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TOEFL SPEAKING TEACHERS MANUAL

LESSON 7

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LESSON 7

PART 1

Directions: For this task, you will be asked to speak about a topic that is familiar to you. You will hear a question. You will then have 15 seconds to prepare your response and 45 seconds to speak.

QUESTION:

Talk about a movie you liked or disliked and explain why. Give details and examples to support your decision.

SAMPLE ANSWER

A movie that I have seen that I really enjoyed is called “Iron & Silk.” This movie helped me decide what line of work I wanted to be in. I would not be the person I am today if I had not seen this movie. It is about a man who studies Chinese literature in America so that he can go to China and teach English. When he arrived in China, it was 1980 and China had just begun to change. I thought, from the movie, that China looked like such a different country which was very interesting. Most of the people were so friendly to this man and really respected him because he was a teacher. I thought if I could be like the man in the movie, my life would be very exciting too.

PART 2

Directions: In this question, you will be asked to give your opinion about a familiar topic. After you hear the question, you will have 15 seconds to prepare your response and 45 seconds to speak.

QUESTION:

Some universities have a strict policy that freshman must live on campus in dorms for their first year. Other universities have no policy like this and allow students to decide where they would like live. Which policy do you think is better for the first-year students and why? Use details and examples in your response.

SAMPLE ANSWER

At my college, it was a requirement that students live on campus for their first year. As a freshman, I thought this policy was horrible, as did lots and lots of my classmates. It is the American way to be able to pick and choose as much of your own life as you can, and I felt extremely limited by this school policy. But now that I have lived on campus, I think this is a great policy. I think the policy originally has to do with making sure the dorms are filled up for monetary reasons, but the fact is that it is really a great experience for students who have never been to college before. I got to meet so many of my classmates just by living on campus. If I had lived in an apartment off campus, I don't think I would have enjoyed the rest of my college years so much.

PART 3

Directions: In this question, you will read a short announcement and then listen to a dialogue on the same topic. You will then answer a question about them. After you hear the question, you will have 30 seconds to prepare your response and 60 seconds to speak.

Narrator: The Foreign Language Lab of Northern State University is upgrading its computer lab. Read the notice about the new lab. You will have 45 seconds to read the notice. Begin reading now.

Attention All Foreign Language Students

Starting this semester, all students wishing to use the Foreign Language Lab are required to purchase an access card. No students will be allowed entry to the lab without first purchasing this card. The card is \$10 and can be purchased at the school bookstore. The proceeds from this card are being used to supplement the student technology fee, which was used to renovate the lab over the summer. New computers and software, as well as new language tutors, were all part of the renovation.

Narrator: Listen to two students as they discuss the announcement.

Student 1(male): Well it's about time they upgraded the lab.

Student 2(female): I agree, but I think they went about it wrong, and what's this about a new card?

Student 1: What do you mean?

Student 2: Well, I don't think the problem was with the computers before. In fact, I thought the computers were all fine. They never gave me any problems. The problem I had was with the space in the lab. It was often crowded. And when there was a class in there, you had to wait in line to use a computer.

Student 1: Well, they still have the same number of computers...but now the computers really are the latest and greatest. We also have more tutors, and all the new language learning software on there is great.

Student 2: Yeah, if you're learning Spanish or German or French. They only added software and tutors for the most popular languages. What about Portuguese, Chinese, Korean, and Arabic? And, I still don't see why we have to pay to use the computers now. What was our technology fee being used for before?

Narrator: Now get ready to answer the question.

QUESTION: The woman expresses her opinion about the announcement made by the Foreign Language Lab. State her opinion and explain the reasons she gives for holding that opinion.

