

Transcript**Section 1 – Gordon has come back**

Tess: Hello and welcome once again to the Learn English Elementary podcast. This is podcast number ten in series two. We're your presenters – I'm Tess ..

Ravi: And I'm Ravi. I'm sorry to say that this is the last podcast in this series ..

Tess: Awww

Ravi: But the good news is that it's a very special podcast today and we've got a special guest with us in the studio today. If you've been listening to our podcasts for a long time you'll remember Gordon. Gordon was our producer for Series One of the podcast.

Tess: Producer and joke teller, Ravi.

Ravi: Yeah, Gordon told us some great jokes, that's true. Anyway, at the start of this series of the podcast, we told you that Gordon had a new job. Well, today, he's back here in the studio with us. Say hello, Gordon.

Gordon: Hi Ravi, hi Tess.

Tess: Hi Gordon. It's lovely to see you again. How are you?

Gordon: I'm very well, thank you, very well. How are you both? OK?

Tess & Ravi: Yeah, I'm fine, thanks. I'm good, thanks.

Ravi: So, what have you been doing since we last saw you, Gordon?

Gordon: Well, after we did the last series of the podcast, I got a job working on a TV documentary programme about whales.

Ravi: The country?

Gordon: No, Ravi – whales in the sea.

Tess: Brilliant. What were you doing?

Gordon: I was working on the sound for the programme – we filmed a lot of it on a boat.

Ravi: So did you see a lot of whales?

Gordon: Hundreds. It was absolutely fantastic – but, listen, I'm going to tell you more about it a little bit later so I won't tell you now. How are you two? Have you managed to do the podcast without me?

Tess: Well, it's not the same Gordon, you know, but, yeah, we've had lots of interesting people on – it's been really good.

Gordon: Any jokes?

Ravi: Oh yes. Gordon used to tell a joke in every podcast. At first we didn't have a joke in this series but so many people said they really liked your jokes – it's difficult to believe it, I know – so we decided to have more jokes.

Gordon: Well, I've got a great one for you.

Tess: A joke and your whale stories – it's the Gordon show today. But that's OK – it's lovely to see you again.

Gordon: It's lovely to be here.

Section 2 – I'd like to talk about

Ravi: OK. Well, I'm dying to hear about these whales so let's move on. If you listen to our podcasts regularly, you'll know that we usually start with 'I'd Like to Talk About' – when someone comes into the studio and tells us about something that's important to them – a place, a thing, a person – whatever. Well, as we've got Gordon with us today, we thought it would be nice to hear a little bit about what he's been doing since we last saw him. Now, Gordon, I know we're going to listen to part of your documentary. Can you tell us what it is before we hear it?

Gordon: Well, this is from the first programme in the series. We were on a boat near Provincetown, in Massachusetts in the USA, looking for humpback whales. We'd just started filming and none of us had ever seen a humpback whale and ... well, listen and you'll hear what happened.

Narrator: We're just coming out past the lighthouses now into the open waters of the Atlantic Ocean. One hundred and fifty years ago, thousands of ships made this same journey into the Atlantic because Cape Cod, back there, was the centre of the American whaling industry. Ships leaving this port killed thousands of whales all over the world. Now, ironically, Cape Cod is one of the best places in the world to see whales – and that's why we're here.

The seabirds we can see circling over there are a good sign. The birds often circle like that in places where whales are feeding. We'll head in that direction.

There! That cloud of water in the air there tells us that there are humpback whales over there Another! Any minute now we should see ... WOW! Woohoo! Amazing!

Tess: That sounds incredible.

Gordon: It was amazing. I know we can only hear it here, we can't see it, but when that humpback whale came up then it was so close I could smell its breath – it was absolutely incredible.

Ravi: What did its breath smell like?

Gordon: Pretty bad – quite fishy

Ravi: Yeah? I know someone like that.

Gordon: You know, that was the first time I'd ever seen a whale – and it was so close. It's always special when you see whales but that first time was extra special.

Tess: Why is it always special?

Gordon: Well, I think it's because whales are so special. We think we know something about them but they live in huge oceans and, really, we hardly know anything about them. We probably know more about the moon than we do about the oceans. And, you know, people spent hundreds of years hunting and killing whales – we're lucky that there are any whales left at all. And – and this is the main reason it

feels special to see whales – they're such amazing creatures.

