



National  
Qualifications  
2015

**X727/76/11**

**ESOL  
Listening Transcript**

MONDAY, 25 MAY  
3:30 PM – 4:00 PM

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**This paper must not be seen by any candidate.**

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**Instructions to reader(s):**

**Recording 1**

The conversation below should be read clearly and naturally. After reading the introduction you should pause for 1 minute to allow candidates to read the questions. On completion of the first reading pause for 10 seconds, then read the conversation a second time. On completion of the second reading pause for 1 minute to allow candidates to write their answers.

Where special arrangements have been agreed in advance to allow the reading of the material, it should be read by one male and one female speaker. Sections marked **(t)** should be read by the teacher.

**(t) Recording 1**

Listen to the recording and attempt the questions which follow. You will hear the recording twice.

You now have one minute to read the questions in recording 1 before the recording begins.

*(one minute pause)*

**TONE**

**Sandra** Well, it's certainly a nice view, Douglas.

**Douglas** It's open enough, but these hills aren't exactly spectacular. Not like Perthshire, Sandra.

**Sandra** Oh, Perthshire's nice but I think you get better weather here. Anyway, let's have the coffee before it gets cold.

**Douglas** You want a biscuit? We've got some somewhere.

**Sandra** No, I'm fine. *(pause)* You know, Douglas, I can't believe it's been over a year since mum died, and I've hardly seen you since the funeral. By the way, thanks for sorting out the will – you did a good job.

**Douglas** No problem.

**Sandra** *(Pause)* So many changes – but more for you than for me.

**Douglas** Yes, Sandra, I was struggling a bit before, but mum's money helped Carol and me so I could quit my job and move here.

**Sandra** And what about *here*? How are you finding living in the village?

**Douglas** *(hesitantly)* Oh, it's fine . . . people are friendly . . .

**Sandra** You don't sound very convinced.

**Douglas** Well, I'd say they're friendly here in the new housing estate . . . the incomers from the city. But those in the older houses, in the village proper, well, they don't mix much.

**Sandra** I can't see where there is to mix. This place doesn't even have a decent pub.

- Douglas** There's a nice café at the far end of the main street.
- Sandra** And do you go there?
- Douglas** Not so often – sometimes when I'm walking the dog that way, but we usually go down into the woods. There's a lovely walk along the river and you can see all sorts of wildlife.
- Sandra** Hmm, well, I can't say I'm really surprised – about the locals, that is. This village has existed for centuries and suddenly they stick down a whole load of new houses. You can't expect the local residents to be happy about it.
- Douglas** True, although if you really look at the place, you'll see that there are houses from every period, going back – I don't know – maybe three hundred years. There are some bungalows that were put up in the 1930s.
- Sandra** Yes, but that's more, kind of organic. The new housing estate is a bit too much – too many people at once, and a bit detached physically from the main village.
- Douglas** Yes, Sandra, and in fact, there have been a couple of points of real friction. For example, someone objected to the butcher's shop displaying dead animals, or bits of dead animals, in the window.
- Sandra** What? It's a butcher's. What are they supposed to put in the window – bread?
- Douglas** No, the thing is, they had a whole lot of lambs and rabbits hanging up and that sort of thing, and some people thought this might be upsetting for the kids.
- Sandra** And I suppose these people would be incomers?
- Douglas** Well, yes, actually.
- Sandra** Who probably get their meat from a supermarket in Edinburgh?
- Douglas** I'd imagine they do. Most of them are in the town every few days, if not more often.
- Sandra** Exactly, Douglas, and they expect to see meat cut up and packaged, or at least in nice tidy pieces, lying on the counter?
- Douglas** That's true.
- Sandra** Well, fair enough. I suppose, being city types, they're used to supermarkets. But that's not the point – you've no right to come into a community and start trying to impose your own values on the locals. It really gets my back up.
- Douglas** Well, actually, we do most of our shopping in the supermarkets in Edinburgh. But I wasn't involved in the protest.
- Sandra** (*sarcastically*) That's good of you. So why don't you get your meat from the local butcher?
- Douglas** Well, I suppose I'm one of your city types – and the meat's a bit cheaper in the supermarkets.
- Sandra** That's probably because it comes from everywhere and anywhere, and uses up too many food miles. I'm sure your village butcher uses locally-sourced meat.

