

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY EXAM

LISTENING SECTION

PART 1 WHILE LISTENING

Listen to the first half of an interview with a woman who works as a casting director in the film industry. As you listen, answer the questions by choosing the best alternative. You will listen to the recording **ONCE** only. You now have 30 seconds to look at questions 1-5. (30 SECONDS BUILT IN)

NOW LISTEN

Interviewer : My guest today is Tina Goldman. Her name has appeared on the credits of many well-known films. Although her role in making those films successful was crucial, you've probably never heard of her because she works as a casting director. As you may know, casting is a preproduction process and the audience generally has little interest to know what is happening in this process and who is responsible for selecting actors and actresses. Tina welcome.

Tina : Hello.

Interviewer : So it's quite a big responsibility, is it, Tina, finding the actors for a film?

Tina : The job of a casting director is a highly-skilled one actually, because without the right cast, there is no movie. Although experience counts of course, intuition, I mean something you are born with, is the essential quality for the job, and that's not something you can learn. Without a natural understanding inside, it is not possible for a person to be good at in this job. You signal things to the audience through the kind of actors you cast and those signals have got to reflect the central message of the script and the director's vision.

Interviewer : So how do you go about it? I mean, can you please tell us more about how you do your job?

Tina : Sure. Actually, it's an odd process, because it's not just about casting a certain number of actors in roles. The dynamic is extremely important: if you have a comedian, you have to cast a particular type of person against him. And it's also about energy: if one person has quite a low-energy style, then you need someone opposite that person to encourage him a bit and make him more energetic. In other words, I always look for the actors who complete each other and make a coherent whole. When I meet an actor, I'm trying to find a quality in that person that reflects into the part in an interesting way, although actors don't really like people saying that, as they believe they can act every part. But that's how I do it.

Interviewer : And do you do the whole range of films, or there are times that you get to choose?

Tina : Well I must admit that I do say no to quite a lot of scripts. I only do films that I feel have something important to say or that see life in an interesting way, or are being made by people that I know I like. After I've read the script, I start to have ideas and talk to people.

Interviewer : And is it the place where the director leaves it all to you? I mean from this point onwards, are you free to do anything you like?

Tina: Well, I should say yes. I do all the preparatory work. The first stage is that agents send in photos, video tapes and resumes of actors that I've requested or that they think are good. I watch loads of tapes. If I like an actor, I'll meet them, or go to see them in a play. This is the time when I meet the actors, and up to this stage, everything is my responsibility. Then, my responsibility ends and I send to director the list I have prepared. He is the very person who makes the final selection from my list. On average, a director sees about eight or nine actors per part but I see many more. When I take on a film, I'll cast the whole thing, even if a person doesn't speak in a role.

Interviewer : How did you get into this in the first place? I mean, how did you decide to be a casting director?

Tina : I didn't so much choose my career. Actually, I should say that I fall into it. I was hanging around London, working as a stagehand at the National Theatre. I was responsible for getting the stage ready for the plays. You may know, doing things like setting up the scenery, lights, sound, props, rigging, and special effects for a production. And I met someone there who thought I'd be good at it. He was an agent and he said that I had the flair and would be quite successful in casting. He got me a job as an assistant and it all started. I've always been drawn to the bright lights and I can say that this was a step up from what I had been doing.

THIS IS THE END OF THE FIRST HALF OF THE INTERVIEW. NOW, YOU ARE GOING TO LISTEN TO THE SECOND HALF OF THE INTERVIEW. YOU NOW HAVE 30 SECONDS TO LOOK AT QUESTIONS 6-10. (30 SECONDS BUILT IN)

NOW LISTEN

Interviewer : Let's talk a little more about your career. Tina, were you ambitious when you started?

Tina: Yes. I don't believe anyone who does well isn't. I mean one cannot be successful without ambition. I was initially attracted by the glamour of it all, but I'm definitely not driven by money, because I still don't have any. What absolutely drives me now in all parts of my life is that I don't want to be old and have regrets. I want be satisfied with what I have done. As humans, each of us is able to do something successfully, and I think it's a shame if you don't achieve that.

Interviewer : But you took a break from your career at one time, didn't you?