Ravi: Are people still hunting whales?

Gordon: They are, unfortunately, in some places. But what we found was that whale watching – people paying to go out to sea and look at whales – is a really big business now and, hopefully, some of that money can be used to help protect whales.

Tess: How many different kinds of whale did you see?

Gordon: Over the whole programme, I think we saw fifteen different kinds.

Ravi: How many different kinds are there?

Gordon: Well, that's a good question. There are thirteen species that people usually think of as the 'great whales' but, altogether, there are about forty species of whale. The thing is, though, that we're not absolutely sure exactly how many species of whale there are. The oceans are huge and we don't really know much about them, as I said. There could be species of whales that we've never seen. It's another thing I like about them – there's still some mystery.

Ravi: Yeah. I know whales are big – everyone knows that – but how big are they, exactly?

Gordon: Well that depends on the species but ... Actually, Ravi, you'll have to wait until the quiz to find that out.

Ravi: The quiz? Are you doing that as well?

Gordon: Well, I've got one or two questions for you two, yes.

Ravi: Me against Tess? Excellent.

Tess: Yeah? You've got no chance, Ravi. That all sounds great though Gordon. I'm really looking forward to seeing that when it's on TV.

Gordon: Well, it's being edited at the moment but it should be ready in a couple of months.

Ravi: I'll definitely watch it. Now. Shall we have this quiz?

Section 3 – Quiz

Tess: Just a moment, Ravi. If you've listened before, you'll know that on each podcast we have a quiz. Usually we ask the questions to someone else but this time, because it's a special podcast, Gordon's going to ask the questions and Ravi and I are going to answer them.

Gordon: OK – I've prepared some questions for you. You've both got buzzers – let's hear them. Ravi [buzz] Tess [buzz]. Good. You get one point for a correct answer. The winner is the first one to five points. OK?

Tess & Ravi: OK. Right.

Gordon: OK then. Let's start. Fingers on the buzzers. Which is the deepest ocean in the world? The Atlantic, the Pacific or the

Ravi: The Atlantic

Gordon: No. Tess?

Tess: What are the choices?

Gordon: The deepest ocean – the Atlantic, the Pacific or the Indian ocean.

Tess: The Pacific?

Gordon: Correct. One nil to Tess. Next question. What's the biggest species of whale? Is it the humpback whale, the sperm whale

Ravi: Humpback whale

Gordon: No. Tess? What's the biggest species of whale? The humpback whale, the sperm whale or the blue whale?

Tess: I know this. The blue whale.

Gordon: That's right. Two nil to Tess. Question three. How big is the blue whale? Is it up to twenty five metres long, up to thirty five metres long or up to forty five metres long?

Ravi: Erm .. up to forty five metres long.

Gordon: Sorry Ravi. Tess?

Tess: Up to thirty five metres?

Gordon: That's right. Three nil to Tess.

Ravi: This is a disaster. Right. Come on, ask us another.

Gordon: Question four. How long do sperm whales live? More than 70 years, more than 80 years or more than a hundred years?

Ravi: I'm not going to buzz first Tess – I'm waiting for you to get it wrong then I'm going to give my answer.

Tess: Erm, I'll say 'more than seventy years', Gordon.

Gordon: That's right. Four nil to Tess.

Ravi: AAAAGGGGH.

Gordon: Question five. We said that the blue whale is the biggest kind of whale. How much does a blue whale's heart weigh?

Ravi: Oh come on, no-one knows that.

Gordon: Is it five hundred kilograms, six hundred kilograms or seven hundred kilograms?

Tess: I'll have a guess. The middle one. Six hundred kilos.

Gordon: Yes! That's right. We have a winner!

Ravi: No way! I was going to say six hundred as well. Five nil! I can't believe it.

Tess: Never mind, Ravi. I just know more about whales than you, that's all.

Ravi: OK, let's pretend the quiz never happened and move on. What's next? We've got Your Turn – listen to this one – what superpower would you like to have? – great question – we've got Carolina and we've got a joke from Gordon. I can't wait. That's all after this.

Section 4 – Your Turn

Tess: Time now for Your Turn. This is when we ask some people a question and listen to their answers. The topics are sometimes serious, sometimes not so serious but the answers are

always interesting. Here's the question this time: "Superman can fly. The Hulk is very strong. The Invisible Man is invisible. What superpower would you like to have?" I like it. Let's hear what people said.

