

Listening practice for TOEFL Conversation

Test 10

Conversation

Narrator

Listen to a conversation in a professor's office between a professor and a student.

Prof: Good afternoon, Mr. Pennington. You are in my, um, American History 201 class, right? How can I help you today?

S: It's about my term paper. I, uh, I know it's due next Monday, but, um, I was hoping...I don't think I can get it done by then. Could I please turn it in by the end of next week instead? I have a really good excuse.

P: Oh I'm sure you do! [chuckles]. I've been teaching 33 years. Do you know how many excuses I've heard? "My dog ate my paper." "My roommate had a party so I couldn't concentrate." "I have seven papers due on the same day!" "I went home to see my parents and my car broke down." My favorite was a student who told me she "forgot" all about her term paper until the day before it was due. It's amazing she remembered to come to class.

S: [Laughs nervously] I didn't forget, sir. I've been working on the paper, really! Here, I brought my outline and a rough draft. It's, um, just that...well, a lot of things have been going on in my life, and I'm having trouble managing things.

P: I see. You know, I assigned that paper four weeks ago, and I've been reminding students about it in each class. So, tell me your story. What's happening in your life?

S: First, about two weeks ago, my roommate found out his mother is real sick. She has breast cancer. So he's been really upset, and, uh, I went home with him for a couple of days to see his mom. That caused me to miss biology lab, and I have a huge biology final coming up on Tuesday that I really need to study for this weekend. Then I got the flu last week, and missed a day of class. I tried to work on your paper that day, but I really felt horrible...

P: OK, I can understand that. I'm glad that you're, er, helping your roommate through a tough time. That's more important than school work. But all this seems to have happened recently. What about the two weeks after I first assigned the term paper?

S: I, uh [sheepishly]...I guess I didn't use that time very well. I kind of put off getting started on it.

P: [Sighs]. Yes, you did. You know, if I had a dollar for every time I've heard a student say that...

S: I'm sorry, Professor Dalton. I've learned my lesson. If I had spent just a little bit of time each week on the paper, I could have had it done on time. I know now that I need to plan for unexpected things.

P: You seem like a bright, conscientious young man, Mr...your first name's Jack, isn't it? When I was a young student, an upperclassman gave me some advice that I've never forgotten. He said, "You're going to find yourself with a lot of small gaps during school days -- 15 minutes, or half an hour. What you do during those gaps will make a big difference in how successful you are."

S: Wow! That's great advice.

P: Yeah, I thought so. And I still do. So I'll tell you what. You can turn your paper in no later than 9 a.m. Friday, right here on my office desk. In exchange for this favor, I want you to pass that advice on to all your friends and dorm mates.

S: Thank you, professor Dalton! You bet I will.

P: Um, as long as you're here, let me take a peek at your outline and rough draft. Do you have any questions about the paper that I can help you with?

Questions

Narrator:

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

1). Why does the student visit the professor?

- (A) To request an extension on a deadline
- (B) To receive advice about time management
- (C) To ask for help in writing a term paper
- (D) To explain his absence from history class

2). According to the student, what problem does his roommate have?

- (A) He was arrested by campus police.
- (B) His mother has a serious illness.
- (C) He caught the flu and missed school.
- (D) His dog ate his history term paper.

3). What does the professor mean when he says this: Oh I'm sure you do!

- (A) He is confident that the student's excuse will be reasonable.
- (B) He is positive that the student is about to tell him a lie.
- (C) He is angry that the student is asking him for a favor.
- (D) He is skeptical that the student really has a legitimate excuse.

4). What is the professor's attitude toward the student?

- (A) He is cynical.
- (B) He is servile.
- (C) He is compassionate.
- (D) He is unsympathetic.

5). According to the conversation, indicate which statement is not said.

- (A) The student has finished a rough draft of his term paper.
- (B) The professor agrees to let the student turn in his paper at the end of the week.
- (C) The student is writing about the Civil War.
- (D) The student asks the professor to check his writing.

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