Tina : That's right. I was working on a film which was set in the rain forests of South America. I loved the place but I had such a horrible time on the film that as soon as I came back, I put my whole office into nine bin bags and threw them out of the window. I said: "If that's what the film industry is about, then I am giving up". I stayed away for nine months.

Interviewer : But what went wrong, why did you give up?

Tina : The worst aspect of the job is that the casting stage is a stressful time in the making of a film. It takes a lot longer than people think – a big film can take six months. Believe me, this is a too long and stressful process. An awful lot of other people's frustrations can land on you and I've never really learned how not to take it personally. I can't help feeling guilty for everything that goes wrong as I am the sort of person who looks for perfection. I'm a person fully committed to my job and I really want the best to happen in my professional life.

Interviewer : But in the end, they tempted you back, didn't they? I mean you couldn't stay away from the world of casting.

Tina : Yes. The only reason I came back was because one of my favorite directors handed me a lovely script. It wasn't even that I wanted it, I'd got plenty of theatre work which I was enjoying. But I just couldn't bear the idea of anyone else doing that script because it was so brilliant. It is the best thing about my job, working with really fantastic people. I'm lucky, I work with interesting individuals and scripts are good. But after my work is done, I move on – I don't get involved in the rest of the making of the film. At the end, at the after-shoot party, everyone looks at me as if to say, "Who are you?", but I don't mind because the people who matter know what part I have played and anyway, by that time I'm already getting my teeth into the next one... and I love that feeling .

Interviewer : Tina, thanks millions of times for talking to us today. I really feel honored to have hosted such a great talent in my program. Ladies and gentlemen, today we all have had the privilege of talking to Tina Goldman, one of the greatest talent scouts in the film industry.

Tina: Thank you.

THIS IS THE END OF THE WHILE LISTENING SECTION. NOW GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

PART TWO

NOTE-TAKING

Mass Media and Society

The term media is derived from the word medium, which means carrier or mode. Media is an item specifically designed to reach a large audience or viewers. The term was first used with the advent of newspapers and magazines. However, with the passage of time, the term broadened by the inventions of radio, TV, cinemas and the Internet. Currently, media has become almost as necessary as food and clothing and it is not wrong to say that media is playing an outstanding role in strengthening the society. Basic objectives of media are **to inform, educate, entertain, warn people and raise political awareness and improve trade**. It has a strong social and cultural impact upon society as well as it can play an effective role to bring positive change in society. Along with the positive change it can offer, the media also brings some disadvantages with each of **these objectives**. Because of its inherent ability to reach larger number of public, it is widely used to convey messages to build public opinion and awareness but so many times, this process is disrupted by **many things**. In order to understand how mass media affects societies we need to look closer into these objectives with a few more details and analyse some examples. Mass media can be used for all the purposes mentioned at the beginning of our lecture. Now let's talk about them one by one.

News & Current Affairs:

One of the major duties of media today **is to inform** the people about the latest happenings around them and the world. They cover all aspects of our interest like weather, politics, war, health, finance, science, fashion, music, etc. The need for more and more news has evolved into creation of dedicated TV and radio channels and magazines and for the last 15 years, the internet has had a great influence on news distribution with social media and news sites. People can listen to, watch and read latest news whenever and wherever they want. However, together with all these benefits, **media has also brought with it a negative side: the age of misinformation**. This means that the information we receive through media might be inaccurate and **misleading**. There are millions of news sources, and mass media providers are in competition with each other to release stories faster than other news channels. News produced at such quick rates does not allow for fact checking. I mean the news is released without verifying the source and the news itself. For example, during the Vietnam War, although the Vietnamese forces were winning against American soldiers on the battlefield, the news reports from the battle field were transferred too quickly without confirming the news source that although American forces were losing against Vietnamese forces, media provided the bits of news that said the Vietnamese were losing against them.

