

Exam practice 1 and listening practice 1 (Track 1A and 1C)

- Interviewer:** Should humour be part of education? Does humour have any influence on the way we learn another language? Well, today in our programme, Professor Adams will be answering these and other questions. So professor, what do education and humour have in common?
- Professor:** Well, most experienced language teachers say humour in their classrooms is an essential part of teaching and they include it in their lesson plans. Many teachers think if they encourage the use of humour, students will then use it themselves while learning. In my case, for instance, I have situations every term in which my students burst out laughing. Obviously, not all the students always laugh, but it definitely generates a better atmosphere.
- Interviewer:** Yes, I can see it creating a good atmosphere, but I presume that when you're learning another language it must be more difficult to make jokes.
- Professor:** Well, yes, it tends to be more difficult at the beginning but - and this is related to what I was saying before - if you create the right atmosphere it normally happens spontaneously. There is another factor however and that is the rapport between students: how they get on together as a group, how old they are, what interests they have, if they already speak another language... all these things can make a group closer and, as a consequence, more willing to make jokes.
- Interviewer:** So what is the role of spontaneous humour – moments when the class momentarily erupts in laughter before returning to the activity?
- Professor:** Well, we need to consider that from the beginning of the year, when teachers meet their class for the first time, they show many hidden messages through their body language, and the manner in which they address their students. In order to develop a spirit of informality within their classes, such teachers try to reduce the social distance between themselves and their students by behaving in friendly and approachable ways. They smilingly encourage students to speak and applaud their efforts, being supportive when errors are made. They may sometimes demonstrate, in a humorous way, that they themselves find unfamiliar sounds difficult to pronounce. If they make a mistake on the board (as most teachers do from time to time) they may make a quick joke, for example, to show that they are not embarrassed – and to demonstrate that mistakes are a natural part of the learning process.
- Interviewer:** But, sometimes, don't students misinterpret this kind behaviour and think that they can treat the teacher as a friend?
- Professor:** It can definitely happen, but in the end, the teacher also needs to keep individuals in line, and they need to do so as firmly and nicely as possible. This can be done with language or body language, even writing a short sentence on the board can do the job. It's like using discipline through humour and in many cases, conflicts with individuals can be solved with humour.
- In general, language learners absorb the message that their teacher welcomes spontaneous laughter in the classroom. I'm talking about supportive-group laughing. Sensing that their teacher has given them permission to laugh, many classes start to relax and to behave in readily responsive ways. They then find themselves laughing spontaneously when something unexpected happens, when they make a mistake or there is a misunderstanding. Once it is understood that laughter is acceptable, students will see the funny side of daily occurrences that an outsider might not consider amusing.
- Interviewer:** So, can we say then that humour always works when learning a language?
- Professor:** Not all language classes respond equally to the humorous initiatives of their teachers. For a variety of reasons students in some classes remain relatively unresponsive throughout the classes. Sometimes it takes longer for classes to relax and become readily responsive. In some cases, the teacher has to wait for a spontaneous situation to break the ice.
- Interviewer:** What about the language? Do some languages lend themselves to the use of humour more than others?
- Professor:** Well, some languages are less communicative than others, I mean, it can take longer to be able to communicate. English in that sense is very approachable. The important thing is that there are a number of specific techniques to ensure that humour is used in the class and it depends a lot on whether professionals want to use it or not. A facial expression, an exaggerated gesture, a silly comment about yourself, anything can give the class the right feeling. Teachers should be careful, though, that it is something controlled. Otherwise the students can get overexcited and laughter can get out of control. But at the end of the day it is all about collective and supportive learning.
- Interviewer:** Well, Professor Adams, thank you very much for being here today.

Exam practice 2 (Track 1B)

Susan: Hi, Simon. How are you?

Simon: Do you really want the truth?

Susan: Oh dear, what's wrong?

Simon: I'm so fed up, I have five tests next week and then my final exams. I have the feeling the only thing we do is exams.

Susan: Yes, you're right, but think ahead to the holidays. Ah and by the way, this might interest you, the other day I read an article saying that there could be a change in the exam system because they want to use new technologies.

