



## Pre-sessional English Language Course

# Listening & Note-taking Examination

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2009  
9.30 – 11.30

**Candidate Number:**

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# Booklet 1

### Instructions:

After the introduction, you will have 10 minutes to read through this document. During the lecture, you should complete the questions according to the instructions given. After the lecture you will have 30 minutes to complete and check your answers.

The examination is divided into three sections:

**Introduction:** (no task)

**Section 1:** answer questions in this booklet as you listen

**Section 2:** take notes in this booklet and then answer the questions in Booklet 2 using your notes. Booklet 2 will be handed out after the lecture

	Booklet 1	Booklet 2	Total
1 <sup>st</sup> Marker	/30	/30	/30
2 <sup>nd</sup> Marker	/30	/30	/30

1 <sup>st</sup> Marker's initials
2 <sup>nd</sup> Marker's initials

In this section of the exam you may need to write more than one word for some of the answers.

Answer all the questions

You do not need to write the exact words from the lecture, but the meaning of your answer must be the same as the meaning of the words in the lecture.

## Inequality in the Modern World

### The Material World

1. According to the lecturer, participation in community life nowadays is:

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. greater than in the past
- b. less than in the past
- c. the same as in the past

(1)

2. List three ways in which people might seek comfort in the developed world, according to the lecturer.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

(3)

3. Which of the following best summarises the lecturer's view of modern society?

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. Materially and emotionally comfortable
- b. Materially and emotionally uncomfortable
- c. Materially comfortable but emotionally uncomfortable
- d. Materially uncomfortable but emotionally comfortable

(1)

4. What was the title of the report published by the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation?

Yearning for \_\_\_\_\_

(1)

5. The above report concluded that many Americans were interested in:

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. wealth
- b. material gain
- c. community and family

(1)

6. The book *The Spirit Level* argues that \_\_\_\_\_ have more social problems.

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. poor countries
- b. rich countries
- c. equal countries
- d. unequal countries

(1)

7. The lecturer would like to see less focus on material wellbeing and more focus on the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ wellbeing of society.

(2)

## The Limitations of Economic Growth

8. Which two indicators of quality of life does the lecturer refer to?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

(2)

9. Which of the two people below is more likely to be poor?

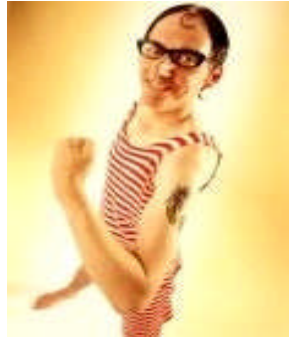
**Circle the correct answer**

**Year: 2009**

a.



b.

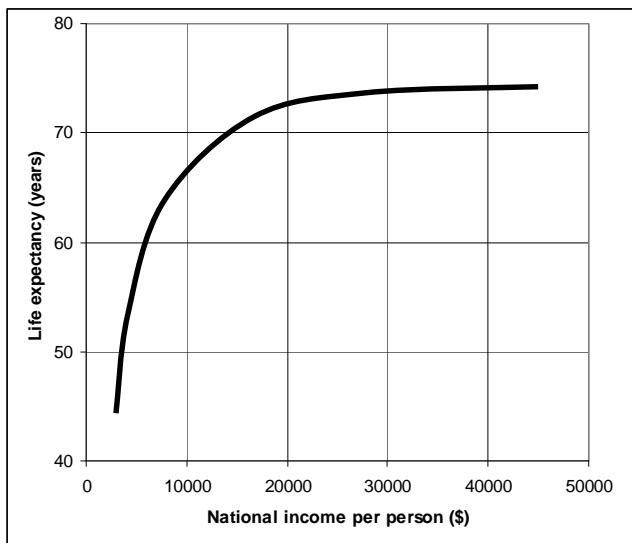


(1)

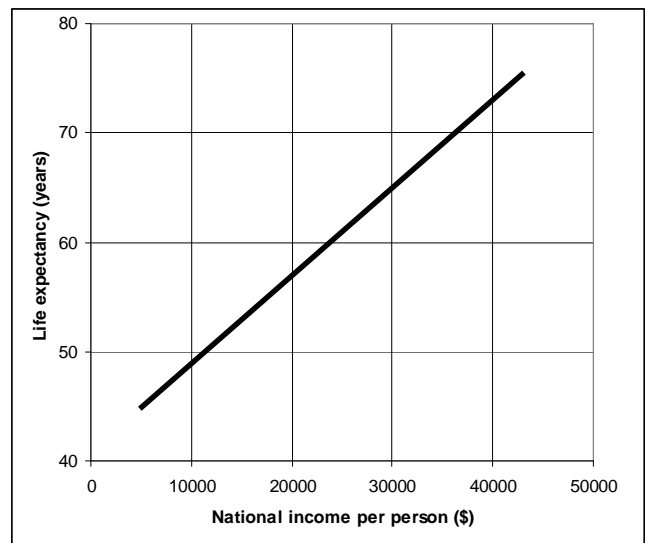
10. Which of the following graphs best represents the findings of Wilkinson and Pickett regarding life expectancy?

**Circle the correct answer**

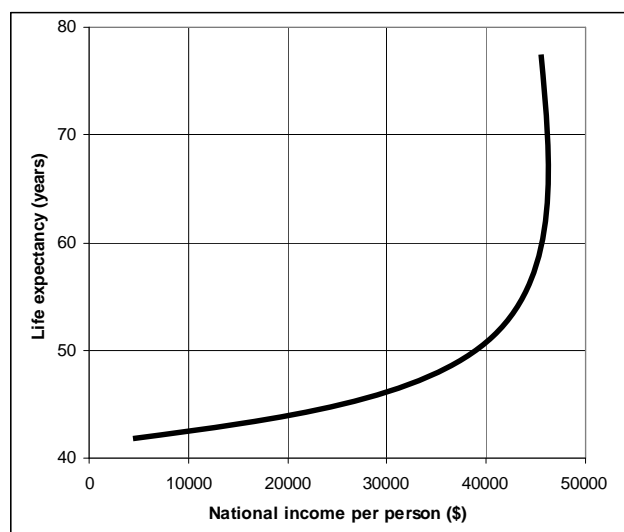
A.



