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transcript of
Spotlight

**7 steps
to better
English
2011**

1. INTRODUCTION

David: Hello and welcome to our 2011 Spotlight Audio Special. I'm David Creedon from the audio team, and I'll be guiding you through the next 30 minutes of dialogues and exercises. In this audio special, we will be presenting seven language and grammar points that learners often find challenging through a story that takes place at a sports centre in Portsmouth, England. A young swimmer, Cathy Elsmore, is training to represent her country at the Olympic Games in London. Let's meet Cathy, her father and a visitor from Canada.

Cathy: Hi. I'm Cathy Elsmore. I'm 17, I come from Petersfield in the South of England, and I'm a swimmer. I'm the national under-18 freestyle champion, and it's my ambition to represent my country at the 2012 Olympics.

John: Hello. My name is John Elsmore. I'm Cathy's dad, and I'm also her coach and her manager — and I want to see my daughter competing in the Olympic Aquatics Centre next summer.

Susie: Hello. I'm Susie Evans, and I'm a journalist from a national news magazine in Montreal. I've come to Portsmouth to interview Cathy and her father and to find out about their hopes for 2012.

David: Remember that you can download a free transcript of everything you'll hear. You'll find the link on the back of the CD cover. Now let's join Cathy at the sports centre.

2. ARE YOU STILL AT SCHOOL?

David: Susie starts her interview with Cathy and her dad by getting a few basic facts about their lives. Listen.

Susie: So, Cathy, are you OK there?

Cathy: Yeah, fine, thanks.

Susie: Good. Let's start by just checking a few facts. You're 17. Is that right, Cathy?

Cathy: Yes, that's right. I'll be 18 in January.

Susie: And are you still at school?

Cathy: Yes. I go to St Anne's High School. I'm in the sixth form.

Susie: So you're studying for your final school exams?

Cathy: Yes, I am. I'm doing three subjects: maths, chemistry and biology.

Susie: Wow! That's a lot of work. How do you fit your training into the school day?

Cathy: I train for a couple of hours before school every morning, before the pool opens to the public; and then in the evenings, I do fitness exercises in the gym. At the moment, I'm focusing on my legs, as I've had a knee injury and I need to get my strength back.

Susie: And John, you're her dad *and* her coach, right?

John: Yes, I'm her coach, chauffeur, cook... You name it, I do it!

Susie: But you don't live here in Portsmouth, do you?

John: No, we live in Petersfield, about 20 miles away, but this is our nearest swimming pool.

3. LANGUAGE CHECK

David: Listen again to some of the things they said. Cathy talked about her life...

Cathy: I go to St Anne's High School.

David: ...and about her daily routine.

Cathy: I train for a couple of hours before school every morning, before the pool opens to the public; and then in the evenings, I do fitness exercises in the gym.

David: Here, Cathy uses mostly the present simple — I go, I train, I do — because she's talking in general about her life and her routine. In one situation, though, she uses the present progressive. She says, "I'm doing three subjects: maths, chemistry and biology." So when should we say "I'm doing" instead of "I do"? Well, in two situations: first, if you're doing something now. For example, at the moment, you're listening to this audio material. And second, we also use the present progressive to talk about temporary situations. Listen to this section of the dialogue again.

Susie: So you're studying for your final school exams?

Cathy: Yes, I am. I'm doing three subjects: maths, chemistry and biology.

David: Here both speakers use the present progressive — you're studying, I'm doing — to show that Cathy is in the middle of her course. The course isn't permanent; it's something she's doing for a year or two. Let's listen some more. Hear how Cathy uses the present simple and progressive to contrast her general routine with something particular that she's working on at the moment:

Cathy: ...and then in the evenings, I do fitness exercises in the gym. At the moment, I'm focusing on my legs...

David: You see? I do fitness exercises — that's her routine — and I'm focusing on my legs — that's her focus this week or this month. So, if it's a general aspect of your life, or a routine, use the present simple. If it's more temporary, use the present progressive.