SAMPLE ANSWER

The woman is happy that the school finally upgraded the language learning lab, but she thinks the school upgraded it in the wrong way. So she isn't satisfied. The university upgraded all the computers in the lab, but the woman thinks that the computers were all fine before and it wasn't necessary to do this. The woman also thinks that the school added tutors and learning software for the computers for the wrong languages. For the few most common languages, there are now lots of new learning resources and help, but for the more uncommon languages, Chinese, Arabic, Korean, the school didn't do enough. The woman wishes that the school expanded the lab to have more room. She says that before the renovation, the lab was often crowded; but, after the renovation, there are the same number of computers and the same amount of space. The woman also wonders why the students still have to pay money for the renovations because she says they were already paying a technology fee before.

PART 4

Directions: In this question, you will read a short passage and then listen to a talk on the same academic topic. You will then answer a question about them. After you hear the question, you will have 30 seconds to prepare your response and 60 seconds to speak. You have 45 seconds to read the passage.

The Mock Epic

The term mock epic or mock heroic refers to a shorter epic written in a satirical manner. It has all the characteristics of a large epic, such as starting out with the invocation of the muse, being written in iambic pentameter, containing a Homeric simile, or a long and drawn out comparison of two things, and having a hero with a tragic flaw, but is much shorter and uses satire as its centerpiece. Satire is usually used to make fun of some aspect in a society.

Narrator: Now listen to part of a lecture in a world literature class.

Professor: Alexander Pope's poem, *Rape of the Lock*, is a fine example of a mock epic. Pope uses satire to reveal the triviality of the values the aristocracy held in 18th century England. Every epic is written in rhymed iambic pentameter that is broken into books or cantos. The first canto begins with the customary invocation of the muse to help Pope tell his tale.

The muse in this case is just Caryl, a close friend of Pope's, as opposed to some deity that usually inspires a poet to tell his story. One of the most important aspects of an epic, or in this case, mock epic because this is just a fraction of the size of a regular epic, is the hero/heroine with a tragic flaw that ultimately causes their own downfall. Belinda is the tragic heroine of *Rape of the Lock*, and her flaw is her vanity, more specifically, her hair. Pope emphasizes her vanity when he mentions that she even has a favorite lock of hair.

Now, the “villain” of the story eventually cuts off this prized lock. After a heated argument, the lock escapes into the wind and falls apart. Belinda’s vanity causes her best friend to assist the villain by concealing scissors and presenting them at just the right time. Pope compares these scissors to a little, steel, engine in a Homeric or epic simile, which is a necessary component of any epic. It is an elaborate comparison that extends over a number of lines of verse.

Narrator: Now get ready to answer the question.

QUESTION: The professor talked about *Rape of the Lock* and described several aspects. Explain why *Rape of the Lock* is considered a mock epic and give examples to support your answer.

SAMPLE ANSWER

The *Rape of the Lock* is considered a mock epic because it meets several of the requirements of a mock epic. *Rape of the Lock* begins with an invocation of the muse, but there is not a muse, or god, in this story. So, the speaker invokes only his friend instead of a god. The story is a little satirical also in the sense that the speaker asks for help to tell his story from his friend instead of the traditional help from a god. This story also has a Homeric simile where the speaker compares the scissors to a little steel engine. It is a long explanation or comparison, instead of just saying the scissors are like an engine, in a short sentence. Another characteristic of a mock epic is that there is a hero or heroine that has a tragic flaw that leads to their downfall. The heroine in *Rape of the Lock* is Belinda and her flaw is her vanity. She thinks she is incredibly beautiful and she cares so much about her appearance that she even has a favorite piece of hair. It is because she loves this piece of hair so much that she becomes undone when it is cut from her head, and she loses her best friend to the villain of the story over the lock of hair.

PART 5

Directions: For this task, you will listen to a dialogue. You will hear a question about it. You will then have 20 seconds to prepare your response and 60 seconds to speak.

Narrator: Listen to a
conversation between two
students.

Student 1(female): Hi, Ted. What's up?

Student 2(male): Oh, hi, June. I'm just studying as usual. I haven't had time for anything else recently, and the near future is looking about the same.

Student 1: Is something the matter?

