

GRAMMAR

1 Complete the sentences. Use the correct form of the verb in brackets.

Example: How many CDs have you got (have got) in you collection?

- 1 _____ he _____ (have to) start work at 7.00?
- 2 I'm upset because Agatha isn't here yet and I _____ (wait) for two hours.
- 3 Karl _____ (be) given a new job in marketing.
- 4 Betty isn't very good at DIY, so last year she _____ her house _____ (decorate) by a painter.
- 5 You _____ (not have) time to go to the cinema tonight – you need to study.
- 6 I was watching TV when I _____ (hear) a strange noise outside in the garden.
- 7 Igor _____ (work) for the company for 20 years when he finally received a pay rise.
- 8 It _____ (say) that getting enough sleep is a very important part of staying healthy.
- 9 The weather _____ (expect) to be mild and rainy this summer.
- 10 There are thought _____ (be) tribes living in the Amazon that no one has ever contacted.
- 11 While my brother _____ (ride) his bike to school, he had a minor accident.
- 12 If only you _____ (not forget) to close the windows, the rain wouldn't have come in.
- 13 I wish I _____ (know) how to help you, but I'm afraid I don't know how to fix computers.
- 14 We'd rather you _____ (not borrow) money for university. We're happy to pay for you to go.
- 15 Would you rather we _____ (have) Chinese food tonight?
- 16 If only Ian _____ (be) a bit happier. It makes me sad to know that he doesn't like his new school.

16

2 Underline the correct word(s).

Example: I lost my wallet, so / **because** I had to phone the bank and cancel my credit card.

- 1 He was late for the interview and **owing** / **consequently**, he didn't get the job.
- 2 We had to work quietly **so that** / **so as not to** wake the children.

- 3 We worked hard to prepare the garden for the party. **As a result** / **Nevertheless**, it looked beautiful and everyone enjoyed being outdoors.
- 4 He's stopped working **due to** / **since** he turned 70 last year.
- 5 Warren is **understood to** / **understood** have driven to Mexico on a motorcycle with a suitcase full of money.
- 6 **It's seem** / **It seems** that we no longer need to worry about Adam. He got a job and he's going to marry Louisa.
- 7 We **used** / **would** go skiing in the Alps every winter.
- 8 **Apparently** / **According** Frederick is going to buy a house in Lyon.
- 9 We'll **probably** / **probably be** go on holiday in Croatia next August.
- 10 Brian's **sure** / **bound to** come back home when he realizes he's left his mobile here.
- 11 Bader **can't** / **should** be in Tunis now. It's a four-hour flight, and he left about four hours ago.
- 12 Marsela **unlikely** / **won't** be here until after lunch.

12

3 Complete the sentences with the correct word(s).

Example: They say you should get eight hours of sleep every night, but I usually get about six.

They They're Their

- 1 My brother and I give _____ a box of chocolates every year on our birthdays.
another each other by one another
- 2 I need to spend some time _____ every day. I need time to think and to relax on my own.
ourselves yourself by myself
- 3 _____ can use your computer for video conferencing, and it's free.
One Each other You
- 4 _____ all have problems remembering things sometimes.
One We Ourselves
- 5 **A** Did you ever _____ to living away from the seaside?
B Not really. Actually, I really miss walking on the beach every day.
get use get used to get use

- 6 Could you get Mario _____ and see me this afternoon, please?
coming come to come
- 7 It's _____ late and I need to go home.
get getting gets
- 8 Rarely _____ so happy. The interview went perfectly and they offered me the job!
have been I have been have I been
- 9 _____ we got to the shopping centre than all the shops closed.
As soon Sooner as No sooner had
- 10 I'm afraid my little sister _____ taking some sweets from the shop.
got someone caught got caught was got caught
- 11 Never _____ such a terrible, shocking story.
I have heard have I heard I heard
- 12 Not until someone tells me _____ who wrote the letter.
will I know do I know I know

12

Grammar total 40

VOCABULARY

4 Underline the odd word out.Example: mumble slam scream giggle

- 1 monotonous tedious colloquial repetitive
- 2 wages bonus salary skills
- 3 employer career profession job
- 4 idiom collocation metaphor transcribe
- 5 rejected praised dumped broke up with
- 6 affluent well-off penniless loaded
- 7 creak sigh groan stammer
- 8 thought-provoking competitive gripping intriguing
- 9 yell splash slurp drip
- 10 bang crash crunch whistle