4. PRACTICE

David: You're going to hear some sentences about Cathy's dad, John. Listen to the two options and repeat the one you think is right.

David: I have a daughter or I'm having a daughter?

John: I have a daughter.

David: I'm going to all her competitions or I go to all her competitions?

John: I go to all her competitions.

David: We prepare for a competition next month or we're preparing for a competition next month?

John: We're preparing for a competition next month.

David: I'm driving her to all her training sessions or I drive her to all her training sessions?

John: I drive her to all her training sessions.

David: We look for a new sponsor or we're looking for a new sponsor?

John: We're looking for a new sponsor.

5. HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD YOUR OLYMPIC DREAM?

David: Now Susie wants to ask Cathy about her Olympic dream. Listen.

Susie: And now your dream is to compete in the Olympics. How long have you had this dream?

Cathy: For years. I mean, the Olympics: it's every athlete's dream to win gold at the Olympics, isn't it?

Susie: I guess so. But how long have you worked towards it?

Cathy: Since 6 July 2005.

Susie: That was the date that London was chosen to host the Olympics, wasn't it?

Cathy: That's right. That's when I realized maybe I could compete in our home Olympics.

Susie: But you're not able to compete at the moment, are you? You've had an injury, haven't you?

Cathy: Yes, I've been out of competitions for three months because of an injury to my knee; but it's getting better now.

6. LANGUAGE CHECK

David: In this part of the interview, Cathy talks about how long she's done things — how long she's dreamed of swimming in the Olympics, and how long she's been out of competitions with her injury. Listen again.

Susie: How long have you had this dream?

Cathy: For years.

Susie: But how long have you worked towards it?

Cathy: Since 6 July 2005.

Susie: You've had an injury, haven't you?

Cathy: Yes, I've been out of competitions for three months because of an injury to my knee.

David: Here we're looking at using the present perfect tense, which is formed using "have" and the past participle of the main verb — "been" or "done", for example. If you say how long you've done something, remember to use the present perfect, not the present simple. I've done it for years, not ~~do~~ ~~it~~ ~~for~~ years. This tense often comes with the words "for" and "since". Both of these translate as *seit* in German. As Cathy showed us, we use "for" with a length of time...

Cathy: For years.

David: ...and "since" with a point in time.

Cathy: Since 6 July 2005.

7. PRACTICE

David: Here's John again. You'll hear him make a statement about his life, and then you will hear a time phrase. Your job is to create a complete sentence, using either "for" or "since". First, listen to the examples.

John: I've been Cathy's coach.

David: 2004.

John: I've been Cathy's coach since 2004.

David: Seven years.

John: I've been Cathy's coach for seven years.

David: Now you have a go. Let's start by doing the examples again. This time, you give the answer after the tone.

John: I've been Cathy's coach.

David: 2004.

John: I've been Cathy's coach since 2004.

David: Seven years.

John: I've been Cathy's coach for seven years.

John: We've lived in Petersfield.

David: 1999.

John: We've lived in Petersfield since 1999.

David: More than ten years.

John: We've lived in Petersfield for more than ten years.

John: Cathy has had a problem with her knee.

David: Three months.

John: Cathy has had a problem with her knee for three months.

David: The middle of July.

John: Cathy has had a problem with her knee since the middle of July.

John: I've been divorced.

David: 2006.

John: I've been divorced since 2006.

David: Five years.

John: I've been divorced for five years.

8. HOW DID YOU GET STARTED?

David: Susie wants to know how Cathy got started — how she became interested in swimming. Listen.

Susie: How did you get started? When did you discover that you had this fantastic talent?

Cathy: Well, we all used to go swimming together, as a family: me, Mum and Dad. We used to go to the local pool on Sunday mornings. That's when Dad taught me to swim. He used to make me do it properly — with the proper breathing and everything, not just splashing about — and I just enjoyed swimming and found I was good at it.

