

# Listening practice for TOEFL

## Conversation Test 4

### Conversation

**Narrator**

Listen to an assistant lecturer talking to a new student.

**Mr Fitch:** Yes? Come in.

**Mary Jane:** Excuse me, are you Mr Fitch? Dr Addlestone's assistant?

**MF:** Hi. Yes. Can I help you?

**MJ:** Yes, please, if you have time. I'm Mary Jane Turner and I'm signed up for Literature Two-twenty? I just wanted to get clear on the grading system. I'm still not sure how it works.

**MF:** Hi, Mary Jane. Sure. It's pretty straightforward, really. After each lecture, we prepare a short quiz on that material, and you take it at the beginning of the next lecture period. It only takes about ten minutes and it's pretty simple-- if you've taken good notes and studied them a bit beforehand, that is. There are fifteen lectures, so that's fifteen quizzes.

**MJ:** And they're part of our final grade, right?

**MF:** Right. One percent each or fifteen percent for all fifteen of them.

**MJ:** Each one's only one percent of my grade? That doesn't seem like much. Missing one or two of them wouldn't make much difference, would it?

**MF:** Not really, no-- but the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. They're not worth much individually because they're very short and sweet-- just to check that you've been coming to class, really. But students who pass all fifteen quizzes earn a five percent, um, bonus for effort.

**MJ:** Don't our individual quiz scores count?

**MF:** No, sorry. They're just pass-fail quizzes.

**MJ:** So, pass them all and it's twenty percent of my final grade?

**MF:** That's right.

**MJ:** That sounds good.

**MF:** And sixty percent are your mid-term and final exams.

**MJ:** Are they short and sweet, too?

**MF:** (laughs) No, I'm afraid not. They're not like the quizzes. They're ninety-minute tests and require a good bit of writing in addition to the objective questions. The mid-term covers the first eight lectures, the Founding Fathers to Mark Twain. The final mainly covers World War One to the present, from Lecture Nine on.

**MJ:** So first-half authors won't be on the final?

**MF:** That's not what I said. I said it's MAINLY on the second half of the course. Professor Addlestone will be keeping you, uh, honest with a few questions about American literature before the first World War, too.

**MJ:** I see. And they're thirty-thirty?

**MF:** Yes, thirty percent for the mid-term, thirty percent for the final, and up to twenty percent for the weekly quizzes. And then up to ten percent each for your essays. You'll need at least ninety percent for an A, eighty percent for a B, and seventy percent for a C.

**MJ:** Erm....could you tell me something about what is expected with our essays? There're two of them, right?

**MF:** Yes. You're required to write two short critical essays on American authors of your choice, from anywhere in American literary history, and we'll be looking carefully at your writing style and ability as much as at the content of your essays. The Professor's a real stickler for overall literacy.

**MJ:** So I can choose any author in the syllabus?

**MF:** Yes, but I can tell you that we often like it when a student picks an author out of the mainstream - perhaps a lesser writer that we haven't been able to include in the lectures, or a contemporary author who hasn't, uh, hasn't found a place in literary history yet.

**MJ:** Someone really obscure?

**MF:** Not a good idea. The author you choose should have some relevance to the course of American literature. And if you can demonstrate that relevance clearly in four to five typewritten pages, then you'll have a good essay.

**MJ:** For each essay? Ooh.

**MF:** This is a university, uh, Mary Jane, not a high school. Now, you've got almost four months to write eight to ten pages. You should be able to manage that.

**MJ:** Yes, OK. You're right. When are they due?

**MF:** Your first essay's due in late October. It must be handed in by Lecture Eight, but we'd be happy to see it anytime before that. And the second is due at the last lecture in December. It must be returned in before the winter break.

**MJ:** Oh-- should the first essay be about somebody in the the first half's material then? And the same

for the second?

**MF:** No, not at all. Any author you like. It would be smart to choose ones that interest you, though. Papers that reflect some, um, enthusiasm always turn out better.

**MJ:** Oh, I've got that! I'm really looking forward to this course-- I love reading!

**MF:** That's good, because you'll be doing a lot of that.

**MJ:** Thanks for your help, Mr Fitch-- I really appreciate it.

**MF:** And don't be shy if you have any more concerns, Mary Jane. My door's always open. Good-bye.

## Questions

**Narrator:**

Now answer the following questions. You may use your notes to help you.

1). What is the purpose of this conversation?

- (A) To acquaint the student and the assistant lecturer
- (B) To find out about the American authors being taught
- (C) To ascertain the grading method of the course
- (D) To figure out how to study for the lectures

2). How long should the student's essays be?

- (A) Four pages
- (B) Four months
- (C) Four lectures
- (D) Four authors

3). If the student passes all fifteen quizzes, how much of her final grade will they represent?

- (A) 10%
- (B) 15%
- (C) 20%
- (D) 30%

4). Why does Mary Jane say this: "Are they short and sweet, too?"

- (A) She thinks the examinations will be very easy.
- (B) She is flirting with Mr Fitch.
- (C) She thinks the examinations will be very difficult.
- (D) She is joking with Mr Fitch.

5). What will Mary Jane probably do?

- (A) Research American writers
- (B) Miss some lecture quizzes
- (C) Visit Dr Addlestone's office
- (D) Buy a typewriter

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