Simon: I don't really see how. We seem to take exams every year of our lives... we need to take exams to see if we can continue with our education and then we need to take more exams to get into university and it's just exams, exams, exams – and sometimes they can even ruin our future career prospects.

Susan: You're right up to a point. I very often feel that taking exams isn't the ideal way to show what you're capable of, at least not for every student. That's the reason why I feel that this technological application could be very interesting.

Simon: Well, I suppose there's some truth in that and to some extent it's already changing. We did a couple of online tests for the Geography teacher and it really worked. It should happen more often and it's certainly more enjoyable, I don't know, I didn't feel the pressure I normally feel when I take an exam.

Susan: It seems that doing online exams and tests can allow students to progress at their own pace, so that if you are a quicker student you do it quickly and if you're slow, like me, you can take as much time as you need. It's called competency-based learning and it's already been used in high schools in the US and apparently the results are pretty good. It means that teachers can be more relaxed too.

Simon: Why?

Susan: Because they don't have the stress of every student doing the test at the same time.

Simon: But how does it work exactly?

Susan: Apparently it's software that takes information about the student's activity on a course website – the pages the students have visited and whether they have read a certain text or watched a video, for example- and it is combined with other information from the students, like informal tests and quizzes, to analyse how long it takes each student to understand concepts. That means that only when a certain concept or series of concepts have been understood, it moves on to new ones. The student then takes a formal exam.

Simon: It sounds like science-fiction! So it's like individual preparation for each student?

Susan: Exactly. And, as I said, it seems it's working really well. In the article it said that they're using this system at Arizona State University and that the number of students who pass has increased.

Simon: But, be realistic, Susan. Do you see our Physics teacher using these new technologies?

Susan: Hmm, I suppose it's a question of time!

Exam practice 3 and listening practice 2 (Track 2A and 2C)

This is BMB2. Welcome to the programme. Today we're going to talk about homelessness, a situation in which people don't have a regular place to live. Although we can say that it has always existed, the fact is that with the economic crisis, this situation has worsened in some areas. Apparently, in western countries there has been an increase in the number of people who don't live in a house, and to be more precise there has been a big increase of cases in the United States. More than 630.000 Americans, equivalent to a city the size of Boston, are homeless. In fact, a larger number of homeless people is expected due to the current cuts on government spending and the growth of poverty. Most countries provide a variety of services to assist homeless people. They often provide food, shelter and clothing and may be organised and run by community organisations (often with the help of volunteers) or by government departments. These programmes may be supported by government, charities, churches and individual donors.

The national total of more than 630.000 is based on the official data for 2012. This is calculated by the number of people who sleep in the streets or in shelters.

Many politicians think things will get better if the problem is treated effectively by the government. In fact, more than five years after the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, many think we are finally beginning to see signs of recovery.

There are many different stereotypes as far as homelessness is concerned, the biggest being that most people believe that it is only men who become homeless. This is not true and social groups insist that the state of homelessness can happen to anyone at any time. Social workers and social groups explain that when it happens, it takes away your dignity and you feel broken inside. But homeless people must remember that in the same way anyone could get into this desperate situation, there are also options of survival and change.

A good example of this is Liz Murray's story. She wrote the book *From Homeless to Harvard*, where she describes her tremendously hard experience of being homeless, how she lived through it and then became another person. Liz Murray now spends part of her time, talking about her experience and how things can change around the world. She's an inspiration for many...

Exam practice 4 (Track 2B)