Education:

Because the power of media is so extensive and huge, it can be used to **educate people at a very little cost**. Imagine a classroom in every city with thousands of students being taught by just one teacher. As you see, educating people through media can be quite affordable. But unfortunately, **because of moneymaking approach of media and lack of interest by government, very little work is done in spreading the education to great masses. Media has given way to the age of greed**. Instead of educating people in remote parts of the world, media is interested in the drama and the news stories that it can get from these people to broadcast on their reports. **Many media companies know that providing**

education for masses is less profitable than broadcasting stories with high ratings that can make millions for them. For example, the hunger and lack of education in Africa are two of the problems that are constantly shown on TVs but very little media coverage is made to promote education for these people. **When you do a quick research on the net you can only see results about educational projects by local people but not by world leading mass media patrons. They choose to stay away from it.**

Entertainment:

The original idea behind the creation of various „media means“ was **to entertain masses.** Radio, TV, Cinemas and Magazines spend most of their resources targeting on entertaining items and programs. Because of the growing population and developing lifestyle, the demand for more entertainment is increasing. Every year billions of dollars are traded in entertainment industry. **All the system in media industry is now based on entertainment.** Every news report, every show involves an element of entertainment whether it is appropriate or not. Social media is also a great contributor. Social media sites like Facebook, tweeter and YouTube provide much of the entertainment on the internet and people tend to focus too much on their entertainment and this created **selfish individuals and self-centred communities.** **Even though** media provides cheap entertainment for everyone, it brought about **the age of individualism**. For instance, **violence** on TV and social media has become a normal phenomenon for most of the youth and we can easily observe this with chain of school shooting events in the United States in the last couple of years where students killed their classmates in cold blood with no empathy.

Political Awareness:

Media is the supervisor of the political system. If it plays its role honestly, it will be a great force in building the nation. It plays a great role in **bringing common man close to their leaders.** The media focuses on bringing details of all major political situations, decisions and scenarios. Hence people can better understand their rights and make better decisions. On the flip side of the coin, media distances people from the real politics and it builds barriers between public and politician. People tend to believe whatever they hear on the TV about politics so they are open to manipulation and this has resulted in **the age of manipulation** in mass media. The problem of objectivity in media is pretty obvious in mass media culture. The media has a role to inform the citizens about the competing political parties and their programmes and candidates, and to contribute to the formation of opinion. However, it is sometimes **manipulated** by the governing party (especially if the media is state-owned) to report in their favour. As an example, North Korea is one of the most closed societies on the planet and has been for decades. All media outlets are strictly owned and controlled by the North Korean government. As such, every media in North Korea gets its news from the Korean Central News Agency. The media dedicates a large portion of its resources toward political propaganda and promoting the personality cult Kim Jong-un. In this country, people have only one political view and it is unlikely to change.

Advertising

Advertising is a part of mass media. Market of advertisement has been developed as much as we can see an advertisement per one minute. People get to choose the product that they

want amongst many options and it provides freedom. This also increases competition amongst companies. Nowadays most products make up of advertisement because each product has to be sold in competition society. Now customers live in the flood of advertising. From the moment of opening eyes to going to bed, people are connected with advertising through television, radio, newspapers, magazines and catalogues. Companies use special tactics to make people buy more products. Big Capitalist Organisations **started the age of Consumerism with the help of the media**. For example, a firm called Traction recently ran a small experiment in San Francisco, selling lemonade. When presented with the exact same product branded in two different ways the majority of people tended to pay twice as much for the “**brand**” that they know because they had seen the ad many times on TV before. **Consumerism** and ostentatious life styles have affected our physico-mental set-up. No pursuit and profession is free from compulsive control of commercialization of attitude and approach.

If too much domination of the media, both electronic and print, is undesirable and uncalled for, it is equally unethical if the media becomes the slave of the society and caters to its transitory tastes rather than highlighting the real problems of the people. An increased interaction between both the media and the people can help enlarge their territories and thus keep at bay certain forces that make a fool of both. In some quarters, there are apprehensions that today we are all being bombarded for twenty four hours a day by television programs and the daily newspaper too are touching every aspects of our lives. In their intense competition to be heard (read) and influence (impress), we are constantly bombarded with words and more words.

In conclusion, people have to be careful when accepting mass media's information. There are not simple solutions to solve the problem of media. These problems of mass media like television, the internet and advertising have bad effects on people especially the perfection of self during childhood. People should try to accept right information through mass media. Therefore, they need to improve critical thoughts for filtering correct acknowledge. The media has the power of educating people, the good and the bad. Since it affects the eyes, the ears and the mind simultaneously nothing can overcome the influence of the media. The media in the advanced society should perform a noble mission of enlightening people and discourage sectarian, communal and divisive trends.