10

5 Underline the correct word(s).Example: The book made me laugh. The writing was really witty / moving.

- 1 If you get some **qualifications** / **benefits**, then you'll probably get a better job.
- 2 I have a new **timetable** / **hours** at school. I now start at 7.00 in the morning and finish at 2.00 in the afternoon.
- 3 I'm lucky to have the **prospects** / **opportunity** to travel for my work. I've visited China six times.
- 4 I missed a few days of work and was behind schedule, but now I've **filled** / **caught up**.
- 5 Lucia and Rudolf are getting on like a **stick** / **house** on fire. They're really happy together.
- 6 What's got **on** / **into** Pat? She seems very upset.
- 7 I'm going to get a new car next month, but for the time **being** / **now** I'm taking the bus.
- 8 You have to teach kids that they can't always get their **own way** / **together**. Sometimes you have to do what someone else wants you to do.
- 9 I need to get **around** / **back** home by midnight. I have an early start tomorrow.
- 10 It took George a long time to get **over** / **anywhere** losing his job, but now that he's working again, he's happy.

10

6 Complete the sentences with one word.

Example: Don't put off going to university. If you wait, it may be too late.

- 1 I _____ my teeth every time my boss says 'Will you come into my office, sweetheart?'
- 2 It's best to meet your problems _____ on and solve them before they get worse.
- 3 A _____ is a frequent combination of words. Often they are the only possible combination to express a concept, like light snow.
- 4 It's a big _____-off when someone is late for a date.
- 5 Aldo loves living in Barcelona. He's having the time of his _____.
- 6 If you keep trying, it's only a question of _____ before you find a job.

- 7 If you spend too much money, you're living beyond your _____.
- 8 My kids don't go to school yet, so we have to pay for _____ while we are at work.
- 9 A _____-fisted person is not generous with money.
- 10 When you _____ money, you put it into your bank account.

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7 Complete the words in the sentences.

Example: A story that makes you feel sad is depressing.

- 1 Musical ability r_____ in my family. My grandmother and my brother both played the piano, and I play the guitar.
- 2 I've entered a c_____ to win a holiday in Greece. If I win, I'll take my whole family with me.
- 3 When I was 12, I failed an exam. I felt very a_____ and so I never failed an exam again.
- 4 My gut f_____ is that everything's going to be all right.
- 5 My work day is a b_____ of emails, phone calls and meetings. Sometimes I don't even have time for lunch.
- 6 The children were s_____ for making so much noise. They were quiet after that.
- 7 My sister and I don't have the same o_____ about a lot of things, but we do have the same taste in music and clothes.
- 8 He told a really d_____ story about losing his job, his girlfriend leaving, and then getting really ill.
- 9 His translation was very f_____ to the original version. I read it in Spanish and in English, and they both had the same feeling.
- 10 When Lucho saw Beata's new car, he was s_____ with envy. He's always wanted to own a Porsche.

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Vocabulary total		40
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PRONUNCIATION

8 Match the words with the same sound.

mumble profession trousers synonym
enormous turnover value experience screech
mortgage joke

Example: yell mumble

- 1 environment _____
- 2 planner _____
- 3 usually _____
- 4 round _____
- 5 tedious _____
- 6 question _____
- 7 gadget _____
- 8 giggle _____
- 9 sheep _____
- 10 makes _____

	10
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9 Underline the stressed syllable.

Example: manager

- 1 dominant
- 2 adhere
- 3 transcribe
- 4 register
- 5 misery
- 6 compete
- 7 gadget
- 8 nicknamed
- 9 haunting
- 10 awkward

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Pronunciation total		20
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Grammar, Vocabulary, and Pronunciation total		100
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Progress Test Files 1–3

READING

1 Read the article and tick (✓) A, B, or C.

WHO WANTS TO BE RICH?

A It's very common for people to say 'Money doesn't bring you happiness'. They point to the very public problems of wealthy people and the evident misery some of them have. Money, the theory goes, makes them superficial and selfish, their lives often fall apart, and they miss out on the simple pleasures of life. Money is their top priority and because of this, they've got it all wrong.