John: What Cathy hasn't said is that I used to be a good swimmer. That's where she gets her talent from, you see.

Susie: Oh?

John: Yes, I used to swim for my school. I came second in the regional finals once and won a silver medal.

Susie: Really? So you were nearly as good as your daughter?

9. LANGUAGE CHECK

David: Listen again to what Cathy and her father say.

Cathy: Well, we all used to go swimming together as a family. ... We used to go to the local pool on Sunday mornings.

John: I used to be a good swimmer. ... Yes, I used to swim for my school.

David: Both Cathy and her father are remembering activities from the past. They both use the phrase “used to”. “We all used to go swimming together” means that they often did it, but they don’t do it any more. John also says he used to swim for his school, but of course he isn’t in the school team any more. “Used to” is a good expression for talking about the old days. Don’t forget: it’s only for things that you often did, or that were always true, not for things that you did once or twice. Listen again to John.

John: I came second in the regional finals once and won a silver medal.

David: This happened only one time. John can’t say that he used to win medals, because he won a silver medal only once.

10. PRACTICE

David: You’re going to hear Cathy remembering some more things about her childhood. Some of her statements can also be said with “used to”. If it’s possible, say the sentence with “used to”. If it isn’t possible, just say “not possible”.

Cathy: We went to the pool on Sunday mornings.

Cathy: We used to go to the pool on Sunday mornings.

Cathy: I broke my arm.

David: Not possible.

Cathy: My dad bought me a dog.

David: Not possible.

Cathy: I walked him in the park after school.

Cathy: I used to walk him in the park after school.

Cathy: I met Franziska van Almsick.

David: Not possible.

11. WHAT ARE YOUR CHANCES?

David: Cathy doesn’t know yet if she will have a place in the British Olympic swimming team, as the team hasn’t been named yet. The organizers are still in the middle of the selection process to choose the team. Listen.

Susie: You must be very excited that the Olympics are coming to London next year. Young British athletes are getting a lot of attention now.

Cathy: Yes, it’s great for all our athletes. I’ll be so excited if I’m selected for the team.

John: What do you mean, if you’re selected, Cathy? It isn’t if; it’s when! When she gets into the team, we’ll all be very pleased for her!

Susie: But her place isn’t guaranteed, is it?

Cathy: No, it all depends how I do in the national championships next month. If I do OK there, I’ll be in the team for London.

John: Yes. When she wins the national championships, that will guarantee her place in the Olympic team.

Cathy: Well, I’ll be in the team if I come in the first three at the national championships, so I should be OK. The only problem is my knee, if it’s better by then.

John: Yes. When her knee’s better, she’ll be back in top form and ready for gold.

12. LANGUAGE CHECK

David: Who is sure that Cathy will be in the Olympic team — Cathy herself, or her father? Yes, it’s her father. Listen again.

Cathy: I’ll be so excited if I’m selected for the team.

John: What do you mean, if you’re selected, Cathy? It isn’t if; it’s when!

David: John doesn’t like the word “if”, as it shows uncertainty — that things aren’t certain or guaranteed. He prefers “when” — his daughter’s future success is only a question of time. Both words are translated with the single word *wenn* in German. Listen again to some more extracts from the interview and notice the different effects of “if” and “when” — “if” to show uncertainty and “when” to show that it’s only a question of time.

Cathy: If I do OK there, I’ll be in the team for London.

John: Yes. When she wins the national championships, that will guarantee her place in the Olympic team.

Cathy: The only problem is my knee, if it’s better by then.

John: Yes. When her knee’s better, she’ll be back in top form and ready for gold.

David: So you see how you can show certainty by using “when”, and uncertainty by using “if”.

13. PRACTICE

David: Let’s practise “when” and “if” now, by talking about your life. You’ll hear six phrases: some of them are certain; some of them probably are not. Use the phrase to create a sentence beginning with either “when” or “if”. You have to decide which is best.