- Presenter:** Today in *How to be Social* we have Frank Towers, a social worker who is going to tell us about his job and the areas he believes are most urgent at the moment. Hello, and welcome to the programme, Frank.
- Frank:** Good morning. Thanks for having me.
- Presenter:** So, Frank, when we talk about social work everybody seems to know what it is all about but in a very general sense, I believe. Can you tell us the main issues that social workers address?
- Frank:** Well, we have to remember that there are some main areas that always exist, like social help for the old or the sick, but right now, with the economic crisis there are new problems that emerge for example from unemployment or having unstable jobs, like family conflicts or psychological problems. In our society we need to think a lot about values and how important they are to confront reality. What is really important is to understand that a social worker has an obligation to help people transform conflicts into opportunities.
- Presenter:** What exactly do you mean?
- Frank:** That it is important to understand that sometimes changes are good, even if the people involved cannot see that at the time.
- Presenter:** OK, thanks Frank. That's very interesting. Now, what would you say are the main responsibilities of a social worker?
- Frank:** Well, as I said, a social worker is a change agent, a professional who has to help with changes and new opportunities. We obviously need to be good listeners and get involved in a professional way and not beyond that.
- Presenter:** Why do you think that some people see social work as something that is not particularly positive?
- Frank:** We have to remember that we are usually associated with uncomfortable situations. And some people believe we get involved in ways we shouldn't when we shouldn't!
- Presenter:** Oh dear! I think it's a fascinating job and that you do great work...By the way, if I wanted to become a volunteer, what would I need to do?
- Frank:** Thank you! Well, it's very easy once you've made up your mind. There are many possibilities and the important thing is to look for something realistic and interesting where you think you may find a role. You can join a big NGO, like the Red Cross or Oxfam or go to your local town hall and find out there. Alternatively, it's very common these days to volunteer if you work for a company that offers social volunteering.
- Presenter:** And what is your area of expertise, Frank?
- Frank:** As social workers, we have to be able to work in any area related to social issues but for the last seven years I've been working with the elderly, mainly people who have already retired.
- Presenter:** What would you say are the main qualities a social worker should have?
- Frank:** For me that's an easy question because it's almost obvious: patience, respect, sympathy, a constant wish to learn, knowledge and empathy.
- Presenter:** Wow, it can't be easy to have all those qualities!!
- Frank:** Well, no, but it's like any job, we have to train every day to get better.
- Presenter:** What about elderly people, what are the main problems that you find when you're working with them?
- Frank:** Many elderly people suffer from solitude, isolation and a lack of resources. These can be human –family or friends-, technical –help or assistance- or material –a low income or retirement pension-. For many people, becoming old is seen as something negative, like becoming dependent, but the fact is that elderly people have a lot to teach us and they are a very important part of society.
- Presenter:** Yes, we should all remember that! I'm afraid that's all we have time for today. Thanks a lot, Frank. Next week, I'll be back with a new edition of *How to be Social*...

Exam practice 5 and listening practice 3 (Track 3B and 3C)

- Presenter:** Today in the programme *"The World We Live in"* we are going to analyse the new resources phenomenon, fracking. And in order to give some answers to your questions we have with us Peter Jenney, an engineer who is an expert in fracking and Pamela Lostown who works for the Environmental Protection Agency. A big welcome to both of you.
- Pamela:** Thanks for having us.
- Peter:** It's a pleasure to be here.
- Presenter:** So, Peter, what is fracking exactly?
- Peter:** Well, to keep it simple, fracking is hydraulic fracturing that involves injecting water under pressure, sand and chemicals underground to open gaps and improve the flow of oil or gas to the surface. It's a very important discovery because it can provide the quantities of gas and petrol that we need.
- Presenter:** That's a very clear explanation, Peter. Apparently it's a controversial method of improving the productivity of oil and gas. Can you explain why, Pamela?
- Pamela:** Please, call me Pam. There are several reasons. To start with, it is causing groundwater pollution because of the chemicals that are used. It's a very aggressive way of looking for energy sources and it can have a lot of implications: political, social, economic... The most recent case of polluted water was in Wyoming and apparently the repercussions in humans who drink this water are still to be found but the authorities have advised against drinking it and people in the area are complaining about the awful smell produced by the chemicals.
- Peter:** Let me interrupt you there, Pam. This connection hasn't been proved. The fracking occurred below the level of the drinking water so it's still not clear that the chemicals come from fracking.
- Pam:** Well, it would be great if that were the case but it's not the only negative impact that has been found, actually.
- Presenter:** So, Pam, what other negative impacts have there been?
- Pam:** I'm certain you've heard about the connection between fracking and earthquakes. In fact, it is being studied in many countries: the United Kingdom, Spain, the US, the Ukraine... In all of them there have been cases of earthquakes in areas where fracking had taken place. On top of that we don't really know the other effects it could have but there are many areas that are exposed to possible earthquakes or water and air pollution, amongst others.
- Peter:** I see your point, but then as I mentioned before, there is not a clear connection between pollution and earthquakes and fracking and what's more important, fracking seems to be the only solution to extracting the amounts of gas and petrol that we need to continue living the way we do now. It's a big opportunity for everybody to save on electricity bills too! Apart from that, new jobs will be created through fracking so there are big advantages.
- Pam:** We are working at all the fracking sites to stop the works until there is a guarantee of safety towards people and the environment. There are many people who believe there are other ways of using natural resources without actually transforming the environment, which is what fracking does. Environmentalists are worried because with the governments accepting fracking, they are also postponing talking seriously about climate change. People need to know that we need to avoid the impacts of climate change and move to renewable energy, reduce energy demand and gradually forget about fossil fuels like gas and petrol.
- Peter:** I understand your point of view completely, but really, Pam, do you believe we can live without petrol and gas? Millions of people own a car, many two, we use central heating and air-conditioning if we're lucky and to keep that going, we cannot rely on renewable energies like those obtained from the wind or the sun. It's just not enough. Governments are looking for solutions, science is changing very fast and I want to believe that in a short period of time there will be a way of doing fracking – or an alternative to it- that won't cause any problems to people or to the environment, if it does right now, which is still not clear.
- Pam:** OK, but just so it's clear: both environmental experts and scientists are clear that we need to leave around 80% of fuel reserves in the ground if we want to protect the climate. It doesn't make any sense to start a new oil and gas industry.
- Presenter:** Well, that's all very interesting....