B Attitudes to the rich are also characterized by hatred. Typical images of wealthy people are that they are greedy, cruel people who've got what they've got by exploiting or abusing other people. The rich are often seen as bad characters whose pursuit of wealth has led them to treat good people with brutal force and whose behaviour has been either morally questionable or completely corrupt. They can't have got that rich by honourable methods, the thinking goes, they must have done something truly inexcusable.

C Connected with this is a common belief that some of the rich, especially the young ones, don't deserve their wealth. Some of them are spoilt brats, benefiting from the wealth of their parents and living empty lives of laziness and luxury, with nothing between their ears. Their lives have been all reward and no effort. And then there are the people in sport and the arts whose immense earnings are well-publicized. Surely, people say, no one can be worth such sums. It's outrageous that these people get such high incomes for doing what they do.

D Even when people aren't actually rich by most conventional definitions of the word, their lifestyles attract criticism from others. There is among many people a dislike of what they regard as a materialistic attitude to life. When they see people with big houses, luxury cars, and a mass of the top-of-the-range gadgets, they dismiss them as empty, foolish people with the wrong priorities in life. How can they afford these things? Have they got heavily in debt to fund this lifestyle? If so, how silly they are. Of course, some of this feeling can be attributed to envy. Most people have no direct contact with the truly rich, seeing them only via the media, but materialistic people are all around. The truly rich are considered to belong almost to another species, but the materialistic ones might well be in your neighbourhood.

E So there's a fairly common belief that money is 'a bad thing', or at any rate, having lots of it. But I think that in this envy and dislike of the rich, people are missing the point. Money's a big factor in just about everyone's life. It's often the only reason they get up and go to work. If you haven't got it, life is very difficult. You need to get it for food, clothes and shelter, for yourself and maybe others. It's the

main reason why most people work – not for pleasure but to provide the necessities of life. What they are effectively doing is exchanging their time for money.

F And this brings us to the key point about wealth. It buys freedom, it buys time. If you're rich, you don't have to exchange your time for money, you don't have to give so much time to an employer or dedicate all that time to the business of earning a living. You can use your time in any way you please, in ways that bring you some fulfilment. If you're wealthy, you don't have to be materialistic, nor do you have to be superficial and selfish. These are not iron rules. Disliking the rich because of what you read or learn about some of them in the media results from only a partial view of what having wealth means. Getting annoyed with materialistic people is based on a narrow view of what money brings. Some people squander wealth, some people don't deserve it, some people want it for reasons you might take a dim view of. But the fact is, wealth provides opportunities for the kind of life you would like to have.

G So don't knock it. Instead, think of ways you might be able to attain it. Focus on the goal of getting yourself into a position where you're no longer trading your time for money. Take control of your own time by becoming independently wealthy. You might say that's easier said than done. Well, you might be right, but have you tried yet?

- 1 What is the writer's point in section **A**?
 - A People take too much interest in the lives of the wealthy.
 - B There is evidence to support a common belief about money.
 - C Being wealthy changes people.
- 2 The writer says in section **B** that a common view of the wealthy is that they _____.
 - A have acquired wealth dishonestly
 - B have been exceptionally lucky
 - C enjoy feeling superior to others
- 3 A criticism of rich people mentioned in section **C** is that _____.
 - A they should keep quiet about the amount of money they have
 - B the financial rewards in their fields are too great
 - C they don't appreciate the money that they receive

- 4 In section **D**, the writer says that many people think that materialistic people _____.
- A don't care what other people think of them
- B aren't as rich as they might appear to be
- C don't really enjoy their lifestyles
- 5 In section **D**, the writer suggests that most people _____.
- A are materialistic to some extent
- B have the wrong impression of the truly rich
- C don't envy the truly rich
- 6 The writer's main point in section **E** is that _____.
- A money is important to everyone, not just the rich
- B the rich give people the wrong ideas about money
- C most people would like to have a lot of money
- 7 In section **F**, the writer suggests that wealthy people _____.
- A sometimes dislike other wealthy people
- B often sympathize with people who have little money
- C are able to avoid something that most people do
- 8 The writer says in section **F** that common attitudes to rich people _____.
- A fail to take into account a key advantage of wealth
- B are based on a false picture of what wealthy people are like
- C place too much emphasis on one particular group of people
- 9 The writer's intention in section **G** is to _____.
- A emphasize that everybody can become wealthy
- B encourage readers to change their lives
- C regret the importance of wealth
- 10 What is the writer's purpose in the article as a whole?
- A To analyse the advantages and disadvantages of wealth
- B To defend wealthy people against criticism
- C To argue against a common belief about money