B.



C.



(1)

11. Which of the following best describes life expectancy in the richest countries?

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. It has stopped rising
- b. It continues to rise slowly
- c. It has started falling

(1)

12. New Zealand is an example of a country which is poorer than the USA...

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. ...and has a shorter life expectancy
- b. ...but has a similar life expectancy
- c. ...but has a longer life expectancy

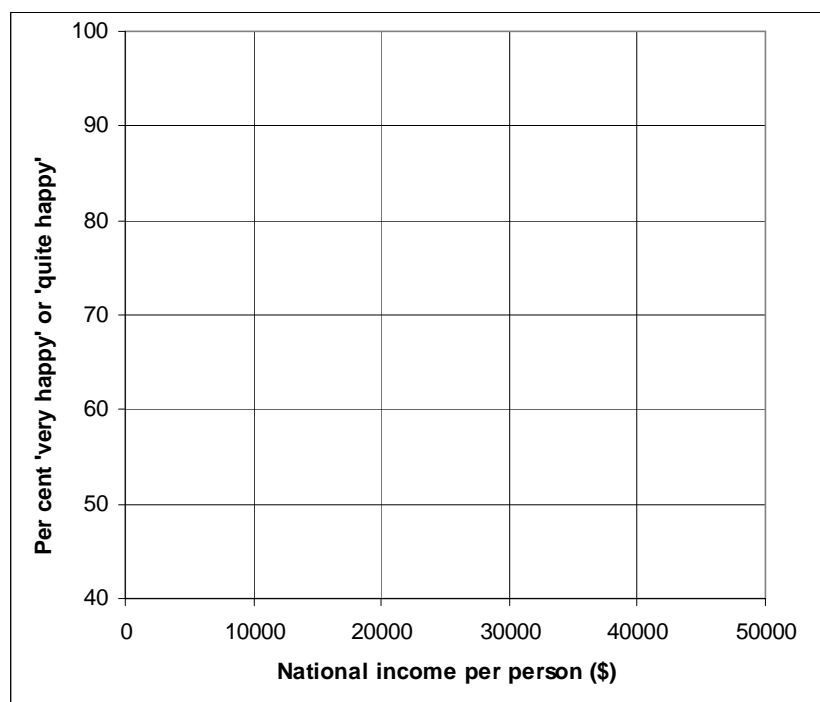
(1)

13. In which year was Richard Layard's book published?

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(1)

14. Draw a line on the graph below to represent Richard Layard's findings.



(1)

## Income Differences Within and Between Countries

15. According to the lecturer, whose health is most affected by income?

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. Rich people's
- b. Poor people's
- c. Everybody's

(1)

16. According to the lecturer, which of the following is most important for people's health?

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. Their level of satisfaction with their income
- b. The average income of the country they live in
- c. Their individual income in relation to others in the country

(1)

## Social Problems in Unequal Societies

17. Wilkinson and Pickett compiled a list of how many of the world's richest countries?

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18. Put the following countries in order according to how equal their societies are, starting with the most equal.

(1)

<u>Country</u>	<u>Order</u>
Portugal	_____
Norway	_____
Japan	<u><b>e.g. 1</b></u>
Finland	_____
USA	_____

(2)

19. Identify two of the social problems the researchers collected data on.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

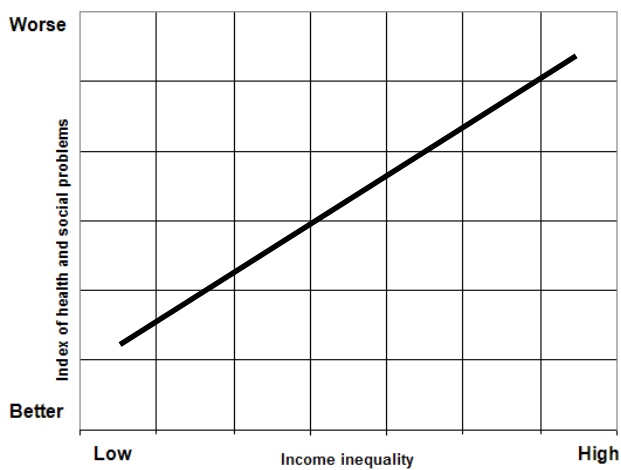
b. \_\_\_\_\_

(2)

20. Which of the following graphs best represents the relationship between health and social problems and income inequality?

**Circle the correct answer**

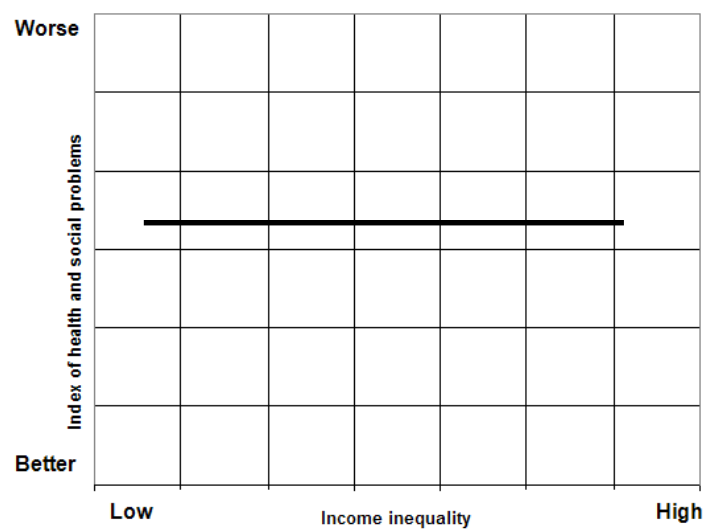
A.



