

Unit 1

CD 1.01

1

Marty? It's Kristen. I guess you're busy, so I'll just leave you a message and maybe text you later. Erm, about Jack's birthday ... I met up with Jack and some other friends for coffee yesterday, and it seems Jack already suspects that something is up. He mentioned that his mum was putting together a guest list of some kind, but she wouldn't tell him what it was for. And since his birthday is so soon, I'm afraid he may have worked out what the plan is. Anyhow, I'd love to come, and my sister would too, so you can plan on us turning up around 7:30. It'll be great to catch up over dinner and maybe make a night of it after the main party is over. See you soon!

2

Hey, it's Lucy. It's so nice of you to get in touch! I'd love to catch up with you and the others, but I'm so busy right now that I'm not sure when I can get away. The thing is I'm helping my mum out in her shop, and we're working all sorts of hours, what with the holidays coming up and all. Look, I'll do my best to keep Friday afternoon and evening free, and if you can get it all organised, I'll do everything I can to be there. I'm really looking forward to seeing everyone again and having a good chat. Will be waiting for your call!

3

Hello, Jenny. It's your cousin David. I know it's been ages since we last saw each other, but I thought I'd ring you about the reunion. First off, I think it's amazing that you're willing to throw a big do like this. Different family members have been talking about doing something similar for ages, but nobody's been ambitious enough to actually attempt it! Second thing, I've been putting together a family history, so I'm in touch with quite a few members of the extended family. That means I'd probably be the best person to put together a guest list and maybe even send out invitations, if you'd like. Give me a ring soon and we can discuss it in more detail. Oh, and thanks again for getting this started!

CD 1.02

1

I've never been so surprised in my life! My sister took me out shopping for things for the baby's nursery, and when we got back to her house, the place was packed with our friends and relatives. They'd put up decorations, and there were masses of gifts. I have to say, with me not working during my pregnancy, all the baby clothes, nappies and gift cards are going to come in *very* useful. I'm embarrassed to say that I burst into tears a couple of times during the party, but it's just because I was so surprised and so happy!

2

I really thought that hiring a professional to plan the whole event was a great idea, but I have to admit I was totally mistaken. You see, we decided to hire a friend of a friend, who was just starting out, and, well ... let's just say that it wasn't perfect. We didn't get the venue we wanted because she'd waited too long to make the booking, the food at the reception was awful, the cars we'd hired never turned up ... and on and on. Still, we did manage to get married, and we had a fairly enjoyable time, even though there were so many problems.

3

I've never felt so proud in my entire life, I have to say! I'm the first in our family to get a degree, so that made it feel pretty unique. And then, during the ceremony, I was thinking back and realised how hard I'd worked, not just at my studies but also in my part-time job – and that made my achievement even more meaningful. Of course having my family there made it really special, and so did sharing the ceremony with all the friends I'd made during my three years there. The party afterwards was outstanding as well. All in all, it was an amazing day!

4

I'll admit I never dreamed we'd make it this far. I mean to say, fifty years of marriage is definitely something to celebrate, and ours has been a very happy one for the most part. Our grandkids organised the celebration, and it was truly an evening to remember. Everything was designed to look like the year we got married – even the music took us right back to our first days together! It made us very nostalgic – but in a good way. I had heard that our eldest grandson and his family weren't going to make it since they live in

Australia, so you can imagine how surprised and thrilled I was when they walked into the room just after the celebration started. Yes, it was a wonderful evening ... really unforgettable!

CD 1.03

The greetings card industry is an enormous, multi-billion dollar industry, with cards produced for every possible occasion. But how long has it been going, and when did it first start? You might hazard a guess at a hundred years or so, but you would be very wrong! The first cards were exchanged many centuries ago. The ancient Chinese gave cards at New Year, and the early Egyptians sent greetings on papyrus scrolls. Clearly, things have changed somewhat since then! Greetings cards as we know them first appeared in Europe in the 1400s, but initially they were expensive and handmade. This tradition became more affordable a few centuries later with developments in printing and the introduction of the postage stamp in 1840. It seems that the first published Christmas card in Europe was sent by Henry Cole, who specifically commissioned an artist to design and print copies of a card for his friends and family in 1843. Valentine cards began being printed regularly in the US in 1849, and then the whole greetings card industry took off in Boston, USA, in 1856 with the efforts of a German immigrant named Louis Prang, who developed the process of reproducing copies of great paintings for his cards. The beginning of the 20th century saw a new type of card, in which the wishes being sent to the recipient – often in the form of a short poem – became just as important as the picture. By the 1950s, humorous cards with funny pictures and short punch lines gained in popularity. Towards the end of the last century, 'non-occasion' cards – where a card is not related to a specific holiday or event – were introduced, and this market continues to grow today. The latest change in the greetings card owes everything to new technology, and E-cards are rapidly becoming an easy and effective way to send a word of encouragement or congratulations.