 10

- 2 Answer each question by putting in the correct section of the article (A–G). Which section of the article (A–G) contains the following?
- 1 a belief that some wealthy people lack intelligence ___
- 2 a reference to something that wealthy people are unable to experience ___
- 3 agreement that an aim may be hard to achieve ___
- 4 the opinion that not all wealthy people have certain attitudes ___
- 5 assumptions about what wealthy people did to get their wealth ___

 5Reading total 15**WRITING**

Choose one of the titles below and write approximately 250 words:

- Write an article for an English website about how education has changed in your country over the last 50 years.
- Write your letter of application for the advertisement below:

Barista required to work every morning in coffee shop in centre of town.

Job description: To serve customers, bake fresh pastries, keep coffee shop clean...

Requirements: You must be aged 16 or over, friendly, polite, and able to work in a demanding atmosphere. You should have a high level of English, and some experience of dealing with the public.

How to apply: Email CV to Charles Combibos (coffeemate@bnet.co.uk).

Writing total 10Reading and Writing total 25

Progress Test Files 1–3

LISTENING

- 1 Listen to five people talking about various gadgets. Match the speakers (1–5) to what they say about the gadgets (A–H).

Speaker 1

Speaker 2

Speaker 3

Speaker 4

Speaker 5

- A Sometimes I wish I didn't have it.
 B I intend to get a better one.
 C I don't use it as much as I used to.
 D It often doesn't work properly.
 E I can't imagine being without it.
 F It has had unexpected benefits for me.
 G It's more useful to others than to me.
 H I sometimes can't use it when I want to.

5

- 2 Listen to a talk about a connection between sport and language. Tick (✓) A, B, or C.

- 1 What did the research involve?
 A Examining people's brains while they answered questions
 B People listening to sentences in two different categories
 C One set of sentences for each group of people
- 2 The results of the tests were not _____.
 A as important as the results of the brain scans
 B what some of the subjects expected
 C consistent for all the subjects
- 3 The research indicated a connection between _____.
 A planning actions and understanding language
 B being interested in sport and understanding language in general
 C the language of sport and other kinds of language
- 4 The conclusion that can be drawn is that the same parts of the brain _____.
 A help with both learning languages and learning sports
 B are used by players and people watching sports differently
 C are used both for watching sport and understanding language

- 5 It is suggested that people who are learning language connected with a topic should _____.
 A learn the language and then do activities connected with it
 B do activities connected with that topic at the same time
 C do activities connected with that topic before learning the language

5

Listening total 10

SPEAKING Student A

- 1 Ask your partner these questions.
- 1 What's the most successful thing you've ever done?
 - 2 Which three personality characteristics do you admire the most?
 - 3 What are you good at remembering and not so good at remembering?
 - 4 How much do you discuss your relationships with other people?
 - 5 What's your favourite character in a novel you've read or film you've seen?
- 2 Now answer your partner's questions.
- 3 Now talk about one of these statements, saying if you agree or disagree. Give reasons.
- 1 'Your family are the most important people in your life.'
 - 2 'In modern life, people spend too much time on their own.'
 - 3 'It is possible to be poor but happy.'
- 4 Now listen to your partner. Do you agree with him / her?

Speaking total 15

Listening and Speaking total 25

Progress Test Files 1–3**SPEAKING Student B**

- 1 Answer your partner's questions.
- 2 Now ask your partner these questions.
 - 1 What's your definition of success in life?
 - 2 How important do you think it is to be busy all the time?
 - 3 What's the first sound you hear when you wake up in the morning?
 - 4 How easy or difficult do you find it to meet new people?
 - 5 Which book or film has had the greatest influence on you?
- 3 Listen to your partner. Do you agree with him / her?
- 4 Now talk about one of these statements, saying if you agree or disagree. Give reasons.
 - 1 'There are many things in life that are more important than work.'
 - 2 'It is hard to keep the friends you make as a child.'
 - 3 'Materialism leads to unhappiness.'