B.



C.



(1)

21. What percentage of poor Americans:

a. have air conditioning? \_\_\_\_\_%

b. own a car or truck? \_\_\_\_\_%

c. have a computer, dishwasher or second car? \_\_\_\_\_%

(3)

22. Wilkinson and Pickett refer to a man who:

**Circle the correct answer**

a. could not afford to eat any food

b. spent money on clothes instead of food

c. spent money on a telephone instead of food

(1)

**Total marks for Section 1 = 30**

*This is the end of the first part of the exam. During the next part of the exam you must make your own notes. You will need these notes to answer a series of questions that will be given to you after the lecture has finished.*



## Notes











## Pre-sessional English Language Course

# Listening & Note-taking Examination

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2009  
9.30 – 11.30

Write your Candidate Number again here:

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Booklet 2

**Instructions for questions on note-taking section:**

Refer back to the notes that you made during the second part of the lecture in order to answer these questions.

Answer ALL the questions by writing your answers on this paper.

You have 30 minutes to complete this final section of the listening and note-taking examination and to check answers in Booklet 1

## How Inequality Affects Us

1. In order to understand why unequal societies have more problems, we have to start looking at the \_\_\_\_\_ within those societies.

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. problems
- b. individuals
- c. rich people
- d. poor people

(1)

## Anxiety & Self Esteem

2. At the end of the 1990s, the average college student in the USA was:

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. 85% more anxious than the average person in the 1950s
- b. 85% more likely to be anxious than the average person in the 1950s
- c. more anxious than 85% of people in the 1950s
- d. more anxious than 85% of people in the 1990s

(1)

3. In the 1980s, what proportion of teenagers agreed with the statement: 'I am an important person'?

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. 12%
- b. 50%
- c. 80%
- d. 100%

(1)

## The Effects of Stress

4. What is the name of the stress hormone the lecturer refers to?

\_\_\_\_\_

(1)

5. Which four of the following factors were mentioned in relation to the 'fight or flight' response?

**Circle the four correct answers**

- a. Heart works harder
- b. Hearing becomes more sensitive
- c. Lungs work harder
- d. Blood vessels tighten
- e. Energy burns faster
- f. Muscles become stronger
- g. Eyesight becomes sharper

(4)

6. Psychologists from the University of California collected the findings of how many experiments testing stress?

\_\_\_\_\_

(1)

7. The highest levels of stress were produced as a result of a

\_\_\_\_\_ threat.

(2)

8. According to the lecturer, which three of the following can result from long-term stress?

**Circle the three correct answers**

- a. We lose our appetite
- b. Our hips and thighs get fatter
- c. We are more likely to get depressed
- d. Our bodies become hotter
- e. We can become violent
- f. We trust people less

(3)



9. Which English newspaper did the lecturer refer to?

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. The Times
- b. The Guardian
- c. The Independent
- d. The Telegraph

(1)

10. What percentage of the population trusts their fellow citizens in:

- a. Sweden? \_\_\_\_\_ %
- b. Portugal? \_\_\_\_\_ %

(2)

**Status**

11. Give two examples of what the lecturer meant by 'the outward signs of success or failure'.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_

(2)

12. Why might advertisers be contributing to the levels of violence in society?

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. Because they make people feel inferior
- b. Because they show self-confident violent people
- c. Because people want to steal designer products

(1)

**Self Promotion Replaces Modesty**

13. In 1997, an article relating to the way people present themselves was published in which journal?

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. Journal of Private and Social Psychology
- b. Journal of Personal and Social Psychology
- c. Journal of Social and Personal Psychology
- d. Journal of Personal and Private Psychology

(1)

14. Which two countries, in addition to Japan, were given as examples of cultures in which people present themselves more modestly than in the United States?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

(2)

**Conclusion**

15. The Greek philosopher Plato said that:

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. There should be 5 times more rich people than poor people
- b. There should be 5 times more poor people than rich people
- c. The richest should earn at least 5 times more than the poorest
- d. The richest should not earn more than 5 times more than the poorest

(1)

16. Wilkinson and Pickett suggest that the British government would have to increase two things to achieve the same level of equality as Japan. What are they?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

(2)

17. According to Wilkinson and Pickett, if Britain became as equal as the most equal developed countries...

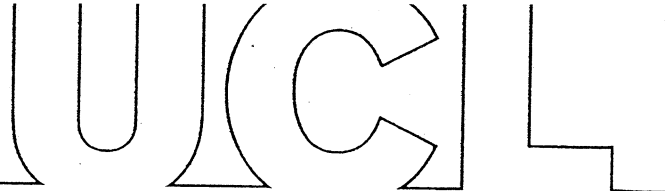
Fill the gaps.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ would rise by two thirds
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ would fall by more than half
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ would fall by a third
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ would fall by 75%

(4)

***Total marks for Section 2 = 30***

KEY



## Pre-sessional English Language Course

# Listening & Note-taking Examination

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# Booklet 1

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The examination is divided into three sections:

- Introduction:** (no task)  
**Section 1:** answer questions in this booklet as you listen  
**Section 2:** take notes in this booklet and then answer the questions in Booklet 2 using your notes. Booklet 2 will be handed out after the lecture

	Booklet 1	Booklet 2	Total
1 <sup>st</sup> Marker	/30	/30	/30
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1 <sup>st</sup> Marker's initials
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Answer all the questions

You do not need to write the exact words from the lecture, but the meaning of your answer must be the same as the meaning of the words in the lecture.

