

Recording scripts

Unit 10

Listening Part 2*

Recording script CD2 Track 12

Presenter: In today's programme, we're going to hear about the experiences of a British student who is spending a year studying in Egypt. Amy, could you tell us what your life is like in Egypt?

Amy: Well, I wake up at about 3 am when a man wearing a grey, floor-length galabiyya marches down the street, banging a small drum and calling to people to wake up for the meal they eat before they start fasting at dawn. It's Ramadan at the moment. Four hours later, my electronic alarm goes off and I roll out of bed. I dress carefully, ensuring that my legs, stomach and shoulders are covered despite the heat. Three friends and I have travelled to the Alexandria Centre for Languages for an Arabic course as part of our degree course at Bristol University. In our first year at Bristol we were offered the choice of several modern languages. Persian, Turkish and Arabic were available, but I was charmed by the Arabic lecturer who had a huge smile and a real passion for his subject. As the course developed, so did my fascination with Arabic, its different alphabet – and the culture. I researched the possibility of studying in a Middle Eastern country. In the end we settled on Alexandria: the city has a lively cultural scene, and its colloquial Egyptian dialect is the most widely understood throughout the Arab World. We arrived in September and got to our hotel at about 10 pm. Unfortunately, the staff were nervous about letting us stay, as we were an unmarried, mixed group. We eventually found another hotel, where we bartered for the price of rooms. We spent the next few days settling in and getting to know the city. Then our course leader arranged flats for us to look around. We chose a light, spacious flat, with a friendly and helpful landlady. It's much better than I was used to in Bristol. It was a

fascinating time for us, but the culture shock was so great that within the first week one of our group returned home. The area around the language centre is crowded with shops and cafés, where people sit and drink tea. We usually have lunch at the centre: small flatbreads stuffed with falafel or beans; or large circular pieces of bread, filled with strips of beef and pieces of cheese. We have two teachers. Rania is a young woman who wears a hijab that always matches her jeans. In her lessons we learn how to greet, congratulate and explain why we are in Alexandria. Ingy is more liberally dressed: jeans, short sleeves, no hijab. With her, we do role plays where we bargain with taxi drivers, buy groceries or haggle for gold at the jeweller's. The teachers seem unaffected by the pressures of Ramadan. They teach for 4½ hours a day, Sunday to Thursday, with no food or water from sunrise until sunset. One of the most difficult challenges in learning Arabic is that it has two dissimilar forms. Alongside 'amiyya, the colloquial dialect, is fusha, which dominates the media and written forms of Arabic, including the Qur'an. Although they share some vocabulary, it's like learning two languages alongside each other. At weekends we relax at the Acacia Country Club, where membership costs £10 a month, and lie by the pool, where dress rules are more relaxed. In the evenings we sit in cafés by the sea and smoke apple sheesha. I'm writing my dissertation at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. Its exterior is covered with characters from every alphabet in the world, symbolic of the array of knowledge that was once contained in the old library and of what will be contained in the new one. Soon the crescent moon will signal the end of Ramadan, and Egypt will show us another face.

* Recording script CD2 Track 12 adapted from *The Guardian* 21 January 2006: 'Life Swap' by Amy Smith and Hodka Baraka. Copyright © Guardian News & Media Limited.

Speaking Part 3

Recording script CD2 Track 13

- Woman: OK, the first picture is obviously a classroom – someone working on an interactive whiteboard. Do you think that's a good way to learn?
- Man: It's probably quite a good way to learn, yeah. And the next picture's of a student and of someone, not sure who, in a sort of one-to-one learning session which would probably be quite good for learning some things.
- Woman: Yeah, it's not really a group environment, though, not like the ...
- Man: Probably not good for learning a language ...
- Woman: The next one is kids all sat in a classroom. I suppose it'd be quite interactive – you could learn together, but ...
- Man: Yeah, the next one's someone on a computer – probably learning stuff off the net, which again probably wouldn't be a good way to learn a language – wouldn't be able to, you know, talk much.
- Woman: No ... The next one I think is a group of girls just talking and writing on clipboards.
- Man: Talking to people, perhaps, ...
- Woman: Yes, that'd probably be a good way to learn a language.
- Man: Conversation.
- Woman: And being outdoors and seeing things.
- Man: And finally there's a lecture theatre with a big screen at the front and a guy giving a talk on a podium by the looks of it.
- Woman: So, which one do you reckon would be the best?
- Man: Probably the first one or ...
- Woman: I don't know, though, because you wouldn't get much one-to-one, would you?
- Man: Mmm.
- Woman: I think it would be the one outside just walking around talking to people ... Which one shall we go for?
- Man: Well, I'll go for that one as well, then.
- Woman: OK – the field trip.