

Listening 27: Lesson 8A, Exercise 3

Reporter And now, the news headlines at one o'clock. North African leaders from several nations have met in Egypt to discuss plans for the Trans-Saharan natural gas pipeline. Although work has yet to begin on the pipeline, its route has been agreed: it will run from the south of Nigeria, through Algeria to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. This latest meeting is to discuss the financing of the project.

In Rome, protestors are demonstrating outside a meeting of European energy ministers. Although the meeting aims to agree new ways to cut greenhouse gases, protestors point out that most of the ministers arrived for the meeting in private jets, which have an unacceptably large carbon footprint, they claim.

Plans to build a new wind farm off the coast of Wales have met strong opposition from local residents. They claim that the proposed facility would harm tourism in the area, but the government argues that the wind farm is an essential part of their Green Energy policy. Local activists are calling for a referendum on the issue.

And finally, firefighters in London have rescued a six-week-old kitten called Sooty who climbed ten metres up an electricity pylon before getting stuck. Sooty's owner called the fire service when the kitten failed to come home for its usual evening meal. Firefighters say Sooty was lucky she did not come into contact with any of the high voltage cables, or she could have ended up being 'Sooty' in more ways than one ...

Listening 28: Lesson 8C, Exercise 4

Boy Have I eaten bugs? Well, not insects exactly – but I've eaten worms. It was when I was on a trip around the world with a friend from school. We took a year out between school and university. Four months into the trip, we were in Samoa, in the South Pacific. It was in November, I think, and we heard that something special was happening that night on the beach. Everyone there was really excited about it, so when it was dark, we went down to the sea to check out what was happening. I'd never seen anything like it. The moon was bright and the sea looked as if it were boiling – but in fact, we were told it was the one night of the year when the palolo worms come to the surface in order to reproduce. The locals go into the sea with nets and catch thousands of them. It was amazing to watch. Some people were just picking them out of the sea and eating them raw. But most people were collecting them in buckets. We didn't eat any that night, but the next day we tried them fried. They tasted OK – I mean, they weren't delicious, in my opinion, but I'm glad I tried them. It was an experience!

Listening 29: Lesson 8F, Exercise 2

Girl I think the best poster for getting people to save energy is the third one. I'd go for that one because I think it's quite interesting – it makes you think a bit. The first poster, for example, isn't interesting at all. We all know that turning off lights is a way to save energy. I just don't think anyone would look twice at that poster. The second poster is OK – I like the fact that it includes a funny cartoon. But it isn't very realistic, because lots of people simply can't choose to walk or cycle to school; they need to go by bus or tram. The third poster is interesting because it made me want to know more. Why does painting your walls white help to save energy? I'd like to know the answer – I'll probably look online later to find out.

Listening 30: Lesson 8F, Exercises 3 and 4

Girl I think it's very important for people to reduce their energy consumption. The main reason is that we really do need to reduce our carbon footprint. But personally, I think companies and manufacturers should do a lot more to help. Why do I think that? Well, for one thing, there are so many aspects which individuals can't control. For example, how much electricity your laptop uses. Only businesses can develop new technology to reduce energy consumption. Another thing is, they should reduce the amount of packaging they use – especially plastic packaging. On top of that, they should make sure the products themselves contain materials which can be recycled.

Listening 31: Get Ready for your Exam 4

Girl I've been a vegetarian since I was eighteen and first travelled round Europe with a friend. It was the meat and fish markets on the continent that brought me to the conclusion that I could no longer justify eating meat. I realised then that the supermarkets in Britain that I was used to – with their plastic slices of meat in their plastic containers – had shielded me from the unwelcome truth of where meat actually came from. In the meat markets of Italy, for example, the vendors were unashamed about the origins of their wares. Deer, pig and lamb carcasses hung above their stalls in the sunshine, and live rabbits and chickens sat in boxes, waiting to be bought and killed for the dinner table. It occurred to me with sudden clarity that I would not be able to kill an animal for food, and if I couldn't do that, then I personally shouldn't eat meat at all. I ordered an omelette and salad that evening in a café, and when I went home I looked further into the production of meat for human consumption.

What I found out about factory farming horrified me. Those animals in the Italian market at least had had a decent life on a small farm in the country first. Factory farming in Britain – where animals are bred and slaughtered without even their basic living requirements met – was cruel and inhumane. At that time, pigs lived and gave birth chained in pens with no room even to move or lie down. Chickens were kept similarly in tiny boxes purely to produce as many eggs as possible. I thought that we as humans should behave far better than this to the animals we kept. And as a vegetarian, I needed to make sure that the eggs I ate were from free-range hens.

Animal welfare has been my passion for the last ten years and I am a highly active member of the organisation Compassion in World Farming. We frequently campaign for the better treatment of animals, and with some success. Those pig pens are no longer used, for example. Much higher standards of animal welfare now have to be met and farms are routinely inspected. We have campaigned to get rid of battery hens and finally a law is being passed in Britain to ban them. I'm now particularly involved in protesting against animal testing, a lot of which I think is wasteful and unnecessary torture. I think as humans we can only be judged by how well we treat the dumb animals in our care.