## Inequality in the Modern World

### The Material World

1. According to the lecturer, participation in community life nowadays is:

Circle the correct answer

- a. greater than in the past
- b. less than in the past
- c. the same as in the past

(1)

2. List three ways in which people might seek comfort in the developed world, according to the lecturer.

a. • over-eating (1)

eating alone (0)  
shopping (0)

b. • obsessive shopping (1)

c. • drinking (1) • drug taking (1)

(3)

3. Which of the following best summarises the lecturer's view of modern society?

Circle the correct answer

- a. Materially and emotionally comfortable
- b. Materially and emotionally uncomfortable
- c. Materially comfortable but emotionally uncomfortable
- d. Materially uncomfortable but emotionally comfortable

(1)

(4)

4. What was the title of the report published by the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation?

Yearning for balance

(1)

5. The above report concluded that many Americans were interested in:

**Circle** the correct answer

- a. wealth
- b. material gain
- c.** community and family

(1)

6. The book *The Spirit Level* argues that \_\_\_\_\_ have more social problems.

**Circle** the correct answer

- a. poor countries
- b. rich countries
- c. equal countries
- d.** unequal countries

(1)

7. The lecturer would like to see less focus on material wellbeing and

more focus on the psychological and social wellbeing of society.

-1/2 for wrong form

(2)

### The Limitations of Economic Growth

8. Which two indicators of quality of life does the lecturer refer to?

a. health

b. happiness

(2)

## Income Differences Within and Between Countries

15. According to the lecturer, whose health is most affected by income?

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. Rich people's
- b. Poor people's
- c. Everybody's**

(1)

16. According to the lecturer, which of the following is most important for people's health?

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. Their level of satisfaction with their income
- b. The average income of the country they live in
- c. Their individual income in relation to others in the country**

(1)

## Social Problems in Unequal Societies

17. Wilkinson and Pickett compiled a list of how many of the world's richest countries?

30

(1)

18. Put the following countries in order according to how equal their societies are, starting with the most equal.

<u>Country</u>	<u>Order</u>
Portugal	<u>4</u>
Norway	<u>3</u>
Japan	<u>e.g. 1</u>
Finland	<u>2</u>
USA	<u>5</u>

(2)

19. Identify two of the social problems the researchers collected data on.

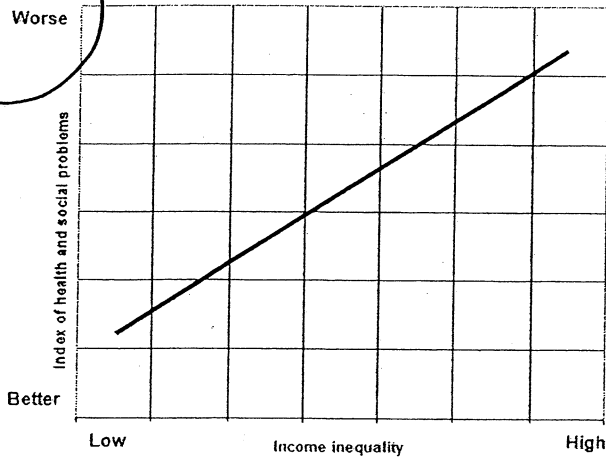
a. mental illness

b. obesity (2)

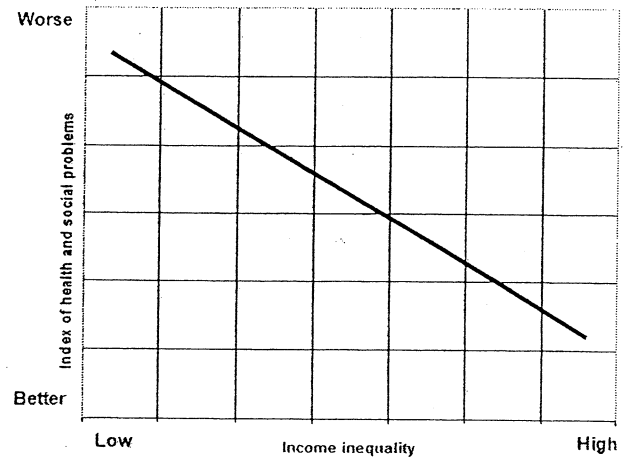
20. Which of the following graphs best represents the relationship between health and social problems and income inequality?

Circle the correct answer

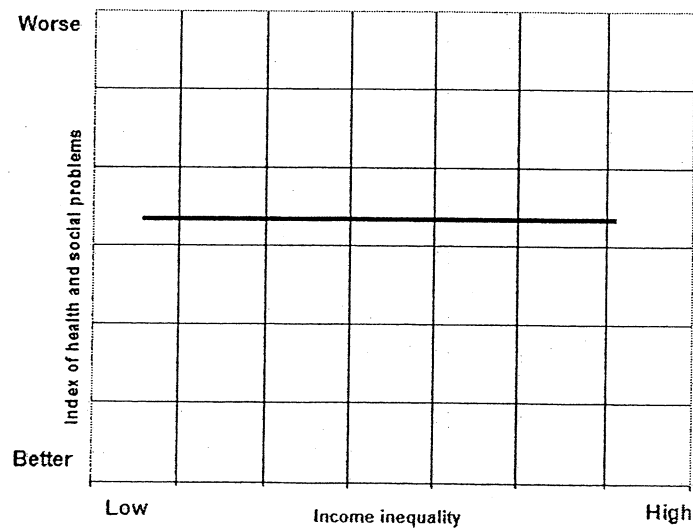
A.



B.



C.