Speaking total	15
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Listening and Speaking total	25
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Progress Test Files 1–3 Answer Key

Grammar, Vocabulary, and Pronunciation

GRAMMAR

- 1**
- 1 Does...have to
 - 2 `ve been waiting
 - 3 has been
 - 4 had...decorated
 - 5 don't have
 - 6 heard
 - 7 had been working
 - 8 is said
 - 9 is expected
 - 10 to be
 - 11 was riding
 - 12 hadn't forgotten
 - 13 knew
 - 14 didn't borrow
 - 15 had
 - 16 were / was
- 2**
- 1 consequently
 - 2 so as not to
 - 3 As a result
 - 4 since
 - 5 understood to
 - 6 It seems
 - 7 would
 - 8 Apparently
 - 9 probably
 - 10 bound to
 - 11 should
 - 12 won't
- 3**
- 1 each other
 - 2 by myself
 - 3 You
 - 4 We
 - 5 get used
 - 6 to come
 - 7 getting
 - 8 have I been
 - 9 No sooner had
 - 10 got caught
 - 11 have I heard
 - 12 will I know

Progress Test Files 1–3 Answer Key

VOCABULARY

- 4**
- 1 colloquial
 - 2 skills
 - 3 employer
 - 4 transcribe
 - 5 praised
 - 6 penniless
 - 7 creak
 - 8 competitive
 - 9 yell
 - 10 whistle
- 5**
- 1 qualifications
 - 2 timetable
 - 3 opportunity
 - 4 caught
 - 5 house
 - 6 into
 - 7 being
 - 8 own way
 - 9 back
 - 10 over
- 6**
- 1 grit
 - 2 head
 - 3 collocation
 - 4 turn
 - 5 life
 - 6 time
 - 7 means
 - 8 childcare
 - 9 tight
 - 10 deposit
- 7**
- 1 runs
 - 2 competition
 - 3 ashamed
 - 4 feeling
 - 5 blizzard
 - 6 scolded
 - 7 opinions
 - 8 depressing
 - 9 faithful
 - 10 sick

PRONUNCIATION

- 8**
- 1 synonym

Progress Test Files 1–3 Answer Key

- 2 turnover
- 3 value
- 4 trousers
- 5 enormous
- 6 screech
- 7 joke
- 8 mortgage
- 9 profession
- 10 experience

- 9
- 1 dominant
 - 2 adhere
 - 3 transcribe
 - 4 register
 - 5 misery
 - 6 compete
 - 7 gadget
 - 8 nicknamed
 - 9 haunting
 - 10 awkward

Reading and Writing

READING

- 1
- 1 B
 - 2 A
 - 3 B
 - 4 B
 - 5 C
 - 6 A
 - 7 C
 - 8 A
 - 9 B
 - 10 C

- 2
- 1 C
 - 2 A
 - 3 G
 - 4 F
 - 5 B

WHO WANTS TO BE RICH?

A It's very common for people to say 'Money doesn't bring you happiness'. (1) They point to the very public problems of wealthy people and the evident misery some of them have. Money, the theory goes, makes them superficial and selfish, their lives

Progress Test Files 1–3 Answer Key

often fall apart, and they miss out on the simple pleasures of life. Money is their top priority and because of this, they've got it all wrong.

B Attitudes to the rich are also characterized by hatred. Typical images of wealthy people are that they are greedy, cruel people who've got what they've got by exploiting or abusing other people. The rich are often seen as bad characters whose pursuit of wealth has led them to treat good people with brutal force and whose behaviour has been either morally questionable or completely corrupt. (2) They can't have got that rich by honourable methods, the thinking goes, they must have done something truly inexcusable.

C Connected with this is a common belief that some of the rich, especially the young ones, don't deserve their wealth. Some of them are spoilt brats, benefiting from the wealth of their parents and living empty lives of laziness and luxury, with nothing between their ears. Their lives have been all reward and no effort. And then there are the people in sport and the arts whose immense earnings are well-publicized. (3) Surely, people say, no one can be worth such sums. It's outrageous that these people get such high incomes for doing what they do.