Win a million euros.

If I win a million euros.

Go to the supermarket.

When I go to the supermarket.

See my neighbours.

When I see my neighbours.

Travel around the world.

If I travel around the world.

Run the London marathon.

If I run the London marathon.

14. HOW DO YOU DO IT?

David: Susie wants to know how Cathy manages the demands of her swimming training. Listen.

Susie: But, Cathy, how do you do it? You have to train for so many hours, and then you have your school work on top of that. And there are only 24 hours in a day, so how do you fit it all in?

Cathy: Well, I wouldn’t be able to do it without Dad. If he didn’t get up at five o’clock every morning to take me to the pool, I wouldn’t be able to train at all.

John: And we wouldn’t be able to do this if we didn’t have the support of a sponsor. Oh, did I mention we’re looking for a new sponsor for Cathy at the moment? So if you included that in your article, it would be really helpful.

Or if you knew someone through your contacts who wanted to sponsor Cathy, that would be great for us. I could guarantee exclusive access to Cathy: interviews, photo shoots...

Susie: Oh, um, I don't know. Well, I don't really deal with that kind of thing.

15. LANGUAGE CHECK

David: Listen again to what John says about finding a sponsor for Cathy.

John: If you included that in your article, it would be really helpful.

David: In the last section, we looked to the future with "if". This time, we're using "if" to talk about possible situations. This type of sentence is called the second conditional. It has two parts: one part with "if" and the past tense of the verb — "if you included" — and the other part with "would" and the infinitive — "it would be really helpful". Listen now to another example.

John: And we wouldn't be able to do this if we didn't have the support of a sponsor.

David: It doesn't matter which part of the sentence comes first. Just remember that "if" and "would" are not in the same part of the sentence. You probably learned this in school: "If" and "would" is not good!

16. PRACTICE

David: Now you're going to have a go. Listen to Cathy talk about how she manages her training. She's going to say what different people do for her: for example, that her father takes her to the pool. You have to turn that idea round and say that if that person didn't help her, she wouldn't be able to train.

Cathy: My dad takes me to the pool.

Cathy: If my dad didn't take me to the pool, I wouldn't be able to train.

Cathy: My mum pays my training fees.

Cathy: If my mum didn't pay my training fees, I wouldn't be able to train.

Cathy: My schoolteachers are supportive.

Cathy: If my schoolteachers weren't supportive, I wouldn't be able to train.

Cathy: Dad doesn't have a full-time job.

Cathy: If Dad had a full-time job, I wouldn't be able to train.

Cathy: I have a sponsor.

Cathy: If I didn't have a sponsor, I wouldn't be able to train.

17. DO YOU GET ON WELL WITH YOUR FATHER?

David: Susie wants to know if Cathy has a good relationship with her father. Listen.

Susie: It must be difficult for you both, working together as coach and athlete as well as being father and daughter. Do you argue much?

John: No, we don't, do we, love?

Susie: Perhaps Cathy might like to answer the question. Cathy?

Cathy: Well, on the whole, we get on very well. We spend a lot of time training together, so it's important that we get on.

Susie: But?

Cathy: Well, sometimes Dad suggests doing something different and I'm not so keen on trying it.

Susie: And?

Cathy: Yeah, well, he keeps on suggesting it, and in the end I usually give in, and I agree to try it.

John: I never force her to do things, or order her to do things. I just encourage her to do her best. That's all. Sometimes she's a bit afraid of trying things, and I give her a little push in the right direction. I just want her to succeed.

Susie: Yes, that's clear!

18. LANGUAGE CHECK

David: In this section of the interview, Cathy and John use a lot of -ing forms, or gerunds as they are often called, like "training", "doing", "suggesting" and "trying". Listen again.