(1)



21. What percentage of poor Americans:

a. have air conditioning? 80 %

b. own a car or truck? 75 %

c. have a computer, dishwasher or second car? 33 %

(3)

22. Wilkinson and Pickett refer to a man who:

**Circle the correct answer**

a. could not afford to eat any food

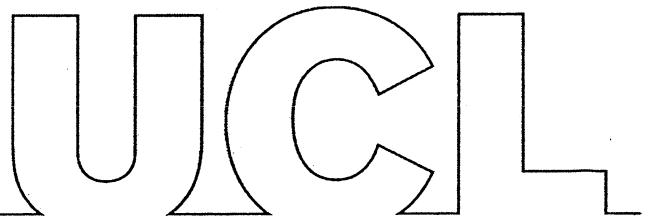
b. spent money on clothes instead of food

**c. spent money on a telephone instead of food**

(1)

**Total marks for Section 1 = 30**

*This is the end of the first part of the exam. During the next part of the exam you must make your own notes. You will need these notes to answer a series of questions that will be given to you after the lecture has finished.*



## Pre-sessional English Language Course

# Listening & Note-taking Examination

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2009  
9.30 – 11.30

Write your Candidate Number again here:

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# Booklet 2

### Instructions for questions on note-taking section:

Refer back to the notes that you made during the second part of the lecture in order to answer these questions.

Answer ALL the questions by writing your answers on this paper.

You have 30 minutes to complete this final section of the listening and note-taking examination and to check answers in Booklet 1

# KEY

## How Inequality Affects Us

1. In order to understand why unequal societies have more problems, we have to start looking at the \_\_\_\_\_ within those societies.

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. problems
- ☒ b. individuals
- c. rich people
- d. poor people

(1)

## Anxiety & Self Esteem

2. At the end of the 1990s, the average college student in the USA was:

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. 85% more anxious than the average person in the 1950s
- b. 85% more likely to be anxious than the average person in the 1950s
- ☒ c. more anxious than 85% of people in the 1950s
- d. more anxious than 85% of people in the 1990s

(1)

3. In the 1980s, what proportion of teenagers agreed with the statement: 'I am an important person'?

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. 12%
- b. 50%
- ☒ c. 80%
- d. 100%

(1)

## The Effects of Stress

4. What is the name of the stress hormone the lecturer refers to?

Cortisol (must be spelt correctly) (1)

5. Which four of the following factors were mentioned in relation to the 'fight or flight' response?

Circle the four correct answers

- ☒ a. Heart works harder
- b. Hearing becomes more sensitive
- ☒ c. Lungs work harder
- ☒ d. Blood vessels tighten
- ☒ e. Energy burns faster
- f. Muscles become stronger
- g. Eyesight becomes sharper

(4)

6. Psychologists from the University of California collected the findings of how many experiments testing stress?

208

(1)

7. The highest levels of stress were produced as a result of a

social evaluative threat.

(2)

8. According to the lecturer, which three of the following can result from long-term stress?

Circle the three correct answers

- a. We lose our appetite
- b. Our hips and thighs get fatter
- ☒ c. We are more likely to get depressed
- d. Our bodies become hotter
- ☒ e. We can become violent
- ☒ f. We trust people less

(3)

9. Which English newspaper did the lecturer refer to?

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. The Times
- b. The Guardian
- ☒ c. The Independent
- d. The Telegraph

(1)

10. What percentage of the population trusts their fellow citizens in:

- a. Sweden? 66 %
- b. Portugal? 10 %

(2)

**Status**

11. Give two examples of what the lecturer meant by 'the outward signs of success or failure'.

- a. Any two of 'houses' 'cars' 'clothes'
- b. ↓

(2)

12. Why might advertisers be contributing to the levels of violence in society?

**Circle the correct answer**

- ☒ a. Because they make people feel inferior
- b. Because they show self-confident violent people
- c. Because people want to steal designer products

(1)

### **Self Promotion Replaces Modesty**

13. In 1997, an article relating to the way people present themselves was published in which journal?

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. Journal of Private and Social Psychology
- ☒ b. Journal of Personal and Social Psychology
- c. Journal of Social and Personal Psychology
- d. Journal of Personal and Private Psychology

(1)

14. Which two countries, in addition to Japan, were given as examples of cultures in which people present themselves more modestly than in the United States?

- a. Thailand (in either position)
- b. China

(2)

### **Conclusion**

15. The Greek philosopher Plato said that:

**Circle the correct answer**

- a. There should be 5 times more rich people than poor people
- b. There should be 5 times more poor people than rich people
- c. The richest should earn at least 5 times more than the poorest
- ☒ d. The richest should not earn more than 5 times more than the poorest

(1)

16. Wilkinson and Pickett suggest that the British government would have to increase two things to achieve the same level of equality as Japan. What are they?

- a. tax(ation)
- b. invest(ment)

(2)

17. According to Wilkinson and Pickett, if Britain became as equal as the most equal developed countries...

Fill the gaps.

- a. (levels of) trust would rise by two thirds
- b. mental illness would fall by more than half
- c. teenage birth (rates) would fall by a third
- d. homicide (rates) would fall by 75%

(4)

**Total marks for Section 2 = 30**

### **Instructions**

While I read these instructions you must not, I repeat not, open the booklet in front of you.

This paper is divided into three parts: the introduction, section 1 and section 2.

During the introduction you are not required to take any notes or complete any tasks.

After the introduction, you will have 10 minutes to read the questions in Booklet 1 in front of you.

In Section 1 of the lecture, you will answer the questions in Booklet 1 as I speak.

In Section 2 you will take notes using the extra pages provided at the end of Booklet 1.

After the lecture, you will be given a second question booklet, Booklet 2, and you will have 30 minutes in which to answer the questions according to your notes and to check your answers in Booklet 1.

