticed that a large number of celebrities have been on programmes researching into their pasts. That's always a big influence.
- Interviewer** You know, I still can't quite get my head round it. I mean – don't get me wrong – family is very important and it's fascinating to see how much we take after our parents and grandparents. But this digging into the past – isn't it just a security thing – for people who aren't that secure or content in their present lives?
- Professor** Oh no. I think it's just human nature to want to know your place in the world.
- Interviewer** But surely there's a bit of snobbery involved here too. You know – people want to know that they're related to someone famous or even royalty! Then they can brag about it.
- Professor** Maybe a bit! But there's no harm in it, is there? I think for most people who trace their family trees it's an innocuous hobby rather than an obsession! Are you sure that you wouldn't like to know what your ancestors were doing for a living 300 years ago?

Progress test Unit 2

Interviewer My guest today, Karen Pearson, is here to talk to us about that new holiday trend – location vacations! Welcome to the programme, Karen. So, what's it all about?

Karen Well, as we all know, films bring in vast amounts of money for the entertainment industry. Everyone is making a profit somewhere – from the writers to the make-up artists! But in recent years we've seen an interesting spin-off and it appears that film-makers are attracting money into the holiday industry too. Location vacations – or, as the trend is also called, set-jetting – has really taken off. It seems to have tapped into the boom in film-making and is carving out a significant niche for itself in the holiday market. It entails, as the names suggest, travelling to different places that have been brought to the public's attention by big screen hits. And there are all sorts of agencies that have sprung up that can sell us designer holidays dependent on which films have fired our imaginations in a given year. Perfect for your average film buff or even simply people who want to go on holiday somewhere a bit different.

This trend is a godsend to local communities too. I mean, who would have wanted to visit the less salubrious areas of Mumbai before they were immortalised in Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*? And the New Zealand tourist board have been doing very well since *Lord of the Rings* was filmed there.

So, who is benefiting most from this holiday trend? According to location managers, the film production companies and the travel agencies are teaming up to promote the films and maximise the income from these joint ventures. For example, *The Dark Knight* promotes Hong Kong, Hong Kong promotes *The Dark Knight*! And the same with the film *Australia*! It seems to be a win-win situation all round. The film company invests in a locale, injecting cash into the local economy, the people in that area help them make the film and the area benefits from the tourism that the film attracts.

And it's not just the areas in general. For the most dedicated fans it's more than travelling thousands of miles to see one house or landscape – what they really want is to follow their favourite characters' experiences. They want to eat in the same restaurant, stay in the same hotel, walk down the same street. – Remember Magnolia Cupcakes in *Sex and the City* or Tokyo's Park Hyatt in *Lost in Translation*? And sometimes geographical places are even *named* after the movies. Nicole Kidman in *Australia* gave her name to a crossing along the Pentecost River in Western Australia. It's fascinating to see how the entertainment and tourist industries have come together in this way. Who knows where the next film will take us – literally!

Progress test Unit 3

Speaker A

To tell the truth it's been a bit of a roller coaster ride over the last ten years! But, on the whole, I'd say we've got a pretty good marriage now. You learn quite quickly that it's all about give and take and you have to talk things through otherwise you've got no chance! You have to adapt in little ways because your life now isn't all about you any more, it's about you as part of a couple. It isn't always easy and I'm the first to admit that! There's no room for selfishness in a marriage and as long as you realise that then you'll be fine!

Speaker B

Everything started off really well! I mean, we were really lucky and we both had good jobs, a nice house and no real problems. When the kids came along I suppose we were just too busy to see that we were actually drifting apart. It got to the point that we didn't seem to have anything in common any more – there was nothing we wanted to say to each other and the conversation just dried up! Finally we decided to try living apart for a while to see how we feel about each other when we're not in each other's pockets all the time. We'll see how it goes, although I don't hold out too much hope.

Speaker C

I think the secret of a happy marriage is keeping your own independence within the relationship. I see it all too often with my friends – they think they have to do everything together, have the same interests and go out with the same people all the time. I think our marriage has worked because we haven't done that. We both have completely different interests and we almost have separate groups of friends. I'm not saying that we never go out together – of course we do. But with our lives, there's always something to talk about and we really appreciate the time we actually do spend together. Sometimes marriage can be a bit of a prison – but not for us.

Speaker D

I realised pretty early on that I'd made a big mistake! I mean, when you're young – and I was only nineteen – the whole marriage and babies thing is so romantic. You just don't think of the consequences. You don't see that 'happily ever after' doesn't mean that you're forever living in a dream – there's a hard reality and that's not such good fun! I think some young mums who marry early can make a go of it, don't get me wrong. It just wasn't for me. My husband and I grew apart and we both knew that we weren't right for each other. So we split and it was a good decision. I know life is still hard for me but I'm coping and best of all I'm really good friends with my ex! He helps out a lot. Maybe one day I'll marry again but not for a long time!