Exam practice 6 (Track 3A)

Who doesn't associate the lovely St Bernard with a barrel of brandy round its neck, with the Alps and with saving people? Switzerland's noble St Bernard, famous for centuries for rescuing avalanche victims buried in the Alps isn't our number one choice any more. It has been said that the breed is too slow and heavy in the deep Alpine snow, and on top of that, they're expensive to feed and have already been mostly replaced with helicopters and heat sensors. St Bernard's are becoming obsolete.

The religious order, the Congregation of Canons of the Great St Bernard, has raised, trained and kept the dogs since about 1660, but the dogs are now too expensive for them to keep and they find themselves in a position of having to sell the 18 adults and 16 puppies they have left.

We don't know exactly when the dogs first started to rescue people, but they are credited with saving more than 2000 travellers over the past 200 years on the St Bernard Pass on the border with Italy. We know that at the beginning of the century they were very useful, but in 1955 the helicopter, which had limited room for dogs, came on the scene. Helicopters are quicker, can rescue more people and can reach places a dog would find difficult. And what is more, a helicopter can take the person in danger to the nearest hospital.

The last St Bernard was used around 1975, when it was replaced by golden retrievers and German shepherds to run over the remains of an avalanche and sniff for victims. Since the early 1950s, the dogs have been sent to spend the winters in the kennels in the valley, but returned during the summer tourist season. Many tourists are interested in learning how these dogs were trained to rescue people and why they have become a symbol of the Alps.

But what does the future hold for these dogs? They will probably be sold to associations, rather than individuals, and their new owners will have to let them return to the mountains in the summer when the tourists come.

Exam practice 7 and listening practice 4 (Track 4B)

Recently there seem to be more young people with mental health problems. According to experts, universities should do more to encourage students with mental health problems to look for help. More than a quarter of students who say they experience mental health problems do not get treatment and only one in ten use counselling services provided by their university, according to a National Union of Students (NUS) survey. Of the students surveyed, one in five said they experienced mental health problems while at university. This is in line with national statistics estimating that in any one year 23% of British adults experience a mental disorder.

For many students, going to university means that they leave home and start a new life, both academically and physically.

Those who do experience mental health problems mention coursework deadlines and exams as the initial cause of distress. Financial difficulties, pressure on being part of a group and homesickness also contribute to mental ill health.

Stress is one of the most common symptoms of distress, with many students also reporting a lack of energy, motivation or anxiety. 55% of students suffer from this and insomnia. Some 38% experience panic, while 14% consider hurting themselves and 13% report suicidal thoughts.

Researchers admit that their survey may exaggerate the number of mental health problems among students. But experts say that their main concern is that very few of the students experiencing distress speak about their problems. Of those who do experience mental health problems, 64% do not use any formal services for advice and support.