OK, now I'll begin the lecture with the introduction, during which you don't have to take any notes.



For almost two years now, one topic seems to have dominated the news agenda more than any other. It's been in the news because it's affecting the lives of so many of us and will probably continue to do so for some time before the situation improves. This topic has variously been referred to as the financial crisis or economic crisis, the credit crunch or the world recession – I think all of you are probably familiar with at least one of these terms.

Now, I'm not an economist, and I know that most of you aren't either, so don't worry this lecture *isn't* about the economy or about finance. However it is about the *values* in our society which many believe helped contribute to the crisis, and the lessons we might learn for the future.

The title of today's lecture is: **Inequality in the Modern World**. I'll be arguing that in many countries nowadays there is far too great an emphasis on economic success and not enough emphasis on other important aspects of life. I'll also be arguing that this obsession with economic growth has led to high levels of inequality in many countries which, in turn, have given rise to a large number of social problems.

I've divided the lecture into 5 sections.

The first section is entitled **The Material World**. In this section, I'll provide some background and context for the rest of the lecture.

The next section is entitled **The Limitations of Economic Growth**. In this section, I'll try to demonstrate how economic growth can help countries, but only up to a certain point, and that after this point has been reached, there are no further benefits to be gained.

The third section is **Income Differences Within and Between Countries**. We'll see how much richer some countries are than others but then also see the size of the gap within those countries between the richest and the poorest. The next section will focus on **Social Problems in Unequal Societies**. In this part, we'll build on the information from the previous section, looking at

rich countries with a wide gap between rich and poor, and hopefully notice a clear link between levels of inequality and the number of social problems countries face.

The final part of the lecture will be the note-taking section. This section is called **How Inequality Affects Us**, and I've broken it down into 4 subsections which I'll give you later on.

OK, that's the end of the introduction. You now have ten minutes to read through the questions in Booklet 1 in front of you. Please open your booklets.

### ***10 minutes***

That's the end of your 10 minutes.

Now we'll begin Section 1, **the Material World**, during which you should answer the questions as I speak.

We're now living in an age of unparalleled material and technical achievement. In all developed, and many developing countries, we're richer and materially more comfortable than ever before. But at the same time, our societies don't seem to be any happier, and many people of my grandparents' generation talk about the 'good old days' as if people used to be much happier in the past, despite the fact that they were poorer. Is this, or was this, really the case? Were people happier in the past? Well, it's certainly true that many people nowadays feel anxious about things. We worry about our jobs, we worry about how other people see us, and many of us feel isolated participating in little or no community life. Instead, it's quite common for people to seek comfort through activities which many now associate with the developed world. By this I mean things like over-eating, obsessive shopping, drinking or even drug taking. All these are quite common nowadays.

So in one sense we're richer than ever before, and in another sense we're far poorer. How is it that we've created so much material comfort for ourselves

but so much emotional discomfort? Could it be that we actually have too much nowadays and that the luxury and extravagance of our lives are creating more problems than they solve? These are questions which interested researchers from the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation in the USA, who recently published a report entitled *Yearning for Balance*, which showed that many Americans feel that materialism – that's the belief that money, possessions and physical comforts are more important than spiritual values – somehow comes between them and the satisfaction of their social needs. Perhaps surprisingly, the report concluded that Americans were 'deeply ambivalent about wealth and material gain'. A large majority of people wanted society to 'move away from greed and excess toward a way of life more centred on values, community and family'. Although I haven't done any research of my own on this, I think that there are many people in Britain who also feel this way, and that more and more are beginning to question the way we live our lives and the principles that guide us.

All the issues I've raised so far in the lecture are addressed in an interesting book published earlier this year entitled 'The Spirit Level: why more equal societies almost always do better'. It's the culmination of 25 years of scientific research by two academics - Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett - who suggest that the more unequal a society is, the more social problems it faces, regardless of whether it's a rich or a poor country. I'd like to share some of the key findings of the book with you today because I believe that it clearly demonstrates that if we're to gain further improvements in the quality of our lives, we need to shift attention away from material standards and economic growth and towards ways of improving the psychological and social wellbeing of societies.

So there you have a bit of background, and I've given you a few of the main ideas which will arise throughout the lecture. Let's now move on to the next part of the lecture which, as I've already said, is entitled: **The Limitations of Economic Growth**

In this section, we'll be looking at how economic growth can and can't help us, and we'll do this by focussing on two areas which are vital for good quality of life – health and happiness. In the past, both of these were easily improved by raising material living standards. When we were hungry, we were made a lot happier and healthier by food. When we were thirsty, water made us happy. As our basic needs were met through economic growth, so we became happier and healthier. However, once our basic needs have been satisfied, something changes. As we get more and more of something, each addition to what we have contributes less and less to our well-being. Think of bread – if you're hungry, a loaf of bread is everything, but when you're satisfied, many more loaves don't particularly help and might even become a nuisance as they go stale. Nowadays, most of us aren't hungry, in fact for the first time in history, most of us wish we could eat less and the poor are, on average, fatter than the rich.

Nowadays, in many countries around the world, it's clear that health and happiness have stopped increasing with greater economic growth. In fact, quite the opposite has happened - as affluent societies have grown richer, there have also been rises in the rates of anxiety, depression and numerous other social problems. The populations of rich countries seem to have reached the end of a long journey – for years economic growth helped them develop, but nowadays people's quality of life has stopped improving. The examples I'm about to give you will hopefully demonstrate this a little more clearly.