Student 2: It's all this homework and tests that are coming up. I have five tests within two days of each other, and I also have several presentations and research papers to write, and they are all due within a couple of days of each other.

Student 1: Wow, that explains why I haven't seen you around lately. Don't you also have to work?

Student 2: Yeah, every night this week. I really don't know what I'm going to do. I don't think there are enough hours in the week to finish all this stuff.

Student 1: Well, maybe you could talk to some of your professors about this. I know, sometimes professors give extensions on papers. And some will even let you reschedule a test. Maybe if you tell them your situation they will be more lenient with you.

Student 2: That sounds like a pretty good idea. But, it also might be embarrassing for me to ask just to have my teacher say to me, “Why should I give you special treatment and not the other students?” You know?

Student 1: Hmm, maybe talk to your boss at work and ask for a few days off or something. Or maybe just call in sick. Ha-ha

Student 2: I don't know if my boss will give me time off. We've been pretty busy lately and he doesn't like me too much...

Narrator: Now get ready to answer the question.

QUESTION: The students discuss two possible solutions to the man's problem. Describe the problem. Then state which of the two solutions you prefer and explain why.

SAMPLE ANSWER

The problem that the man has is that he is too busy. He has lots of tests to take this week, papers to write, homework to do, and he has to work every night. He just doesn't have enough time to do everything that everybody needs him to do. I think, if I didn't call in sick to work, I would probably talk to a few of my teachers and ask if they could help me out. Maybe the teachers would be nice and let the man turn in a paper or two late if he asks them. I have had teachers before who allowed students to turn in late work or to take a test on a different day when they also had several tests on one day. The worst that could happen is that the teacher says "no." If the man asks his boss for a few days off of work when his boss already doesn't like him, maybe he could lose his job. I prefer asking the teachers for extensions.

PART 6

Directions: For this task, you will hear a short academic talk. You will hear a question about it. You will then have 20 seconds to prepare your response and 60 seconds to speak.

Narrator: Listen to part of a talk in an economics class.

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Professor: The term “elasticity” has a different meaning in economics. In economics, we don’t use this term for how far something will stretch, not exactly. We use elasticity to describe how much one variable will change as a response to changing another variable. The ratio of the proportional change of one variable to proportional change of another variable. It’s commonly used in reference to prices. Price elasticity of demand, simply put, represents the relationship between change in demand and change in price. If the price goes down, how many more people will want this product?

Let's take toilet paper, for instance. Toilet paper is one of those items that people use on a daily basis, and there isn't a really good substitute, well, not an affordable substitute. And, in addition, it is a product that is a necessity. If you don't have toilet paper, what do you do? Toilet paper is a basic *inelastic* good. If the price goes up, the demand will stay about the same. People aren't going to stop buying toilet paper because it gets more expensive. It is inelastic because as the price changes, the demand will stay about the same.

A product, or good, that is very elastic is, let's say, apples. Apples are not something that people have to have. If the price of apples increases, then fewer people will buy them. When apples get too expensive, people will stop buying them or switch to another product. Maybe people will buy pears, or oranges, or some other kind of fruit. If the price of apples drops, people will buy more apples. Apples are an elastic good because when one variable changes, like price, the demand changes drastically.

Narrator: Now get ready to answer the question.

QUESTION: Using points and examples from the talk, explain how a good is inelastic and explain the relationship between demand and price of a good in terms of elasticity.

SAMPLE ANSWER

A good is inelastic when people don't care about the price. When a product, for example—toilet paper—gets really expensive, people will still buy it. If the price of toilet paper goes way down, people will still buy about the same amount. Something like toilet paper is a good that people need...so...that is what an inelastic good is. Umm...Elasticity means that the demand for a good, how much people want something, will change a lot if the price changes. If the price of apples gets really expensive, many people won't buy apples. If the price of apples is very cheap, lots more people will buy apples. The demand changes a lot when the price changes. That is what elasticity is...how much the demand will change when the price goes up or down.