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Speaker E

You know I can't really remember when the arguments started or even what they were about. Probably just silly things in the beginning. But then they got more serious. And the worst thing was the way Paul reacted – he'd shout and shout and then just shut off and I was left feeling frustrated because he wouldn't talk about things. I knew we ought to just sit down and discuss things calmly but he could never do that. It was all or nothing with him – a big row or total silence! It reached the point where I was seriously thinking about leaving him, but then I managed to persuade him to come with me to see a counsellor. She was amazing. She got us talking properly again and – well, yes, we're still together!

Progress test Unit 4

Interviewer Firstly, let me congratulate you on your success this year – it has been quite remarkable.

Guest Thanks. Yes – it's been quite a year so far. It's certainly been way beyond anything I'd expected. I mean, this time last year I was playing to pub audiences. Now I'm playing the Albert Hall. It's crazy!

Interviewer And I imagine your life has changed beyond recognition too?

Guest Well – it depends what you're talking about. As far as my personal life is concerned – not that much. I'm still with my old girlfriend and I'm still living in the same place. Also – I really hope that I haven't changed that much myself. You see some overnight successes and the whole fame thing has gone to their heads. They look different, they act different and there's a lot of arrogance out there.

Interviewer You seem pretty grounded!

Guest Good. And I hope that's the way it stays, because, believe me, it's easy to get your head turned in this business. But obviously there are parts of my life that have changed.

Interviewer There can't be much privacy for you these days.

Guest That is so true. I'm recognised pretty much everywhere I go. I don't mind that so much – and quite honestly, I don't really believe anyone who says that they object to being recognised and asked for their autographs – it goes with the territory. It's part of the deal you make with the public – you buy my music and I'll be nice to you! But what I do have big problems with is the press.

Interviewer In particular?

Guest Oh, it's the fact that they're waiting for you everywhere you go and not just waiting to take a good photo but waiting for you to fall over or make an ass of yourself! And it's the lies too. I don't mind them reporting the truth about me – but it's when they 'speculate' and when they twist your words or actions! That drives me nuts. And raking up old scandals...oh, don't get me started!

Interviewer OK! But your lifestyle must have changed in some ways?

Guest I suppose I use limos more than I used to – but that's just to escape from the paparazzi! And, let's think – I fly first class – that's because I like the luxury! I don't watch so much TV – because I haven't got the time – and my bank balance is a lot higher these days! But you've got to stay grounded because everyone knows this is a precarious profession. One day everyone loves you but tomorrow, who knows? I could be back to working on the supermarket checkouts!

Interviewer Somehow I think that's extremely unlikely! Anyway – thank you...

Progress test Unit 5

Speaker A

I know people say that losing your temper is a really bad thing to do and it shows a complete lack of control, but quite honestly I think it helps a lot to let off steam. There's nothing worse than keeping everything bottled up inside. It can't be good for you. My own problem is that as much as I want to, I find it impossible to let rip! And I know I should. It's just not me. I'm the sort who dwells on things and lets it all get me down whereas my sister's the total opposite. She just has a good rant or something and feels much better afterwards! But whatever people tell you – it's hard to change who you are, isn't it?

Speaker B

I cannot bear people who shout. I just hate raised voices. And it never does any good, does it? You just get yourself worked up and often you say things you regret as soon as you've said them. And once you've said something, you can't take it back – it's out there. Oh, no, I think it's really dangerous to lose your temper. Also – some people go way too far! They can get violent and that's not going to sort out any problems, is it? I think it's part of being a civilised human being to keep control. We should all make an effort to talk things through sensibly – we'd get a lot further.

Speaker C

Yeah – it's good to get angry and get it out of the system, but I personally don't like a shouting match. I don't think it's very productive. I find that it's better to do my shouting on my own, in my own space. I know that sounds a bit weird! But believe me, it makes you feel a whole lot better and you don't hurt anyone in the process. I must admit I have thrown things too – on my own, that is, not actually at people! I usually throw something that's not going to break though – so that shows I'm still in control, I suppose. My favourite things to throw are my shoes. I throw them at the door. Once I threw them so hard I made two holes in the door!

Speaker D

I love a good row. It clears the air. But that's because of the sort of person I am. I get angry quickly, shout for a bit and then it's all over and forgotten. Bit like a volcano I suppose! And I'm not the sort of person who holds grudges either. I'm very up front. I say what I think! I know it's made me quite a few enemies over the years but I can live with that. For me that's so much better than secretly hating someone for something they've done, that they've probably forgotten ages ago! All that does is hurt you, doesn't it?