The first of these examples comes from The Spirit Level. Wilkinson and Pickett produced a graph showing trends in life expectancy in relation to Gross National income per head in countries at various stages of economic development. The graph shows that among the poorer countries, life expectancy increases rapidly during the early stages of economic development. But then the rate slows among the middle income countries. As living standards rise and countries get richer and richer, the relationship between economic growth and life expectancy weakens. Eventually it disappears entirely and the rising curve becomes horizontal, showing that

increased wealth makes no difference to average life expectancy. That's already happened to the top thirty or so countries.

So, given this information, can we therefore assume that we've reached the limits of life expectancy? Well, no, because even in the richest countries, life expectancy still continues to rise by two or three years every ten years. But the thing is, this happens *regardless* of economic growth - it happens to all countries. This explains why a country like New Zealand now does as well as a country like the USA even though it's only a bit more than half as rich. Both countries are at the point where economic growth makes no difference.

So that was health, but what about happiness? This brings me to the second of my examples, and it comes from a book by the well-known economist Richard Layard, simply entitled *Happiness: Lessons from a New Science*, first published in 2005. Layard shows that in poorer nations, an increase in income generally leads to an increase in happiness. This pattern continues until somewhere around the 25 thousand dollar mark, at which point the benefits become less apparent and the line more or less levels off.

So there you have two examples of how economic growth can contribute to the development of countries in the early stages but that they then reach a point after which no benefits are gained.

OK, let's move on to section 3 now –**Income Differences Within and Between Countries**. So far we've looked at patterns across both rich and poor countries. What I'd like to do now is start looking within countries, as this is where the statistics really begin to get interesting.

Let's stay with the example of health, as we've already looked at this. What do we know so far? We know that after a country reaches a certain level of affluence, it can be more than twice as rich as another country and yet have the same average life expectancy. However, if you look *within* those countries, life expectancy and happiness are systematically related to individual income. In blunt terms, the richer you are, the happier you are and

the longer you'll live. The poorer you are, the shorter you'll live. This gradient cuts right across society.

This evidence seems to suggest that differences in average income or living standards *between* whole populations don't matter, but income differences *within* those same populations matter very much indeed, and this is what many people find surprising. It doesn't matter how rich your country is, what matters is where you stand in relation to other people. This brings us to the next section - **Social Problems in Unequal Societies**.

So far in the lecture, we've seen that economic growth and increases in average incomes have stopped contributing to wellbeing in rich countries. But we've also seen that within societies, health remains strongly associated with income. In this part of the lecture, we'll see how the amount of income *inequality* within a society - that's to say the gap between the richest and the poorest - can have significant implications. In order to do this, I'll return again to the work of Wilkinson and Pickett. They compiled a list of the world's 30 most developed countries and then sorted them according to how equal they are. At the top of the list was Japan, closely followed by Finland and then Norway. At the other end of the scale at the bottom of the list was Singapore, with the USA not far behind, and then Portugal.

The researchers then collected internationally comparable data on as many social problems as they could find reliable figures for – for example mental illness and obesity – in order to investigate whether these problems were more common in more unequal societies or not. Their results showed a very strong tendency for ill-health and social problems to occur less frequently in more equal countries. They were, however, very frequent in countries with bigger income inequalities.

I mentioned Japan and Finland the two most equal of all the developed countries. Although they're very different societies, they're both consistently at the top of the charts for every indicator of social success. They have low violence, low mental illness, low teenage pregnancy, low drug addiction, low

obesity, low prison populations, but high life expectancy, and high levels of friendship and trust. I also mentioned the United States and Portugal as examples of extremely unequal countries. Interestingly, they're both consistently at the bottom of the charts for every indicator of social success – high violence, high mental illness, high obesity and so on. The correlation is amazingly clear all the way through from the most to the least equal.

So the fact that some of the richest countries have some of the greatest social problems suggests that it doesn't matter how rich or poor a country is, what matters is how you stand in relation to others in your country. The poor people in America are poor by American standards but not that poor compared to people elsewhere around the world. Although it's true that there are some Americans who are so poor they can't afford to eat, there aren't actually that many of them. Surveys of the 12.6% of Americans living below the federal poverty line show that 80% of them have air conditioning, 75% own at least one car or truck and around 33% have a computer, a dishwasher or a second car. What this means is that when people lack money for essentials such as food, it is usually a reflection of the strength of their desire to live up to the prevailing standards. You may, for instance, feel it more important to maintain appearances by spending money on clothes and saving on food. Wilkinson and Pickett refer to a man they met who was unemployed and had spent a month's income on a new mobile phone because he said girls ignored people who hadn't got the right stuff.

That's the end of the first part of the lecture. From now on, you need to take your own notes, and as I said in the introduction, this section is entitled: **How Inequality Affects Us**

I hope that I've now given you some convincing arguments and statistics to demonstrate that inequality is not beneficial for society. What I'd like to do now is ask why this might be, and how it is that inequality affects us so negatively. In order to do this, we need to start looking not just at societies but at the individuals within those societies and some of the psychological characteristics which make people sensitive to inequality. As I said in the

introduction, I've divided this part of the lecture into 4 parts, the first of which is **Anxiety and Self-Esteem**.

It may come as no surprise that a great deal of research suggests that people nowadays feel more anxious than they did in the past. In the USA, the psychologist Jean Twenge – that's spelt T-W-E-N-G-E – has shown that there's been a clear upward trend in people's anxiety levels over the last forty years. In fact, at the end of the 1990s, the average college student in the USA was more anxious than 85% of the population had been in the late 1950s.

However, other research suggests that people's self esteem – that's people's view of themselves – has also risen over that same time period. People are, for example, more likely to say that they feel proud of themselves, and more likely to agree with statements such as, 'I am an important person'. Twenge says that in the 1950s only 12% of teenagers agreed with that statement, but by the late 1980s this figure had risen to 80%.

