

# 10 Final Test New York – Answer Key

## A LISTENING COMPREHENSION

The **listening text** is the beginning of an episode of the radio programme “This American Life” (from the beginning to 13:06–this will be 9:56 long, because the introduction is skipped and the text starts 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 ...”.)

The **transcript** of this excerpt can be accessed at:

<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/445/transcript>

(Please copy and paste this hyperlink into your browser)

It starts at “Act One. Kabul Kabul Kabul Kabul Chameleon” and ends at “[DOORBELL RINGING] Sorry, that’s our doorbell, and it’s really tacky and loud.”

**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 going through a movie. Like, there’s all the gates and how they open and the huge locks. Almost looks like you’re visiting some place in Disneyland 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?**

They want to find out what Afghans think and what they want so that international organizations can act accordingly.

**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?**

His uncle has a very high opinion of Hyder and he expects him to work for a change in Afghanistan, for the country to have a better future. Hyder does not want to disappoint his uncle.

**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?**

He tells the story to convey two things. Firstly, the Taliban have a great deal of influence on young men, even children. They spread their message of hatred against all Americans and manage to impress the young. Secondly, Yusef's father does not inform the police of the Taliban's doings, but he goes to the Taliban and asks them for help in the education of his son, which shows that this man does not trust the official side of the law but acknowledges the power and authority of the Taliban.

## B TEXT COMPREHENSION AND ANALYSIS

**The Elderly Face an Abyss, But They Remain Unbowed**

By MICHELLE O'DONNELL

**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?

**Model answers**

1. The meaning of the headline can be decoded quite simply by reading the first couple of lines of the text body. "The Elderly" are the "city's elderly residents" (l. 6). These people have experienced a lot of ups and downs in the history of New York, and so they "remain unbowed", they still stand upright, in a figurative sense – they do not despair or resign, although they "face an abyss", although they are confronted with this most recent catastrophe which has shocked them and made them very sad.
  
2. The metaphor of "change and how it chisels away at life" (par. 1) makes use of an image taken from the work of a stonemason. What the picture conveys very effectively is how sudden and irrevocable the changes were that the old New Yorkers had to endure. If one blow of the chisel has removed a part of the stone, this part is gone at once, and it can never be put back again.  
 Another analogy can be drawn from the fact that, in the process of being shaped, the stone becomes continually smaller and lighter; likewise the people who are affected by change are reduced: things are taken away from them – perhaps a house they had become used to, perhaps a member of the family they had loved.  
 Whether the action of the chisel is to be seen as something finally positive or negative will depend on the individual's fate and philosophy.
  
3. One of the qualities the author praises about New Yorkers is their "resilience" (par. 3), which means that they don't give up. She also uses other expressions and phrases to illustrate that quality and to give examples.  
 During the depression the citizens of New York "sold apples on street corners" (par. 1), "they lighted candles during blackouts" (ib.) and they overcame the fiscal crisis of the 1970s (par. 7). In these examples the author shows the reader that New Yorkers keep together in bad times and help each other, too.  
 A retired professor of Chinese literature explains that there is no reason for panic: "America is strong. America is confident" (par. 6). By quoting him, the author points out that New Yorkers have not given up their confidence, they believe they can get over this crisis, too.  
 Michelle O'Donnell also calls New York and its citizens "badly bent but not broken" (par. 3), which makes it clear what all the other expressions and phrases used by her are designed to clarify, too: New Yorkers have not declared their defeat – they are resilient and optimistic (cf. ib.).

**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 into idiomatic German (from "Jerry Cohen ..." to the end). Bear in mind that you must be very precise in this kind of task.

### Model translation

Jerry Cohen, ein pensionierter Richter des State Supreme Court, nippte am Bier und versuchte, den terroristischen Anschlag in Beziehung zu anderen Katastrophen zu setzen. Da war der Krieg von 1812, der das Töten ins Land gebracht hatte, und Pancho Villas Massaker in New Mexico im Jahr 1916. Mr Cohen hielt inne. Aber wenn er recht darüber nachdachte – was er die ganze Zeit tat –, dann war der terroristischen Anschlag auf das World Trade Center schlimmer als alles andere.

„Es ist nicht so, dass die Auswirkung verblassen wird“, sagte Mr Cohen (76). „Sondern wir werden dadurch zu tieferen Einsichten kommen. Es ist ein Prozess, der zum Erwachsenwerden gehört, und wir werden unser Leben lang immer wieder erwachsener.“

Obwohl der 11. September schlimmer war als alles, was er seit seinen Einsätzen in der Pazifik-Region während des Zweiten Weltkriegs erlebt hatte, sagte Mr Cohen, er habe trotzdem das Gefühl, dass die Stadt es schaffen werde.

„Sehen Sie mal“, sagte er. „Jeder redet immer von der guten alten Zeit, aber in Wirklichkeit war die nicht gut. Wir hatten eine Weltwirtschaftskrise. Man hat sich Zeitungspapier in die Schuhe gelegt, mit einem Gummiband drum, damit kein Wasser reinkommt. Aber es hat uns nichts ausgemacht, denn es war bei allen gleich.“

Während der Weltwirtschaftskrise versammelten sich in Mr Cohens Wohngegend auf Coney Island zweimal wöchentlich sechs Familien im Haus von Vince D'Agostino in der 20. Straße, um in seiner Küche zu kochen; so teilte man sich die Kosten für das Herdfeuer und das Essen. Eine Woche nach den Angriffen machte Mr Cohen weiter mit seinen Plänen für ein Grillfest für die Stammgäste des Heights-Cafés: pensionierte Rechtsanwälte und Buchhalter, und die junge Barkeeperin Annie. Es war zunächst ein seltsames Gefühl, aber er dachte, die Leute hatten es mehr denn je nötig, zusammen zu sein. Gleich in der Woche darauf hatten sie wieder ein Grillfest.

Im Manhattan Valley Senior Center in der 106. Straße/West tröstete eine Gruppe von Frauen einander, indem sie zusammen nähten und häkelten; sie saßen an einem großen Tisch, der mit türkisen und braunen Topflappen bedeckt war, die für den Herbst-Basar gehäkelt worden waren. „Es tut mir um meine Enkelkinder leid“, sagte Lola Menendez (84). Sie mache sich keine Sorgen um sich selbst. Ihr Sohn sei vor elf Jahren in jungem Alter gestorben, und seitdem mache sie sich um sich selbst kaum noch Gedanken.

Dennoch schienen die jungen New Yorker im Anschluss an die Angriffe sich mehr um diejenigen zu kümmern, die schon soviel gesehen hatten.

In einem Bus in der Third Avenue saß ein alter Russe und hörte der jungen Frau zu, die den Bus steuerte, wie sie von den Zerstörungen redete und von der Furcht, die sie seither in der Öffentlichkeit habe. „Ja, ja, es ist furchtbar“, sagte er.

Als der Bus über die 34. Straße rumpelte, stand er auf, weil er bald aussteigen wollte. „Bitte setzen Sie sich hin, bis wir da sind“, sagte die Fahrerin sanft. „Ich will nicht, dass Ihnen etwas passiert.“

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)