Students are more likely to tell their friends and family about feelings of anxiety, than they are to approach a doctor, academic or university counsellor. Paul Farmer, chief executive of *Mind*, says this may be because of the stigma attached to mental illnesses. He adds that universities should do more to reach out to students. Higher education institutions need to ensure not just that services are in place to support mental wellbeing, but that they create a culture of openness where students feel able to talk about their mental health and are aware of the support that's available. Opening up to friends and family can help those feeling stressed or anxious, but anyone consistently feeling down may have a mental health problem, so it's best they visit their doctor because nobody should suffer alone.

For many academics, the results of the study are not surprising because for a long time the student community has been considered at high risk for mental ill health, with exams, intense studying and living away from home for the first time all being contributing factors.

Where symptoms of poor mental health are spotted early and appropriate support and treatment is put in place the recovery is significantly improved. Much more needs to be done within educational settings to improve the prevention and intervention of mental ill health.

Exam practice 8 (Track 4A and 4C)

- Paul:** I was listening to a really interesting programme on the radio yesterday. They were talking about whether success makes us happy or if happy people succeed. What do you think?
- Mary:** Well, it's not an easy question. Let me see, I suppose it depends on the perspective. I would say both. But I think that while success makes us happy almost automatically, the second idea is debatable. I imagine that it has to do with how interested you are in becoming successful.
- Paul:** I consider that happiness is a wide concept and to some extent varies depending on the person. Some people are interested in success but then what is success? A lot of people relate it automatically to professional success, but in my case, for example, I'm more interested in personal success. I suppose it depends on your professional career.
- Mary:** OK and so how would you define personal success?
- Paul:** Some essential elements for me are good health, enough money to live on, a good group of friends and fitting in. What about you?
- Mary:** I agree with everything you've said, but I also think it's essential for everyone to have a dream.
- Paul:** That's very poetic, Mary! But what exactly do you mean?
- Mary:** They say that some middle-aged people are not as positive as when they were younger because they are already in a good professional position, they enjoy good health and a happy relationship but deep inside they think, 'is this all?' Supposedly they have covered all the important areas in their lives and there is nothing more to look forward to.
- Paul:** Yes, I understand but that could also be seen as the mid-life crisis. Optimism is very important. And I also think that stress, positive stress, that is, is good in order to see things as a challenge. The more positive you are at work, for example, the more likely you are to help your workmates. I'm talking about work now, but it's the same with everything.
- Mary:** Yes, but it's impossible not to feel a bit down at times. I don't think we can all be positive all the time. A friend of mine, Sonia, was telling me the other day that she was feeling a bit bored with work and stressed with things at home. But thought she shouldn't feel that way because she knows how lucky she is – but sometimes we just can't help it. Anyway, she was telling me about this idea she had - she decided to write down all the things she was happy about in her life and do exercise for ten minutes every day. She says it helped and when she didn't understand why she was feeling miserable she went to her list and remembered all the happy things that she had in life. You should do it, Paul, you seem to be a bit tired and fed up with work at the moment.
- Paul:** You're probably right. Although what I think I really need is a holiday!

Exam practice 9 and listening practice 5 (Track 5A and 5C)

Have you ever heard of Creedence Clearwater Revival? It was once the biggest band in America and after the Beatles split up, in the world. This was back in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Creedence Clearwater Revival was for many, the only band that could bring together hippies, the pop critic and rock lovers. For Bruce Springsteen they were just the best.

In 1972 the band split up and it wasn't a nice separation. There were lots of legal problems and creative paralysis. Things became so difficult between the members that John Fogerty, the leader, couldn't perform his own songs for 25 years because his feelings were too painful. He confessed that if he was driving his car and one of his old hits came on the car radio – which happened often – he would have to turn it off.

But after that very long period, in his early 70s Fogerty returned! Forty years later, he still has the good looks of a Hollywood cowboy. He still sings in the same style and is delighted to take to the stage again and give it his all. What is more, he still wears the traditional cowboy shirts he introduced to rock 20 years ago and he sells them too. The shirt business was an idea his second wife, Julie, came up with. Julie also suggested the name for Fogerty's new album: *Wrote a Song for Everyone*, and according to the musician, Julie is also responsible for making him forget about the bad times and go back to music.