CD 1.04

Maria Hey Karl! I haven't seen you lately. What have you been up to?

Karl Oh, hi Maria! I've been helping my mother get ready for our family New Year celebration all week. We celebrated at my grandparents' house until they moved into a small flat, but we've hosted the celebration at our place since then.

Maria That sounds like a lot of work! Have you finished everything yet?

Karl Well, I've been helping all week. Yesterday, I sent out the invitations. This morning, I've been putting up the decorations – I've decorated three rooms so far. But I haven't shopped for the food yet.

Maria I'm sure it will be fantastic! I've always loved celebrating New Year's Eve, but I don't have anywhere to go this year.

Karl Well, why not come to our place? You've already met my family, and they'd love to have you!

CD 1.05

Laurie I wonder what's happened to Cynthia. She said she'd meet us at three and it's already quarter past!

Sam She must have forgotten about our appointment. She may not have made a note of it in her phone. She can't have stood us up on purpose! That isn't like her at all.

Laurie No, it isn't. She must be doing something else, and our meeting just slipped her mind.

Sam She could be at the dance school. I remember she said they needed to work on some costumes. Or she might be shopping with her mum.

Laurie Yes, that must be the case. It's strange that she hasn't answered any of my texts, though. I'm afraid that something bad might have happened.

Sam No, I'm sure everything's fine. Oh, look! She's just sent me a text. She missed the bus, that's all!

CD 1.06

This photo shows a young man and a young woman who are sitting together. It looks as if the photo was taken in a café. The setting seems to be very light and clean-looking, with lots of windows and mirrors. On the table, there are a couple of electronic devices, which must belong to the people. Judging from their appearance, I would say that the young people are in their early twenties, and I would guess that they are

students. The young man is looking at his watch as if he is checking the time, and he appears fairly calm. The young woman looks extremely worried, and I imagine she's calling someone who is not answering their phone. I can understand the frustration of the girl in the picture because I know what it feels like when friends don't turn up when we plan to meet. I really dislike being stood up, and I think that is what may have happened here.

CD 1.07

1

The young woman seems quite concerned because she cares about her friend and is worried that something bad may have happened. I imagine that the friend who hasn't turned up may have been dealing with a problem he wanted to discuss with the two friends. He might have been upset about a relationship, or he could be having trouble with his studies.

2

Personally, I don't seem to get really upset in situations like this. It seems to me that you have to be pretty flexible when it comes to young people and their schedules. We're all really busy, and things are bound to come up that prevent us from meeting our friends when we plan to. It doesn't seem like a big deal to me.

3

Actually, a friend of mine stood me up just last week. We were meeting at a café. I was reading and wasn't really paying attention to the time, but when I eventually looked at my phone I saw that he was half an hour late. It seemed a bit strange to me because he's usually on time, so I gave him a ring to make sure everything was OK. He'd completely forgotten! It was during exams, so I guess it shouldn't surprise me. We all get a bit absent-minded when we're under stress.

CD 1.08

1

Did Tom turn up in the end?

2

I feel so grateful for all you've done for him.

3

Why didn't he ring?

4

What's he like?

Unit 2

CD 1.09

Interviewer So, Jeremy, how does it feel to be retiring from professional tennis after such a long career?

Man Well, I certainly have some very mixed feelings about it. You know that I started competing when I was just sixteen, and after a number of early victories a lot of people were saying that I was going to be the next big tennis star. In fact, I was almost undefeated during my first year of competing, and I was neck and neck with some of the greatest players at that time. But for reasons I can't really explain, my winning streak didn't last long. I managed to stay in the top forty or so players in the world for most of my career, but I was always coming in second or lower in the big tournaments. I just couldn't get past the thing which was preventing me from becoming an international champion. But now that I'm retiring, I look back on my tennis career and I realise how lucky I am. I mean, millions of kids learn to play tennis, and I'm sure that many of them dream of competing in big-time tournaments, but very few of them ever get past school level competitions. Maybe I wasn't a champion or a big celebrity, but I worked very hard, I made a living from playing a game I love to play, and I got to compete against some of the greatest players in the world. Not many people can say that, and so I'm really very grateful, and I'm looking forward to sharing my skills with some of the best students in the country.