- Douglas** I'd imagine he does — but, actually, he's doing well out of the protest. The story was big on social media. One side tried to organise a boycott of the shop, but he got more backing from the people on the other side. He told me the other day his trade has gone up.
- Sandra** That's good. Actually, I don't know why I should care — as you well know, I'm a vegetarian.
- Douglas** True — and isn't that a city value?
- Sandra** Don't be silly — there are vegetarians everywhere. Anyway, if I lived here I'd be sure to buy my vegetables locally. But the thing is, if people are going to eat meat they should know what they're eating. Kids should know that their hamburgers, their chicken nuggets, their sausages and so on, come from dead animals.
- Douglas** Well, speaking of kids, *(begin fade)* that looks like Carol and the boys coming up the path. I'll put the kettle on again.

*(ten second pause after first reading)*

TONE

*(one minute pause after second reading)*

*(TONE)*

**Instructions to reader(s):**

**Recording 2**

The talk below should be read clearly and naturally. After reading the introduction you should pause for 1 minute to allow candidates to read the questions. On completion of the first reading pause for 10 seconds, then read the talk a second time. On completion of the second reading pause for 1 minute to allow candidates to write their answers.

Where special arrangements have been agreed in advance to allow the reading of the material, it should be read by one male or one female speaker. Sections marked **(t)** should be read by the teacher.

**(t) Recording 2**

Listen to the recording and attempt the questions which follow. You will hear the recording twice.

You now have one minute to read the questions in recording 2 before the recording begins.

*(one minute pause)*

TONE

**(m/f)** Thank you for inviting me along to give this short talk – I'll try to keep it brief.

We always hear that texting is a scourge. The idea is that texting spells the decline of any kind of serious literacy, or at least writing ability, among young people today. That just isn't true. Actually texting is a miraculous thing that we're seeing happening right now. We have to stand back and look at what language really is. One thing that we see is that texting is not writing at all. What do I mean by that?

Basically, language has existed for at least 80,000 years, and what it arose as is speech. People talked. That's what we're probably genetically specified for. That's how we use language most. Writing is something that came along much later. According to traditional estimates, if humanity had existed for 24 hours, then writing only came along at about 11:07 p.m.

Casual speech is something quite different from formal writing. Linguists have shown that when we're speaking casually in an unmonitored way, we tend to speak in word packets of maybe seven to ten words. You'll notice this if you ever have occasion to record yourself or a group of people talking. Speech is much looser. It's much less reflective – very different from writing. We naturally tend to think, because we see language written so often, that's what language is, but actually what language is, is speech. They are two different things.

Now of course, as time has gone by, there's been a certain amount of bleed between speech and writing. So, for example, in the past it was common when one gave a formal talk to basically talk like you write.

Well, if you can speak like writing, it logically follows that you might want to sometimes write like you speak. Even if you can type easily enough to keep up with the pace of speech, you have to have somebody who can respond quickly. Once you have a device that can do that, then you have the conditions that allow us to write like we speak. And that's where texting comes in. And so, texting is very loose. No one thinks about capitals or punctuation when they text, but then again, do you think about those things when you talk? No, and so why would you when you're texting?

What texting is, despite the fact that it involves the brute mechanics of something that we call writing, is fingered speech.

But what's going on is a new kind of language is emerging. We have a whole range of new constructions that are developing, and yet it's easy to think something's still wrong. It's not as sophisticated as the language of a quality newspaper.

And so, I see texting these days as a new way of writing that young people are developing, which they're using alongside their ordinary writing skills, and that means they're able to do two things. Increasing evidence is that being bilingual is cognitively beneficial. That's also true of being bidialectal in terms of your writing. And so texting actually is evidence of a balancing act that young people are using today, not consciously, of course, but it's an expansion of their linguistic repertoire. It's very simple. If somebody from 1973 looked at a typical text written by a 20-year-old today, often they would have no idea what half of it meant. A whole new language has developed among our young people as a result of doing something as mundane as messing around on their little devices.

So in closing, if I could go into the future, to 2033, the first thing I'd ask is please let me see texts written by 16-year-olds, because I'd want to know where this language had evolved since our times, and ideally I'd then send them back to you and me now so we could examine this linguistic miracle happening right under our noses. Thank you very much.

*(ten second pause after first reading)*

TONE

*(one minute pause after second reading)*

(t) You now have one minute to check you answers.

*(one minute pause)*

(t) This is the end of the listening test.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPT]**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Listening Transcript Recording 2 – Text is adapted from “*Txting is killing language. JK!!!*” from John McWhorter’s TED Talk, April 2013.

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