Voice 1: I would like to have a super power to heal a broken heart because, ah, there's no remedy for a broken heart – it's not like, ah, if you have a cold or flu then you have the appropriate medicine for that, but if you have a broken heart then there is really no medicine, ah, people will say that, um, time heals a broken heart, but if I have this super power then I can speed up the process and to heal every, um, weeping soul.

Voice 2: I think I'd like to be invisible, too, so I can listen in and see what people are doing when they don't know I'm there.

Voice 3: If I could choose any super power I would choose the ability to fly, um, because I sometimes have dreams where I'm flying and it's a very free feeling, it's a very good feeling to be able to go anywhere you want very quickly, and, um, enjoy the view of the Earth from above.

Voice 4: If I had a super power I'd like to be like the genie in the bottle and be able to grant other people wishes, because it would be so much fun every day to walk around giving people exactly what they want and making their lives better.

Voice 5: I would like to have a, ah, super power that can read and tell the minds, what's in the mind and the heart of people.

Tess: Ravi? I know you'll be dying to say something on this.

Ravi: Hmm. I can't decide. Flying's a good one. Invisibility would be great too. Hmm. I don't know. What about you?

Tess: Would knowing a lot about whales be a superpower? Oh, I've got that one already.

Ravi: Very good.

Tess: Actually, I don't know. It's nice to say something like 'mending a broken heart' or 'making people's lives better', but, really, I think flying is what I'd like. I'd love to be able to fly.

Ravi: Me too. Remember, listeners, you can tell us what you think about Your Turn by writing to us or recording yourself and sending it to us at LearnEnglishPodcast @ BritishCouncil dot org. What superpower would you like to have?

Tess: OK. Now it's time for Carolina. Remember Carolina, Gordon?

Gordon: Oh yes.

Section 5 – Carolina

Tess: Carolina is from Venezuela but she's come to study at Newcastle University in the north east of England. In every podcast we hear something about what Carolina's been doing. Last time, she went to a restaurant with her boyfriend, Jamie – although I don't think they had a good time, really. This time, it's the end of term and Carolina's getting ready to go back to Venezuela for the summer.

Carolina: OK Emily. I think I'm ready.

Emily: Sure you've got everything?

Carolina: Oh I don't know. I've probably forgotten something. I hate travelling – it makes me really stressed.

Emily: Money, passport, tickets. That's all you really need.

Carolina: Yes ...I've got money ... my passport ... and my tickets. Oh dear. Well – I guess I'm ready to go.

Emily: Why don't you phone him?

Carolina: Phone who?

Emily: Jamie of course. You've been checking your phone for messages every five minutes for the last two days. Just phone him.

Carolina: I can't. He knows I'm leaving today – he promised to phone. He hasn't called since

we had that horrible dinner together. He obviously doesn't want to speak to me.

Emily: But you obviously want to speak to him. You can't go away feeling miserable.

Carolina: I'm not going to phone him Emily.

Emily: OK, it's your decision. I think you're mad, but it's up to you. So are you going to phone a taxi? The number's on the table by the door.

Carolina: OK. Hello. Blueline taxis? Um, I'd like to order a taxi please. I'm at Bowsden Hall. Yes, that's right; the university residences. It's number 36A. Yes that's right. I want to go to the station – Newcastle train station. Yes, that's right – Central Station. Ten minutes? OK. Cab number 647? OK, I'll go downstairs and wait. My mobile number is 033 474 61037. Thank you very much.

Emily: You don't need to go downstairs – we can see him coming from the window.

Carolina: No, I'd rather go down. I'm a bit nervous. I can't relax. I think I'll go down now and wait.

Emily: OK. I'll help you with your bag.

Carolina: No it's OK. I can manage. So, goodbye then Emily.

Emily: Bye bye. Have a lovely time – and see you when you get back.

Carolina: Yes OK. Have a good holiday too Emily.

Emily: You've forgotten your handbag.

Carolina: Oh! Thanks.

Emily: Money, passport, tickets

Carolina: Money, passport, tickets

Taxi driver: Right. To the station isn't it love?

Carolina: Yes please. How long do you think it'll take?