CD 1.10

Interviewer Today in the studio, we have a young athlete, Lucy Wilson, who competes in a team sport that you may never have heard of: sepak takraw. Welcome, Lucy.

Lucy Thanks for inviting me!

Interviewer So, I had to do some research into the sport to prepare for our interview, and I found out that it's quite popular in Asia, but almost unknown in the West. What made you take up a sport that virtually no one here even knows about?

Lucy Well, it's really pretty simple. My parents worked in Singapore for a few years. I was about twelve when we moved there and fifteen when we came back. I've always loved sports and competitions of all kinds, and I especially enjoyed volleyball and basketball – both playing and watching on TV. I didn't want to give up sports, obviously, so went to a gym to see what was on offer, and I saw these girls playing sepak takraw. I had no idea what it was, of course. It looked like a completely crazy kind of volleyball and I was fascinated, so I decided to find out all about it and to learn how to play myself.

Interviewer Can you explain how the game works? I'm assuming that most of our listeners will never have heard of it.

Lucy Well, it's really very similar to volleyball, which I played in the UK, but imagine a volleyball game where you aren't allowed to touch the ball with your hands or arms. It's all done with the feet and legs. There are three players, on the court for each team during a set, plus there are two backup players in case a player needs to be replaced during a set. The net is just like for volleyball or badminton. The point is to get the ball to hit the ground on the other team's side of the court. Each team can touch the ball three times before getting it over the net. The first team to get 21 points is the winner of the game. If the score is 20 to 21, it's considered a tie game and so the play has to go on.

Interviewer So in theory, it should be pretty familiar to western fans. I have to say, though, it looks *VERY* demanding physically – much more so than volleyball. I watched some video clips and saw players completely upside down in the air – almost like parkour runners or snowboarders.

Lucy Yeah, there is some crossover in the skills you need. And it IS pretty demanding. I was lucky that I'd done martial arts and gymnastics before – they helped a lot.

Interviewer So what do you have to do to get ready to play? I'm sure it's not a sport where you can just jump in unprepared.

Lucy No, not at all. It's very easy to get injured playing sepak takraw, and even well prepared players have to drop out of a game sometimes, so it's very important to warm up. You have to stretch out your muscles very carefully before you play, and you need to stretch and cool down after the game as well. All that jumping and kicking can make your muscles very tense.

Interviewer To anyone who's interested in taking up this sport, what would you suggest as preparation?

Lucy As I said, I was quite lucky because I had taken part in skateboarding, gymnastics and martial arts before I got into sepak takraw, and all of those are quite good preparation.

Interviewer And do you think this sport will catch on in the UK?

Lucy You know, it's already becoming better known. There are a few active groups, and there are plans to put together a national team. So I'm really optimistic that it will become just as popular as football someday!

CD 1.11

Hi, everyone. This is Devin Lawson, and you're listening to my weekly podcast, 'What Devin Thinks.' I've been thinking about sports and competition lately, and about how important winning and losing are to the majority of people who take part in or follow sports. I'm not a particularly athletic sort of person or much of a sports fan, I admit – but I really enjoy certain physical activities like climbing and skateboarding, and I've even started learning how to do parkour. Now if you think about it, none of these are really *competitive* sports in the true sense of the word, but instead they focus on individual achievement. There are normally no teams or scorekeepers, and nobody wins or loses. Instead, these are activities where the only competition is against *yourself*, and the only way you win is if you manage to do something you couldn't do before. I know that a lot of professional athletes claim that the only competitor they really think about is themselves and that the fight is always to get better than they were before. Well, maybe they are being sincere, but it must be difficult to maintain that attitude when the public is judging them by their wins and losses. The truth is, I'm not sure if that kind of competitiveness is a good thing or not. I just want to say that

I don't think we should ONLY judge success and failure by how high someone's exam marks are or how many times their team wins a football match or a basketball game. Instead, I believe that we should learn to appreciate the attempt to always improve at whatever our chosen pursuit is. I believe that success should only be measured by how much we want to get better, and that we should see failure as one step towards success.

Thanks for listening, and let me know what you think!

