

10 Worksheet Final Test: New York

A LISTENING COMPREHENSION

These tasks deal with the beginning of an episode of the radio programme “This American Life” originally aired 09.09.2011, on the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The website of the station says:

In this show, we return to people who've been on *This American Life* in the last ten years, whose lives were drastically altered by 9/11, including Hyder Akbar, an Afghan-American teen who moved to Afghanistan after his father was tapped to become governor of Kunar province there.

Take five minutes to study the tasks below. Then go to the following link and listen to the first passage “ACT ONE. KABUL KABUL KABUL KABUL CHAMELEON” (from the beginning to 13:06 – this will be 9:56 long, because you skip the introduction and start at 3:10):

<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/445/ten-years-in>

(Please copy and paste this hyperlink into your browser, then click on the small red “play” button to the left of the headline “ACT ONE. KABUL KABUL ...”.)

Try to do some of the tasks while listening. When you have reached 13:06, stop the player and work on the tasks for about three minutes, then listen to the same passage again, and complete the tasks within another four minutes. Try to keep to the times indicated in order to get used to having limited time – just like in an exam.

1. Why did Hyder Akbar go back to Afghanistan at age 16? (do not tick more than 2 options):

- His father and uncles had been invited by the Russian government.
- Hyder was curious to meet his relatives who had behaved bravely.
- Hamid Karzai, the leader of the Afghan government, was an old friend of his father's.
- His family wanted to help the Taliban.

2. In one of his early reports, Hyder is very impressed by his visit to a palace. Complete his sentences:

It was almost like _____. Like, there's all the _____
and how they _____ and _____. Almost looks like you're
_____ in _____ or
Universal Studios.

3. On his two trips, Hyder has a lot of adventurous experiences. Which of the following did he actually have? (do not tick more than 2 options)

- worked as an interrogator for the US military.
- got involved in a shooting.
- saw his friend die in prison.
- witnessed the damage caused by a car bomb.

4. When Ira Glass phones him ten years later, Hyder lives in Kabul and has founded an NGO. What is the purpose of this organization?

5. Then Glass plays another message that Hyder recorded as a 16-year-old; in this whispered passage, Hyder promises not to let his uncle down. What does he mean by that?

6. Why is Hyder disappointed when he hears what he said ten years before? (1 option)

- He is sorry to have been so naïve.
- He is sad that he hasn't managed to become a successful businessman.
- He is frustrated about the fact that his country does not seem to have improved much.

7. There was one sign of change between 2002 and 2003 that impressed Hyder very much. What was it? (1 option)

- The shops sold a lot more burkas in 2003.
- The percentage of women wearing a burka went down by ca. 70 per cent.
- The girls did not have any jeans in 2002.
- Many women even dropped their burkas in 2003.

8. Why do the Taliban kidnap young men? (1 option)

- They demand ransom money in order to be able to buy more guns.
- They need them for their religious ceremonies.
- They need new members for their organization.
- It is their kind of practical joke; later they bring the people back.

9. Hyder tells a story about his friend Yusef and a Kalashnikov (a semi-automatic gun). What does he want to illustrate by that story?

B TEXT COMPREHENSION AND ANALYSIS

Please read the following article by Michelle O'Donnell in the New York Times of 14 Oct 2001:

The Elderly Face an Abyss, But They Remain Unbowed

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/14/nyregion/neighborhood-report-new-york-up-close-elderly-face-abyss-but-they-remain-unbowed.html>

(Please copy and paste this hyperlink into your browser.)

Annotation: par. 10 **Pancho Villa** 1878-1920, charismatic leader in the Mexican revolution; in 1916 he raided the border town of Columbus, New Mexico, because an American merchant refused to deliver the arms to Villa's army which they had paid him for.

Questions on the text

- 1 What does the headline mean? Explain in your own words.
- 2 Explain the metaphor in the introduction: “change and how it chisels away at life” (par. 1).
- 3 One of the qualities the author praises about New Yorkers is their “resilience” (par. 3); what other expressions and phrases are used to name or illustrate that quality?

C TEXT PRODUCTION

Choose one of these topics and write 200 to 250 words.

- a) You have learnt a lot about New York now. Would you like to live there? Weigh the pros and cons.
- b) Park (one-word essay).

D MEDIATION

Choose one of the following tasks.

- a) Translate paragraphs 10 to 19 of the text “The Elderly Face an Abyss, But They Remain Unbowed” into idiomatic German (from “Jerry Cohen ...” to the end). Bear in mind that you must be very precise in this kind of task.
- b) An American e-pal of yours, Jenna, has found the text „New York: Keine Angst vor bösen Jungs” by Gerhard Waldherr on the internet. It is an article which was published in the German travel magazine *Merian* in November 2010. Jenna thinks this sounds interesting, but her German is not good enough to understand all of it. So she has asked you to tell her what parts one and two of this text are about. Write her an e-mail in English giving her the information she wants. Do not use more than 300 words.

Read the German text here:

<http://www.merian.de/reiseziele/artikel/a-727408.html> (part one)

(Please copy and paste this hyperlink into your browser)

The link at the bottom, “2: Das alte Image der brennenden Bronx”, gets you to part two. Do not include part 3 in your mediated text.

(Peter Ringeisen)