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# Splendid Speaking Podcasts



## Topic: Describing Photographs (Interview 3: November Archives)

This show can be listened to at the following address:

<http://splendid-speaking.com/blog/?p=16>

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## Transcript

### Introduction

Are you working in an industry or an academic area where you have to describe or interpret pictures or photographs? Perhaps you're doing an exam like CAE (Certificate in Advanced English), part of which asks you to describe a series of photographs.

This podcast features an interview with Ekaterina from Bulgaria, who's preparing for CAE. In this task Ekaterina had to speak for about 1 minute, commenting and reflecting on the collection of photographs she was given.

Ekaterina was asked to speculate on the content of the photographs and not simply to describe them. As you listen, decide how well Ekaterina managed to keep to the time limit of 1 minute and in particular, how successfully she speculated on how the people in the photographs were feeling. Finally, make a note of Ekaterina's use of English, which we'll look at in the feedback section.

Let's listen to Ekaterina.

**Peter: It says in this part of the test I'm going to give you the chance to talk for about a minute on the pictures that are in front of you. They show people with photographs of the past. I'd like you to compare and contrast these pictures saying what aspects of the past the photographs show and how the people might be feeling as they look back on the past. Don't forget you have about one minute for this. OK?**

Ekaterina: OK

Peter: OK would you like to start now.

Ekaterina: Yes. OK .. so these are three pictures ... showing people with photographs of the past. And ... they ... they are actually different ... they show different aspects of ... development. The first ... the first picture it is ... in the first picture there is ... an old lady and her portrait of her youth. She ... she must feel proud of her ... of herself ... of what she's been doing. About the next picture there is again a lady in her fifties maybe and around her there are lost of ... as far as I could see a kind of a plate or ... again pictures from ... photographs of her youth and maybe she's been a star. Well ... at the next ... at the next photograph there are more ... there are several people and ... they are looking at a kind of mountain or hill and ... as and ... as far as I could see and I could say from the picture that is in the picture ... maybe this .. this hill has changed and maybe these people feel in some way amazed by ... the ... you know the changes of time on the nature. All these three pictures have ... have a lot in common because of the feelings that people express. For example the ... the woman ... the star ... the show star feels ... in some way regrets that she isn't young again ... that she isn't young again, while the old lady is ... proud of herself.

First of all a big 'thank you' to Ekaterina for agreeing to be recorded. I'm sure she'd appreciate any comments you would like to make on her talk on the Splendid Speaking website. Time for some feedback.

Ekaterina did go over the one minute time limit a little but did an excellent job of speculating on the scenes in the photographs. Did you notice the various ways in which she used language to speculate?

*"...She ... she must feel proud of her... of herself ... of what she's been doing..."*

*"...there is again a lady in her fifties maybe..."*

*"...maybe this .. this hill has changed and maybe these people feel in some way amazed by the ... you know the changes of time on the nature..."*

*“... the show star feels in some way regrets that she isn’t young again ... that she isn’t young again, while the old lady is proud of herself...”*

In the main Ekaterina’s English was very accurate but can you spot the mistakes in these extracts:

*“... an old lady and her portrait of her youth...”*

*“... About the next picture...”*

*“... while at the next photograph...”*

*“... as far as I could see...”*

*“... you know the changes of time on the nature...”*

Here are the corrections. The first is a pronunciation error which Ekaterina made a couple of times but self-corrected later in the podcast.

*“... an old lady and her portrait of her youth...”*

It is in fact ‘in her youth’. Next:

*“... About the next picture...”*

Not ‘about the next picture’ but better ‘as far as the next picture is concerned’ or ‘turning to the next picture’.

*“... while at the next photograph...”*

Not ‘at the next photograph’ but ‘in the next photograph’.

*“... as far as I could see...”*

Not ‘as far as I could see’ but ‘as far as I can see’. Ekaterina was looking at the photographs at the time so needs the present tense. And finally

*“... you know the changes of time on the nature...”*

Not ‘on the nature’ but ‘on nature’.

OK. That’s the end of this podcast. Come back soon for another episode from Splendid Speaking. Before I go, a quick request. If you know of anybody preparing for BEC higher or IELTS or someone who’s working in an English speaking environment who needs to practise a particular speaking skill like giving a presentation, please ask them to get in contact with me at Splendid Speaking. We aim to cover as many examination, academic or work based scenarios as possible. And don’t forget, coming very soon ‘Splendid Speaking’ the online training course for advanced-level learners of English. Until next time it’s ‘Bye’ from me Pete Travis.

# The Splendid Speaking Self Study Course

Learn great strategies for describing photographs in Volume 2 of the 'Splendid Speaking Self-Study Course'.

## Volume 2: Powerful Presentations

In this volume you'll learn how to:

- Captivate your audience by choosing one of five memorable ways to start a presentation, and then signpost it clearly so your audience don't get lost (Unit 4).
- Introduce photographs and information graphics (graphs, charts, tables, etc) to illustrate your talk (Unit 5).
- Avoid worrying when you're asked to "say a few words". You'll soon be giving a T.O.P. spontaneous talk, and using pauses for effect (Unit 6).

In addition to these 12 key strategies you can test yourself with our interactive quizzes on useful collocational phrases to do with work, business, education and relationships, for example.



The screenshot shows a web-based quiz interface. At the top, it says 'Unit 5: Working With Graphics'. Below that, the title is 'Describing Pictures: Practice'. The main instruction reads: 'Listen to someone describing these pictures. Does the speaker A) give a general summary, B) give details C) reflect or speculate? Click the forward arrow to listen.' There are four photographs: 1) A group of people sitting around a table in a meeting. 2) Two men in a workshop or office setting. 3) A person working at a computer. 4) A person working at a desk. A circular button labeled 'Portraits of People' is positioned below the first photo. At the bottom, there are navigation controls including a play button and a forward arrow.

For further information about Volume 1 and 2 visit <http://www.splendid-speaking.com/products/>