D Even when people aren't actually rich by most conventional definitions of the word, their lifestyles attract criticism from others. There is among many people a dislike of what they regard as a materialistic attitude to life. When they see people with big houses, luxury cars, and a mass of the top-of-the-range gadgets, they dismiss them as empty, foolish people with the wrong priorities in life. (4) How can they afford these things? Have they got heavily in debt to fund this lifestyle? (5) If so, how silly they are. Of course, some of this feeling can be attributed to envy. Most people have no direct contact with the truly rich, seeing them only via the media, but materialistic people are all around. The truly rich are considered to belong almost to another species, but the materialistic ones might well be in your neighbourhood.

E So there's a fairly common belief that money is 'a bad thing', or at any rate, having lots of it. But I think that in this envy and dislike of the rich, people are missing the point. (6) Money's a big factor in just about everyone's life. It's often the only reason they get up and go to work. If you haven't got it, life is very difficult. You need to get it for food, clothes and shelter, for yourself and maybe others. It's the main reason why most people work – not for pleasure but to provide the necessities of life. What they are effectively doing is exchanging their time for money.

F And this brings us to the key point about wealth. (7) It buys freedom, it buys time. If you're rich, you don't have to exchange your time for money, you don't have to give so much time to an employer or dedicate all that time to the business of earning a living. You can use your time in any way you please, in ways that bring you some fulfilment. If you're wealthy, you don't have to be materialistic, nor do you have to be superficial and selfish. These are not iron rules. Disliking the rich because of what you read or learn about some of them in the media results from only a partial view of what having wealth means. Getting annoyed with materialistic people is based on a narrow view of what money brings. Some people squander wealth, some people don't deserve it, some people want it for reasons you might take a dim view of. But the fact is, (8) wealth provides opportunities for the kind of life you would like to have.

Progress Test Files 1–3 Answer Key

G So don't knock it. Instead, think of ways you might be able to attain it. Focus on the goal of getting yourself into a position where you're no longer trading your time for money. (9) Take control of your own time by becoming independently wealthy. You might say that's easier said than done. Well, you might be right, but have you tried yet?

WRITING

Student's own answers.

Task completion: The task is fully completed and the answer easy to understand.

(4 marks)

Grammar: The student uses appropriate structures to achieve the task. Minor errors do not obscure the meaning. (3 marks)

Vocabulary: The student uses a sufficient range of words and phrases to communicate the message clearly. (3 marks)

Listening and Speaking

LISTENING

- 1 1 E
2 A
3 G
4 H
5 C

- 2 1 B
2 A
3 A
4 C
5 B

SPEAKING

Interactive communication and oral production: The student communicates effectively with his / her partner, asking and answering simple questions, and where necessary initiating conversation, and responding. The student uses appropriate strategies to complete the task successfully. (10 marks)

Grammar and Vocabulary: The student uses a sufficient range of vocabulary and structure to communicate clearly. Minor occasional errors do not impede communication. (5 marks)

Pronunciation: The student's intonation, stress, and articulation of sounds make the message clear and comprehensible. (5 marks)

PROGRESS TEST FILES 1-3

Listening 1

Speaker 1 Yeah, my car's got a satnav system in it, it's the first car I've ever owned that's got one of those. I didn't use it much at first, preferred to carry on working out routes using map books as I'd always done. I didn't fancy the idea of some robotic voice talking to me while I was driving along, and I'd read in the papers that they can be rather unreliable. Then, I was taking a pretty complicated trip across a city I'd never been to and I thought it was a good opportunity to give it a try. I got a mate who swears by his to show me how to use it, and it was great. Now I use it for every trip when I don't know exactly where I'm going and it makes me wonder how I ever managed before I had it. I wouldn't dream of fiddling about with map books and all that now and I've got no idea how I ever managed before I got it. I rely on it completely.