Progress test Unit 6

- Host** This morning we're talking about something that nearly everyone has experienced at one time or another – insomnia! And I'm asking you to phone in with your own particular experiences. So first let's go to line 1 and hear from Dek. Hi there, Dek.
- Caller 1** Hi! Yeah – regarding insomnia? I've suffered from it all my life – since I was a kid, really. I used to have problems when I was at school and taking exams, you know? Now it's connected to my work. The night before a new production I'll lie awake until the early hours just wondering if my mind's going to go blank on stage. Once I've got one performance under my belt it's OK but that first night...wow!
- Host** Thanks for that, Dek. And on line 2 it's...
- Caller 2** Vicky from Cardiff. I think my problem is a pretty common one. I do shift work and have to make up my sleep during the day. For me it's almost impossible! The rest of the world is awake and I'm trying to go against my biological clock and go to sleep. And when I do drop off, it's a very shallow sleep. I suppose it's all those dreams about stacking the shelves – nightmares really! Also I get woken up easily – cars outside, dogs barking...
- Host** Ear plugs, Vicky, that's the answer! And on line 3?
- Caller 3** Yes – this is Marcus. My sleeping problem comes from sleeping in too many different beds! I love my own bed and being in my own surroundings, but my work tends to take me to different countries for meetings a lot, and then I have to try and sleep in different beds! Soft, hard, big, small, comfortable, uncomfortable – whatever – it really affects the quality of my sleep! And that affects everything I have to do the following day. Sometimes it's like trying to get through a fog. And colleagues don't make allowances – it's just an excuse to them!
- Host** I can well believe that, Marcus! I know the feeling. On line 4 I think we have Tina from London?
- Caller 4** That's right. And I know you're going to say that my sleep problem is all down to me! And it probably is! My problem is that I find it difficult to wind down after a late night out. Whether it's a night at the cinema, a club, a party or just a get-together at a mate's, if I go to bed as soon as I get home there's no way I'm going to sleep! Sometimes I lie there for hours and then any early morning lectures the following morning are completely out of the question!
- Host** You're right, Tina – all your own doing, don't expect any sympathy from me! And finally on line 5 it's Dave.
- Caller 5** With me, it's not so much not being able to get to sleep, it's waking up early and not getting back off that's the problem. It is

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so depressing lying there in the darkness just waiting for the sun to rise! It's obviously connected to my job and I know I have this deep-seated anxiety that the alarm won't go off or I'll sleep through it and then the programme will start without me. You must have the same problem sometimes?

Host I know exactly where you're coming from! I get nightmares about it too. Usually mine are that the taxi doesn't arrive and I'm running through the city streets at dawn trying to get to the studio! Get yourself a string of alarm clocks – that's the answer!

Progress test Unit 7

Speaker A

I've been travelling to college for years now by train and I'm quite used to it. I meet my friends and we chat and I even catch up on homework sometimes during the journey. I don't mind travelling so much. I mean, I live a long way from the nearest town so I've always had to travel – it's part of my life. Sometimes the trains get quite packed and we have to stand up. They really should put on some extra carriages in the rush hour but other than that it's fine.

Speaker B

My working day starts with a bus ride into town to catch the train to London. It's a bit hit and miss with the timetable sometimes but my working hours are fairly flexible so it's not a big problem. It's just something you have to put up with if you want to live in the country.

Speaker C

I'd like to get a car – it would make getting around a whole lot easier – but I'm pretty conscious of my carbon footprint and also on my salary it's way beyond my budget. So, I tend to get the bus – or if I'm going somewhere local I cycle – it keeps the weight down!

Speaker D

I generally use my car to get around. I love driving and it means I don't have to depend on other people for getting where I want to when I want to. It's just so much easier. However, things on the road are reaching such a state that I may have to reconsider in the near future. Traffic jams are becoming a normal part of the commute and I can't see things improving, can you?

Progress test Unit 8

Speaker 1

In my opinion, one of the most influential of today's celebrity chefs and probably the one whose reputation will endure is Heston Blumenthal. He's not plastered all over the TV like a lot of the others, but he's probably done more than anyone else to actually push forward the culinary boundaries. For him, it's like a science, and his obsession is with combining seemingly disparate ingredients. His skill lies in focusing on taste, aroma and flavour perception. He's a real genius and he just loves to delight and surprise!

Speaker 2

My vote would have to go to Jamie Oliver. He's taken a moral stance on many food issues and he puts his money where his mouth is – so to speak! He's even got the government involved in some of his healthy eating schemes. He's a pretty canny individual too and he knows how to make money as well as good food!

Speaker 3

I suppose the most internationally renowned British chef has got to be Gordon Ramsay and that's because he's done so much controversial TV. Viewers either love him or hate him and that's almost certainly down to his temper. He can have a really foul mouth on him when he gets going but apparently his cooking skills are actually fairly good!