His childhood was far from ideal. He spent it in a suburb of California. His mother divorced his alcoholic father and brought her five sons up on her teacher's salary. He confessed he felt ashamed of the poor conditions in which he lived and never took friends home for that reason.

He first started playing with his older brother, Tom, in a high school band, *The Blue Velvets*, when he was just 15. He started writing lyrics, in what he considered a very inspirational moment, when he joined the Army. Why then? It seems that he spent many hours marching around doing nothing and it was after that that the original high school band became Creedence Clearwater Revival and Fogerty began to write many of the most important songs in the history of rock. He describes his creative process in almost mystical terms. He would stay up late in his apartment, after his wife and baby had gone to bed, stare at a blank wall and let his imagination flow.

Exam practice 10 (Track 5B)

Helen: You know, Tom, the other day I went to the cinema with Anna. You won't believe what we saw.

Tom: Another vampire film? God! They're everywhere!

Helen: No, we've already seen all of those. We went to see *Malificent*.

Tom: I can't believe it. You're 17 and Anna's already 18. It's a children's film!!

Helen: It's not really for children. I read a review which said that it was a film for preadolescents.

Tom: Ah, well, in that case.... No, really, don't you think you are a bit old for that?

Helen: Oh, come on, Tom, you sound like my dad! There's a new fashion to readapt fairy tales and in the review that I read it said that the idea behind these films is to retell stories from a different point of view. So, for example *Mirror, Mirror*, was a retelling of *Snow White*, the same way *Malificent* is a retelling of *Sleeping Beauty*.

Tom: Yes, yes, very interesting, but if you ask me, it's all about these superstars playing baddies, so for example in *Mirror, Mirror* Julia Roberts was the cruel stepmother while in *Malificent* Angelina Jolie was the baddie.

Helen: For a person who doesn't like this type of film, you seem to know a lot. ..

Tom: Oh come on, they're advertised everywhere: on TV, in trailers, in newspapers, when I open my email account. It's incredible!

Helen: I suppose that because these superstars are playing the main roles, a lot of people, like me, I confess, will go to see how actors like Angelina Jolie play the role.

Tom: So nobody goes for the plot then? Almost everyone knows the plot of *Sleeping Beauty*.

Helen: Well, it's not really like that. You see, the plot changes and the characters, are given different roles. So, at the end of the day, *Malificent* is not as bad as she was in the original story.

Tom: You must admit there is something perverse about these characters. I remember when I was little and my mum and dad would read me these fairy tales I used to get really scared sometimes.

Helen: It's a key element of fairy tales. The baddie is horrible and the goodie is really innocent. You always find conventional elements like a sinister situation and a happy ending.

Tom: Yes, but we need to understand the difference between a fairy tale and, for example, Walt Disney films. I don't know but I think that when I was little being read a fairy tale was like entering the dark side of life. Films were less aggressive. I suppose it was my imagination running away with me.

Helen: You are dramatic! But yes, some elements of the plot are terrifying: a wolf eating a grandmother, a little girl lost in the woods, a horrible stepmother forcing a lovely girl to clean the house non-stop, an old woman waiting to eat a boy and a girl.... And on the other hand, there's always a moral side to the tales. But going back to the films. I suppose that these new Disney versions of the classics are given another perspective for the potential market. It shows a more gothic side. It's very clear in *Malificent*. She's good deep inside but her physical appearance makes it difficult to believe. In fact, her own daughter had to play *Sleeping Beauty* because apparently all the possible candidates were terrified of her!!

Tom: Are you reading your little sister's magazines again, Helen?

Exam practice 11 and listening practice 6 (Track 6A and 6C)

Today we are going to talk about global initiatives. And one of the most popular new businesses is *Tiger*, which has become the new shopping phenomenon after IKEA. In some ways the concept is the same: shiny, cheap and attractive products but while IKEA is basically a furniture shop, *Tiger* is more orientated to small complements for the house. It could be colourful napkins, small toys or tiny home furnishings but what is true is that Scandinavian chic has never been cooler. *Tiger* is the Danish version of the pound shop but with a chic touch and shoppers from around the world can't get enough.