Taxi driver: Not long at this time of day. What time's your train?

Carolina: Ten forty-five.

Taxi driver: No problem.

Taxi driver: Off home for the holidays then?

Carolina: Yes, that's right.

Taxi driver: Somewhere nice?

Carolina: Venezuela. Caracas.

Taxi driver: Venezuela! That's a long way to go. Been here in Newcastle long then?

Carolina: Since September.

Taxi driver: Is this your first trip home then?

Carolina: Yes, that's right.

Taxi driver: You must be looking forward to seeing your family.

Carolina: Oh just a minute – excuse me. Oh hello Henry. Yes, yes, I'm in the taxi. Yes I will. And you have a good holiday too. Yes I will. OK. Thanks for calling. Bye.

Taxi driver: Boyfriend saying goodbye?

Carolina: No.

Taxi driver: What do you think of good old Newcastle then? Bet the weather's a bit cold for you ...

Taxi driver: Here we are then. Twenty past ten. Plenty of time.

Carolina: Yes, thank you.

Taxi driver: That'll be eight pounds ten please.

Carolina: Here you are. And um, keep the change.

Taxi driver: Thank you very much. Enjoy your holiday.

Carolina: Oh I will. Thank you very much. Bye.

Taxi driver: Don't forget your handbag.

Carolina: Oh! Thank you.

Carolina: Hello Jamie. Yes, I'm at the station. I've just got out of the taxi

Tess: Awwwww. I'm so glad Jamie called. I knew he would.

Ravi: Oh Tess. Well, listeners, that's all from Carolina for now. I'm sure that, like me, you've all been waiting to hear from Gordon again. Ready Gordon?

Section 6 – Gordon's Joke

Gordon: Ready.

Ravi: So, Gordon's joke.

Gordon: Right. This is a story about a man whose wife has a cat – and this man, he hates the cat. He can't stand it.

Tess: How can anyone hate cats? Cats are lovely.

Gordon: Not this cat – it's horrible – and this man hates the cat so much that he makes a plan to get rid of the cat. One day, when his wife isn't at home, he takes the cat, puts it in the car and drives ten miles away from home. He throws the cat out of the car and drives away. When he gets home, who do you think is sitting on the doorstep waiting for him?

Tess: The cat.

Gordon: Exactly. 'Right', thinks the man. The next day – his wife isn't there again – he takes the cat, puts it in the car and drives twenty miles. He throws the cat out of the car and drives away. When he gets home again, what do you think, the cat is sitting on the doorstep again. Well, by now he's really annoyed about this. The next day, he takes the cat, covers its eyes, puts it in the car and drives fifty miles. He goes over hills, through tunnels – he turns left, turns right, he makes it impossible for the cat to know where they are and he throws it out of the car and drives away. Well, two hours later, the man calls his wife. 'Hello?', she says. 'Is the cat there?', says the man. 'Yes', she says. 'Well can you put him on the phone, please? I need to ask him for directions'

Ravi: You've still got that old magic, Gordon.

Tess: Yeah, it's been great to have you back on the podcast, Gordon. But that's about all we've got time for this time. Don't go away, listeners,

because Tom the Teacher will be here in a minute but that's all from us and that's the end of series 2.

Ravi: We hope you enjoyed the series. Thanks for all your emails and things.

Tess: And Ravi – just one thing before we go – I have to make a confession.

Ravi: Go on.

Tess: You know the quiz today? Well, I have to admit, Gordon gave me a little bit of help with the answers.

Ravi: I knew it! I knew you must have cheated.

Tess: You looked so funny though when I got everything right. I wish we'd taken a picture – we could put it on the website.

Ravi: Right. I think that makes me the real winner of the quiz. And that sounds like a good place to finish. Bye everyone. Thanks for coming in today, Gordon. We'll see you all soon.

Tess: Yes, thanks Gordon. Bye everyone.

Gordon: Thanks for having me. Bye!

Tom the Teacher

Tom: Hi, I'm Tom. I'm here at the end of every podcast to talk about some of the language you heard in the programme, and to talk about ways to help you learn English. This is the last podcast in Series 2 so I want to start today by looking at something absolutely fantastic. Listen to Gordon talking about his job on the whale documentary.

Tess: Brilliant. What were you doing?

Gordon: I was working on the sound for the programme – we filmed a lot of it on a boat.