Cathy: We spend a lot of time training together. ... Sometimes Dad suggests doing something different and I'm not so keen on trying it. ... He keeps on suggesting it...

John: Sometimes she's a bit afraid of trying things.

David: Certain common verbs are followed by a gerund or an infinitive. One tip is that if the verb has a preposition like "on" or "of" with it, then it is followed by an -ing form, like some of the examples you've just heard — "to keep on doing something" and "to be afraid of doing something". The dialogue also included some verbs that are usually followed by an infinitive:

Cathy: And I agree to try it.

John: I never force her to do things, or order her to do things. I just encourage her to do her best. That's all. ... I just want her to succeed.

David: So there you have five frequent verbs that need an infinitive: to agree to do something, to force someone to do something, to order someone to do something, to encourage someone to do something and to want someone to do something. Now, while it's fresh in our minds, let's practise.

19. PRACTICE

David: You're going to hear some sentences about Susie, the interviewer. Listen to the two options and repeat the one you think is right.

David: I want to write a good article. I want writing a good article.

Susie: I want to write a good article.

David: I'm afraid of to lose my laptop. I'm afraid of losing my laptop.

Susie: I'm afraid of losing my laptop.

David: John keeps on to answer Cathy's questions. John keeps on answering Cathy's questions.

Susie: John keeps on answering Cathy's questions.

David: I'd never force anyone to answer a question. I'd never force anyone answering a question.

Susie: I'd never force anyone to answer a question.

David: I spend a lot of time to travel in my job. I spend a lot of time travelling in my job.

Susie: I spend a lot of time travelling in my job.

20. GOOD LUCK FOR THE FUTURE!

David: It's time for Susie to end the interview. Before she leaves, she promises to do two things — one thing for John and one thing for Cathy. Listen. What does she promise to do?

Susie: Well, I think I have everything I need now. Thank you both very much.

John: You're welcome. What happens now — with this interview, I mean?

Susie: Well, I need to type my notes up, of course, and then write my article.

John: Will we get to see it before it goes into the magazine?

Susie: Yes, of course, if you'd like to. I'll e-mail it to you by the end of the week. Is that OK?

John: Yes, that's fine. Thanks.

Susie: And, Cathy, I'll keep my fingers crossed for you. I'm sure you have a great future ahead of you.

Cathy: Thank you.

21. LANGUAGE CHECK

David: Susie promised to send the article to John, so that he could check it before it went into the magazine. And she promised Cathy that she would "keep her fingers crossed" for her. You may not know this expression, but you can probably guess what it means: Susie is wishing Cathy good luck. Let's listen to those two promises again.

Susie: I'll e-mail it to you by the end of the week. ... And, Cathy, I'll keep my fingers crossed for you.

David: In both of those promises, Susie says "I'll", short for "I will": "I'll e-mail it" and "I'll keep my fingers crossed". We use "I'll" with promises and offers, like "I'll do that for you now" and "I'll post that to you today".

22. PRACTICE

David: You're going to hear Cathy try to get her father to help her or do something for her. Pretend that you are John and respond to Cathy's demands with a sentence beginning with "I'll". Many different answers are possible, but you will hear a model answer after your response.

Cathy: Dad, I'm hungry!

John: OK. I'll make you a sandwich.

Cathy: Dad, I'm thirsty!

John: OK. I'll bring you a drink.

Cathy: Dad, I can't do my homework!

John: OK. I'll help you.

Cathy: Dad, I need a new swimming bag.

John: OK. I'll get you one.

Cathy: Dad, I really want to watch TV.

John: Well, just switch it on. I can't do everything for you.

David: And to finish, we'd like you to make a promise. Repeat after me: I'll remember everything I learned on this audio special!

23. CONCLUSION

David: That brings us to the end of this Spotlight Audio special. You can find out more about our whole range of language-learning products, such as our monthly audio CD or download, at www.spotlight-online.de Thanks for listening.

IMPRESSUM

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