CD 1.12

Figure-skater Kristen Lane was practicing, as usual, early yesterday morning when she heard the news that the National Skating Committee had chosen her to be on the national team. 'I hadn't been expecting to hear anything for days,' the 16-year-old skater said. 'So I was totally surprised. I actually stopped skating for a while and sat down to take in the news.' Kristen was a late starter by the standards of the figure skating world. 'I had never skated at all before I turned ten years old,' she explains. 'Then my mum took some friends and me to an ice rink for a birthday treat, and I was instantly hooked! I worked really hard to catch up with the other students. But when I wanted to compete at the age of thirteen, my teachers told me I hadn't been skating long enough. They thought I would be too nervous and have problems.' After Kristen convinced her teachers to let her enter one competition, she worked harder than ever. And to everyone's surprise, she won a medal. 'I had been practising every day for about five hours, morning and evening, just because I didn't want to embarrass myself or my teachers. I knew I was good, but it hadn't occurred to me that I might win anything!'

CD 1.13

Kim Do you still run every morning? I'm looking for someone to go running with, and I thought maybe we could go together.

David I used to run every morning, and I would go to the gym or the pool a couple of times a week too. But now, I run twice a week and I go to the gym the other days.

Kim What made you change your routine?

David Well, when I used to run every day, I was always having problems with my knees and ankles. Now that I run less, I haven't had much trouble at all. Why are you suddenly interested in running? You didn't use to exercise at all. In fact, you're always complaining about how boring it is.

Kim I know. I used to think it was a waste of time. But my brother is planning to run in a marathon, so I've decided that I want to take part too.

David Well, you can certainly join me on the mornings when I go running. It'll be fun!

CD 1.14

Girl So, we're here to discuss the ideas for the annual sports day. Some students are saying that we should change the focus of the day, so that it's more about displaying the students' special skills. How do you feel about that?

Boy Can you explain what you mean by special skills?

Girl For example, some kids don't like contact sports, but they're good at skateboarding, hip hop dancing or chess. Wouldn't it be great if they could show off those skills?

Boy I admit there are a lot of activities students are good at. I'm just worried that we'll lose the spirit of the day if we make too many changes.

Girl I'm not sure I agree – a lot of students feel left out. What about if we keep most of the traditional activities, but also add some new ones?

Boy That's an excellent idea! And I think that we should get ideas from the students themselves about what activities they'd like to do.

Girl OK, we're in agreement about that. What about organising the event? Normally, it's a group of teachers plus a few students who plan and organise everything, but I'd like to see more students get involved. What do you think?

Boy That might work. We could assign different students to be in charge of advertising, setting up the venues, refreshments and so on. They can report to the teachers, but the teachers will have less to do.

Girl True. What about giving prizes? I'm wondering if we could just skip that part of it.

Boy Oh no, I can't go along with that. I'm with you, though, if you mean that just giving out cups or medals is silly. I think we should give gift cards, for example, so that students get something useful.

Girl That would be great! Let's see how much money we can get together. So, is there anything else? Oh, right! We need to decide how to promote the event. There was confusion about dates and times last year, so we need to do a better job.

Boy Yeah, I know. We need to do a better job with promotion. I'm wondering if we could put an article about it on the school website – everyone is bound to see it.

Girl That should work. We can also print a flyer to send home with the students. That way, no one will be confused.

CD 1.15

A So, we're agreed that we want to organise an arts day for our high school. When do you think we should put it on?

B I would think that the end of the term is a good time. I'd imagine that everyone will be less busy studying, so they'll have more time to prepare their projects.

A I'm not sure I agree. Wouldn't it be better to do it as far from exam time as possible?

B Actually, I think you might be right. What would you think of doing it during the second week of the winter term?

A That's a great idea! So, we need to decide on a location. I was thinking that the gymnasium would be a good place.

B I'm not sure I agree. I'd have thought that it would be pretty booked up for sports practice and events.

A Yeah, you're probably right about that. I'd imagine we could use the classrooms in the arts wing of the school. I don't think anybody would object!

B Yes, that's a good plan. OK, one more thing for now. How would you prefer to let parents and other students know about it?

A Well, I'd like to use as many means as possible. The school newspaper, the school website and also flyers and posters would all be good options.

B I'm with you there. I think we could also get the word out on local radio.

A That sounds a bit ambitious! Could you explain how you'd be able to do that?

B I have a cousin who works at the local radio station. They're always interested in local stories, and I'm sure he could interest them in this.

A Great! OK, if you wouldn't mind typing up our ideas, we can present them to the faculty and go from there.