Ravi: So did you see a lot of whales?

Gordon: Hundreds. It was absolutely fantastic – but, listen, I'm going to tell you more about it a little bit later so I won't tell you now.

Tom: I'm interested in the adjectives Tess and Gordon used. Tess said 'brilliant' and Gordon said 'fantastic'. Now, 'brilliant' and 'fantastic' are both quite strong adjectives. They both mean 'very good'. Listen again to what Gordon said:

Gordon: Hundreds. It was absolutely fantastic

Tom: He said it was absolutely fantastic. We can only use 'absolutely' with strong adjectives like this. So we can say something is 'very big' or 'very small' but we can't use 'absolutely' here. 'Huge' means 'very big' so we can say something was 'absolutely huge' and 'tiny' means 'very small' so we can say 'it was absolutely tiny'. We only use 'absolutely' with 'strong' adjectives. Listen to another example.

Gordon: It was amazing. I know we can only hear it here, we can't see it, but when that humpback whale came up then it was so close I could smell its breath – it was absolutely incredible.

Ravi: What did its breath smell like?

Gordon: Pretty bad – quite fishy

Tom: Gordon said that seeing the whale so close was 'absolutely incredible' but he said that its breath smelt 'pretty bad' and 'quite fishy'. 'Pretty', when we use it like this means 'quite' and Gordon uses it with 'bad' because bad is just an ordinary adjective, not a strong one. One more thing though. Listen to another thing that Gordon said:

Ravi: Are people still hunting whales?

Gordon: They are, unfortunately, in some places. But what we found was that whale watching – people paying to go out to sea and look at whales – is a really big business now and, hopefully,

some of that money can be used to help protect whales.

Tom: He said that whale watching is 'a really big business'. 'Really' is a useful word because we can use it with strong adjectives like 'incredible' and with 'ordinary' adjectives like 'big'. So we can say 'It was really huge' or 'It was really big'. If you want to make an adjective stronger, 'really' is a good word to use.

Now, I wonder if you noticed a little word when Tess and Ravi were playing the quiz against each other. Listen to how Gordon says what the score is in the quiz.

Tess: I know this. The blue whale.

Gordon: That's right. Two nil to Tess. Question three. How big is the blue whale? Is it up to twenty five metres long, up to thirty five metres long or up to forty five metres long?

Ravi: Erm .. up to forty five metres long.

Gordon: Sorry Ravi. Tess?

Tess: Up to thirty five metres?

Gordon: That's right. Three nil to Tess.

Tom: Gordon said 'two nil to Tess' and 'Three nil to Tess'. What do you think 'nil' means? It means 'nothing' or 'zero' – but we only usually use it in some sports or things like quizzes. One place you often hear it is in football scores – you might say 'My team won two nil'. But you can't use it in every situation. When you give someone your telephone number for example you say 'zero' or 'nought' or even 'oh'. There are different ways to say 'zero' and it can be difficult to remember them but 'nil' is usually used for team sports.

Now, something else. Listen to what Ravi said when he introduced Gordon talking about whales.

Ravi: OK. Well, I'm dying to hear about these whales so let's move on.

Tom: Ravi said he was 'dying to hear' what Gordon had to say. A little late, when they were talking about superpowers, Tess used 'dying to' as well. Listen:

Tess: Ravi? I know you'll be dying to say something on this.

Tom: If you are 'dying to' do something, you really want to do it – you're really looking forward to it. It takes an infinitive, so you might say 'I'm dying to know what happened at the party' or 'he's dying to meet you'. See if you can use it yourself this week.

OK, that's all we've got time for today. This is the last podcast in series two so you won't hear from me for a while. Remember some of the things I've talked about – things you can do to help you learn English. This series we've talked about how important it is to have a good dictionary. We talked about 'thinking in English' – looking at things around you and thinking how to say it in English. And we also talked about looking out for English – you can probably see English every day – in the street, on TV or at the cinema – keep your eyes open for English!

And finally, remember you can write to me about any language that you noticed in this or the other podcasts. The address is LearnEnglishPodcast @ BritishCouncil DOT org. In a moment you'll hear the address for the website where you can read everything you've heard in this podcast. You can also find some practice exercises to do online and a support pack that you can print. Right. That's all for this series. Bye for now!