Speaker 4

For traditionalists Delia Smith is a big favourite. She's possibly the longest-serving TV chef and she's been demonstrating her own particular brand of cooking for over four decades, starting with her first show, 'Family fare', in 1973! Her calm, common-sense approach sets her apart from her more flamboyant counterparts and she makes a virtue of keeping things simple. There are still a lot of people who would prefer to learn to cook a good omelette rather than a complicated dish with 25 ingredients!

Progress test Unit 9

Speaker What surprises me these days is how little some people seem to value their privacy. I'm not talking about data protection and the dangers involved when the authorities get it wrong – there's not a lot we can do about that – it's another sort of privacy that concerns me. It's the apparent willingness to divulge all manner of sometimes quite intimate information about oneself when using a mobile phone in crowded, public places where all and sundry can listen in! I mean, what's that all about? What is it with people who carry on lengthy conversations, very loudly, in a café or a train carriage? Do they really think that everyone around them suddenly becomes deaf when they start talking? Or is it that they don't actually care that the whole carriage – who are probably bored stiff with their journey and eager for any form of distraction – are avidly listening for details about how the 'deal went wrong' or why 'Bridget walked out on Gary!' Sometimes I wonder if it's pride that causes them to do this. Perhaps they really want people to know that they deal in millions of pounds and that they have a love life! I really wish someone would tell me. Or perhaps I'm just the nosy exception. Should I just turn up my iPod and mind my own business? Oh, give me a break – if people want to treat the carriage like a theatre, I'm a willing member of the audience!

Progress test Unit 10

Interviewer How important is it to keep our old traditions and customs? It seems that today in a world that is changing very quickly many traditions that date back centuries are dying out and being replaced by newer modern customs. Petra Saddler has written a book about traditions that are disappearing or changing, and we welcome her in the studio today. Good morning, Petra.

Petra Good morning!

Interviewer It seems very sad that we are losing so many of our customs and traditions. Is the picture really that negative?

Petra I don't think it's as bad as people make out. Yes, traditions are changing and for many reasons, but people still want to celebrate events that have always been celebrated and maintain a link with the past.

Interviewer I understand that you're particularly interested in traditions and customs surrounding the celebration of maturity – the age at which a child becomes an adult?

Petra I am. It's a fascinating subject, because to start with, the age of maturity is different from one culture to another. Secondly, the reasons for celebrating this particular event are also different – as are the ways the event is celebrated. It's also something that affects every one of us. And we can see the traditions changing and developing before our eyes! One very interesting example we can look at is the Quinceanera – a centuries-old Hispanic tradition that is still practised today. What I find interesting about it is that the tradition has been kept by Hispanic communities in the USA but has undergone several changes.

Interviewer And what is the Quinceanera?

Petra It's the celebration of a girl's fifteenth birthday and it goes back thousands of years. Some people say that it has Aztec roots. Others think it comes from the time when France ruled Mexico, and another idea is that it is to celebrate the fathers because so many used to die before their daughters married.

Interviewer And this is celebrated outside Latin America?

Petra Yes. It started to become popular in the USA in the 1930s and girls in the US still celebrate today.

Interviewer So, what happens at a Quinceanera, and how has the tradition changed?

Petra Originally, the Quinceanera was a religious celebration to thank God for fifteen years of life. It involved a Catholic mass and a family party. Today in America it is often less of a religious occasion and more of an opportunity to celebrate the family's Hispanic roots and affirm their cultural identity.

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- Interviewer** It seems that the religious element of many traditions and customs is getting lost today in many countries and cultures.
- Petra** That is very true. One reason for this is commercialism. And we can see this with the Quinceanera in the US. It's rather like the modern wedding. The celebration for some families has grown to such an extent that they often need a 'planner' – someone to organise the whole complicated celebration! Weddings have had another influence on the Quinceanera. The traditional pink dress is now often a white wedding-type gown. The girl carries a bouquet of flowers, receives a ring and has a cake – all like a modern-day wedding. It can be a very big occasion indeed.
- Interviewer** And very expensive too!
- Petra** It certainly can be. I must emphasise that this is not the case with all Quinceaneras. Some celebrations remain small, religious occasions and are true to their origins. But the wealthier families do often throw spectacular parties. And for some girls commercialism has completely eradicated the tradition and they ask for the money instead of the traditional celebration!
- Interviewer** Is there one particular custom associated with the Quinceanera that you think will continue forever?
- Petra** It's never possible to say 'forever'! But I think the custom of giving the girl a special doll on this day will continue to be important. It's a symbol of the last day of her childhood and is treasured for a long time.