So what's been happening? People becoming more self-confident doesn't seem to fit with people becoming more anxious. Well, researchers have concluded that people are indeed more anxious and that one of the effects of this anxiety has been for people to adopt a more defensive attitude which makes them speak highly of themselves or promote themselves. Basically, what's been mistaken for higher self-esteem has in fact been something quite different. We'll return to this a little later on. For now, though, let's move on to the next subsection **The Effects of Stress**.

So it would appear that people have been growing more anxious and less secure. Why? This question can be answered by looking at some of the recent research on stress. Much of it has been focused on a central stress hormone called cortisol – that's spelt C-O-R-T-I-S-O-L – which can easily be measured in saliva or blood. Its release is triggered by the brain and it serves to prepare us physiologically for dealing with potential threats and emergencies. Our bodies lock into what's known as the 'fight or flight'



response – we either fight harder or run away quicker as a result of the cortisol in our system. It makes our heart and lungs work harder, it makes our blood vessels constrict and it makes us burn up energy stores faster.

Psychologists at the University of California, collected the findings from 208 different experiments where people had had their levels of cortisol measured whilst being exposed to stressful situations. They concluded that the experiments which provoked the greatest changes to people's levels of cortisol – that's to say the ones they found most stressful – were ones which included what they described as a 'social evaluative threat'. By 'social evaluative threat' they mean threat to someone's self-esteem or social status. They argued that people instinctively fight to preserve their social standing and are vigilant to threats that may jeopardise their social esteem or status. This might help explain why people are so anxious: in the modern world, we're exposed to a greater number of social evaluative threats on a daily basis.

So what is cortisol exactly and how does it affect us? Well, in the short term, it can be good for us - it can help in a dangerous situation – but if it's released regularly for long periods of time, it can have a very negative effect on our health. High cortisol levels corrode our insides and massively increase the risk of heart-attack. We eat more, and our bodies store fats differently. They hug them to our middles, rather than storing them lower down in our hips and thighs. And we're far more likely to become depressed or resort to violence.

Another negative effect of being locked in stress for too long is that one becomes more suspicious of others. A recent article in The Independent newspaper reported that in Sweden, which is a highly equal country, 66% of people feel they can trust their fellow citizens, and as a result they have the highest levels of friendship in the developed world. In Portugal, which, as we've already seen, is a highly unequal country, only 10% of the population trust other people. So we can see that stress, over a prolonged period of time, is no good for us. Let's move on to the next section, **Status**.

This sensitivity to social evaluative threat helps explain the importance of social status on our self-confidence. We're clearly concerned by how other people see us. If the social hierarchy is seen – as it often is – as if it were a ranking of the human race by ability, then the outward signs of success or failure - for example, houses, cars and clothes - all make a difference. Of course it's possible to be upper-class and still feel inadequate, or to be lower-class and full of confidence, but in general, the further up the social ladder we are, the more the world helps us believe in ourselves.

Advertisers are well aware of our sensitivity to social comparisons - they know that we like to buy products which enhance the way we're seen. Unfortunately, by playing on our fears of being seen as less important, they might be contributing to higher levels of violence in unequal countries. Researchers at the Centre for the Study of Violence at Harvard Medical School claim that the majority of violence is triggered by humiliation or loss of face when people feel looked down on and disrespected. Societies which place a high value on material products and importance on being seen to have the right things create conditions where people inferior and then resort to violence. James Gilligan from Harvard Medical School claims that he has 'yet to see a serious act of violence that did not represent an attempt to undo this loss of face'. We'll move on to the final section now - **Self-Promotion Replaces Modesty** - and then I'll conclude.

This final section provides a brief comparison two of the rich countries I've already mentioned – Japan and the USA – and explains how the people from those countries present themselves to others. Earlier in the lecture I talked about how people seem to be becoming more self-confident despite increasing anxiety, and this is very much connected with that.

In 1997 an article was published in the Journal of Personal and Social Psychology which found that people in Japan choose a modest way of presenting themselves and that this contrasts sharply with the much more self-enhancing style in the USA. Americans are more likely to attribute individual successes to their own abilities and their failures to external factors,

while the Japanese tend to do just the opposite. In Japan, people tend to pass their successes off as if they're more a reflection of luck than of judgement, while suggesting that their failures are probably attributable to their own lack of ability. This pattern was also found in Thailand and China and it could be because people from these countries prefer to maintain social bonds by not using their successes to build themselves up as more able than others. As greater inequality increases competition and social evaluative threat, people have to promote themselves more and modesty can easily become a casualty of inequality.

So, to conclude, the purpose of my talk today has been to highlight the fact that inequality in society can be harmful to all those who live in it – not just the poor, but also the rich. We've seen how life expectancy and happiness have stopped increasing as a result of economic growth and that once countries achieve a certain level of wealth, it doesn't matter how much richer they become, they don't get any extra benefit from it. We've also looked at the ways in which the stress induced by inequality can affect us and the way we behave to those around us.

You may be wondering what I'm proposing as an alternative. It's very easy to criticise a system, but not so easy to present solutions. Unfortunately, there hasn't been time today to go into detail on this, but the simple response is to reduce inequality. How? Well, I know it's not popular with everyone but I believe that by democratically taxing the rich we can help lift the poor, and that would make life better for all of us. The Greek philosopher Plato suggested that the richest person should be allowed to earn five times as much as the poorest and this seems fair to me.

I'll finish with a quotation from Wilkinson and Pickett, who suggest that if the UK taxed and invested its way to the same levels of economic equality as the most equal countries, 'levels of trust might be expected to be two-thirds higher, mental illness more than halved, teenage birth rates would fall by a third, homicide rates would fall by 75%, and the government would be closing down prisons all over the country'.

That's the end of today's lecture. Now you will receive Booklet 2 face down. Do not open the booklet until I tell you. You must not speak while you are waiting.