

Listening 1

- Interviewer** Next, we continue our series on the future of travel. This week we're discussing one company's big dreams. With me in the studio is our resident science expert Professor Leonora Goulding. Hello, Professor.
- Prof Goulding** Good morning, everyone.
- Interviewer** And the company we're discussing is, of course, SpaceX. SpaceX was founded over 20 years ago now by billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk. The company's goal is to reduce the costs of space travel and take humans to the planet Mars. Professor, has SpaceX achieved any steps towards this goal?
- Prof Goulding** Well, SpaceX certainly has ambition. And, yes, it has made some interesting developments. For example, it has successfully reused a rocket and landed it safely on water.
- Interviewer** But the company's space tourism flight has been delayed.
- Prof Goulding** Yes. If it had gone ahead, SpaceX's 2018 flight would have taken Japanese billionaire Yusaku Maezawa to visit the moon. Of course, they won't fly unless they fix their technical problems, so we may have to wait for another few years. But remember: no one has been to the moon since 1972, so that will be a major achievement for a private company.
- Interviewer** And that's not SpaceX's only rocket-powered dream, is it?
- Prof Goulding** Oh no. Elon Musk is enthusiastic about the use of rockets for travel between cities here on Earth. At a press conference, he suggested journey times between major cities of less than an hour: London to Dubai in 30 minutes, Delhi to San Francisco in 40 minutes.
- Interviewer** That's extraordinary.
- Prof Goulding** It would be. However, there are some major problems. Firstly, the rockets are incredibly loud and shake the ground when they take off. It's therefore impossible to take off from a normal airport or a city location. SpaceX's solution is to launch the rockets from platforms on the sea. But if the aim is to reduce journey time, then it's pointless to make people travel to the sea before they can take off.
- Interviewer** What about people in Paris or Prague which are many miles from the coast?
- Prof Goulding** Exactly. And being weightless in space might be really cool, but if I were a business traveller I think I'd find it quite problematic. But the biggest problem of all is the impact on the environment. Elon Musk's other transport company is Tesla, which is dedicated to increasing the use of electric vehicles across the world. Well, it seems to me we shouldn't be working so hard to get people to use electric cars and then introduce commercial rockets which damage the atmosphere and create even more space junk around our planet.
- Interviewer** So, overall, you're against the project?
- Prof Goulding** Not against its aims, no. But I think we should concentrate on improving the transport systems we already have in place. Faster, cleaner aeroplanes would give better results than building a new network of 'rocket-ports' next to any major city which happens to be near the coast.
- Interviewer** OK. Let's take a break and when we come back we'll explore SpaceX's other vision for the future: the hyperloop.

Listening 2

1

- Mike** What's that you're reading, Kat?
Katriona It's a travel guide to Vienna. Eddie and I are going there for our anniversary in September. I'm really looking forward to it. I've never been before.
Mike Oh, you'll love it! You play the cello, don't you?
Katriona Yes. I expect we'll go to quite a few concerts while we're there.
Mike After all, they call Vienna the capital city of music.

2

- Guard** Excuse me, sir, I have to ask you to step back off the train.
Matt Sorry, what?
Guard You can't take your bike on this train, sir. You'll have to wait for the 9.37.
Matt But...but that man just took his bike on the train.
Guard Yes, that was a fold-up bike. It folds into a smaller size so it can fit in the luggage area. Normal bikes aren't allowed on this train. You'll have to wait for the 9.37.
Matt I didn't know. I ... That's really, really annoying. OK, I'm getting off.

3

- Sophia** So, George, I'm hosting my first dinner party in England this weekend. What do I need to know?
George Well, the first thing you need to do is buy some tea.
Sophia It's a dinner party. Why do I need tea?
George Because, whenever someone comes to your house in England, you need to say, 'Would anyone like some tea?' Even if you think coffee or wine would be better, most people will be thinking, 'Where's the tea?'
Sophia I can't tell if you're joking, George.
George OK, OK. Perhaps not everyone will want tea. But I promise you, more than one person will ask for tea during the evening.

4

- James** Are you OK, Emma? You look frustrated.
Emma I'm just trying to work out this website. It's really complicated. I'm trying to ask for my money back because my train was cancelled last week.
James Oh, I see. I expect that's quite difficult.
Emma Yes, but it shouldn't be difficult, should it! It's the train company's fault, and they owe me because of all the time I wasted at the stupid station instead of at work. They should make this easier.
James I totally agree with you. Shall I go and make some tea?
Emma Yes, please, that would be lovely.

5

- Dan** My shoulder still hurts. Do you think I should see a doctor?
Shaun I don't know what a doctor can do. You just need to rest it.
Dan Online it said I should keep moving my arm – you know, so the muscle stays warm.
Shaun Well, you definitely shouldn't get medical advice online. Come on. Get your coat and we'll go to a pharmacy in town. They might be able to help.
Dan OK. Thanks, Shaun.