Let's give an example: it's lunchtime on Monday and shopping in *Tiger's* central London store is busy as office workers look for multi-coloured toys, stationery and hobby paraphernalia such as knitting needles and glue. With 80% of the products selling for £5 or less, the concept is Danish design at very competitive prices.

For many it's a bit like an Ikea marketplace on speed because you definitely don't need an hour to go through it if you don't want to- and it describes a chain which is getting stronger every day not only in the UK but in many other European countries like Spain. But what makes the big difference? There's great design and it's cheap so you are always tempted to buy something. Also the loud music means it always seems cheerful.

How did it all start? It was founded by Lennart Lajboschitz, who started out running a market stall in Copenhagen's Israel Square. He conceived *Tiger* as a pound shop where everybody could get something for a pound or more. Its name has nothing to do with the wild animal but is a play on the Danish slang for kroner (the local money). The philosophy is to sell stylish things in a fun environment at astonishingly low prices and, as a consequence, it quickly earned the nickname of the "posh pound shop".

Its director explains that just because the products they sell are affordable, they don't need to be nasty or horrible looking. After a slow start, which saw the company experiment with its products and locations, it is now working fantastically well. Last year, sales increased from £14.7m to £21.3m.

Many believe *Tiger* can become as influential as IKEA, which changed the way thousands of homes looked when it arrived with its fashionable pine furniture and traditional cushions in the late 1980s. *Tiger*, which has more than 300 stores in 20 countries, also has more financial power.

In fact, the moment couldn't have been better. With the economic crisis, many shops on the high streets were left empty and there is a real need for real shops on the high street. The shopping areas look better if the shops are open and people can enjoy going shopping when they know they are not going to spend more than a few euros without feeling bad about it and without having to think a lot about it.

Exam practice 12 (Track 6B)

Jennifer: Hi, Alice, I know you're really into economics and I need your help.

Alice: Well, I don't know whether I'll be able to help you but you can try me!

Jennifer: OK. What exactly is crowdfunding?

Alice: Ah, I really like that concept, and yes, I can give you some information because I'm helping a friend with that at the moment. Imagine you want to start a business but you don't have the money or you want other people to participate using the internet, social networks and so on, you advertise it and announce it and if you get enough people to participate you can start it.

Jennifer: But is this only for business?

Alice: No, it can be used for social purposes too, I don't know, to raise money to help a person who has a medical problem, for instance, or political – to support a political party- or commercial – to create and sell a new product. Crowdfunding can also be used to start a new financial project and see whether it's going to work.

Jennifer: So it's usually for big projects then?

Alice: No, not necessarily, it can start as something small, for example, small inventors that want to try and launch their inventions and then it becomes something big. It happened with Kano, a computer that you build yourself, and which became the UK's most crowdfunded idea ever. Experts call crowdfunding an idea incubator, it can work or not.

Jennifer: Can anybody do it then?

Alice: Generally speaking, yes. There are many models of crowdfunding and many types of participants. These include the people or institutions that propose an idea or a project to be founded and then the "crowd", the people who want to support or participate in the project. Then you have an organisation or platform that supports the project.

Jennifer: That sounds complex.

Alice: Not really, some of the essential aspects to get started properly are social channels and events to get people to know about the project. These events can be done using photographs, videos and inspiring stories, anything to make your proposal look different and attractive. It's also important to get as many people involved as possible.

Jennifer: So it's like starting a normal business.

Alice: In many ways, it is. The differences are the crowd, the number of people that you get into your project. There's an expression 'building a tribe' that represents, for me, exactly what crowdfunding means. Depending on the background and the objectives your *tribe* can be formed by teachers, friends, potential customers, families. They should be well informed and they should give ideas or express an opinion that should be respected because they are part of the business.

Jennifer: So, how long does it take to get started?

Alice: Well, that's a difficult one. It depends on the project itself, what you are trying to obtain and the amount of time you have on your hands. Let me give you an example. As I said before, there are some political parties or candidates that have crowdfunded. They have to sit down and decide how long they have before a poll to reach their goals.

Jennifer: It's all so modern!

Alice: Well, the origins are definitely not. Apparently, there have been crowdfunding projects going on since the 17th century, for example, to get money to get books printed. What has changed is the channel because in crowdfunding the way we understand it today, the internet is essential.