Speaker 2 I recently bought the very latest in mobile phone technology – my previous phone was pretty old and hopelessly outdated. This one's got all the very latest features – at least until they bring out even more sophisticated ones and it gets outdated itself! It's great and it's really useful to me in all sorts of ways. It took me ages to work out how to use some of the features – actually I had to get the kids to help me out with some of that, they know a lot more about that sort of thing than me. And of course, they want me to get them the same kind of phone now, and they're always moaning about how 'rubbish' the phones they've got are. They were perfectly happy with them before I got mine. Every time they go on at me to get them new phones, I regret getting it, it's causing all sorts of arguments. So although I really like it, in some ways it would have been better if I'd stuck with the 'rubbish' one I had before.

Speaker 3 I recently got an in-car DVD player so that the kids could watch films while we're on long journeys. It cost quite a bit, but I thought it would keep them quiet while I'm driving. Well, of course, when I first got it, they were thrilled and couldn't wait to get in the car. I thought the novelty value might wear off after a while, but far from it. So it's been a great hit with them, but it hasn't actually had the effect on journeys I'd been expecting it to have. Before I got it, they used to get bored very quickly and shout and argue and mess about all the time, which made long journeys very stressful. Now, they're not bored, quite the opposite, but there's just as much noise, if not more. They like all these noisy films and they talk and shout all the way through them about what's happening in them. And they keep telling me what's just happened even though I can't actually see the things. So I'm just as stressed out in the driver's seat as I was before. But they have a great time, so I'm glad I got it.

Speaker 4 I got a laptop a little while back, so that I could do some work when I was out and about, and go on the Internet wherever I am. I must say I hadn't realized how quickly the batteries run out and that often catches me unawares and without a supply to put into the thing to keep it going. So sometimes I'm in the middle of something and I can't complete it, which is very annoying. I know this is basically my fault for not being well prepared enough, but it always amazes me how quickly the power goes. On the plus side, though, it has been very useful and I've got a fair amount of use out of it. It's enabled me to get things done that I otherwise wouldn't have found the time to do. The kids always want to borrow it, of course, but even though they moan I've made it clear it's off limits to them.

Speaker 5 I got a really good hand-held games console a few months back – I'd always wanted to get one and finally I treated myself to it. Of course, these things are highly addictive and I must admit I spent rather too much time using it when I first got it. But I'm not someone who gets addicted to that kind of thing, much as I enjoy playing the games, and after a while I found that I wasn't playing on it quite so often or for so long. I guess the novelty wore off a bit, plus other people in my family were telling me I was on it too much. So I just pick it up and put it down from time to time now. I do find it very relaxing actually but I'm not going over the top with it now. As a result, the kids have found they're getting more chance to use it, which of course pleases them a lot. They've started to talk as if it belongs to them, which wasn't my intention at all!

PROGRESS TEST FILES 1-3

Listening 2

What's the connection between language and sport? You might not think there's any link between language skills and sport, but some new research shows that there is. And this link exists whether you take part in sports or simply watch them as a fan.

The research was carried out with hockey players, fans of that sport, and people who'd never seen or played it. They all listened to a set of sentences about the sport, involving things such as players shooting and making saves. They also listened to sentences about everyday activities, such as ringing doorbells or sweeping floors with brooms. While they listened to the sentences, their brain activity was examined using a technique called 'Magnetic Resonance Imaging', involving a scanner. When they had listened to the sentences, they did a series of tests designed to measure their comprehension of the sentences.

The results of these tests showed that all the subjects understood the language of everyday activities well. The hockey players and fans were significantly better at understanding the hockey-related language than the people who had never seen or played it and therefore knew little or nothing about it. Of course, this isn't surprising.

It's what the brain scans showed that reveals the link between language and sport. When the players and fans were listening to the sentences about their sport, a part of the brain that is usually associated with planning and controlling actions became activated. Even though they were not actually planning any action when they were listening to the sentences, this part of the brain became very active. And the increased activity in that part of the brain helped them to understand the language connected with the sport.

The conclusion is that the parts of the brain usually involved in playing sports are also used for understanding the language of sport. And you don't need to be a player for this to be true, as it's also the case for fans. The parts of the brain that are active when people are playing or watching a sport are also active when people are listening to the language of the sport.

So the experience of playing or watching sport has an effect on your ability to understand language associated with it. This could have some impact on approaches to language learning. It shows that if people are engaged in an activity, the same part of the brain that they use for engaging in that activity is used for understanding language related to it.

So next time you're kicking a ball in the park, or watching a game on TV, remember: you're also developing your language skills.