
Splendid Speaking Podcasts



Topic: Using Anecdotes
(Interview 14: February Archives)

This show can be listened to at the following address:

<http://splendid-speaking.com/blog/?p=29>



Comprehension Questions

As you listen, decide whether according to Arturo, the following questions are true or false.

- 1) Attitudes to food have changed.
- 2) Children welcomed the emergence of canned food.
- 3) Arturo used to help his mother with the running of the house.
- 4) Processed food gave people more free time.
- 5) Canned or processed food was less expensive than fresh food.
- 6) People who bought processed food had high social status.

Transcript

Introduction

Welcome to the Splendid Speaking podcast. My name's Pete Travis and this week we're listening to Arturo from Italy. A reminder that the transcript for the most recent podcast along with comprehension questions are sent to subscribers of our mailing list when the podcast is published each week and remains available for seven days from the date of publication. You can sign up to the newsletter from www.splendid-speaking.com.

Arturo plans to take the CPE (Certificate of Proficiency in English) examination next December and in this podcast we looked on making short presentations. We decided to focus on using signposting words and expressions during short talks. Shortly before the interview in Skype, Arturo was sent the following question:

“Talk about how attitudes to food have changed.”

Here are some ideas which Arturo was told he could talk about.

- food production
- methods of preparation
- social importance

This recording is an edited version of the talk, and consists of an example of how using personal experience in a presentation such as this can help create interest. As you listen, decide how well Arturo uses signposting expressions and pay attention to the Arturo’s personal account. If you have access to the transcript, listen a second time and answer the comprehension questions. Finally, make a note of Arturo's use of English, which we’ll look at in the feedback session.

Let’s listen to Arturo.

OK so ... I’m not very young so I’ve experienced along these years a lot of changes in people’s attitude to food changing. First of all when I was young very young a child people welcomed both processed food and canned food. I remember when I was just five or six and I saw in Italy the first canned food my mother was very eager because people could be helped in running the house with prepared and processed food. Secondly people could go to the market very few times in a month so they could arrange their time in a better way. And above all I think it became a social status the fact that you could buy prepared or processed or canned food because it meant that you had a lot of free time for yourself and you could go around and so you could spend money. And also at the beginning this kind of food was not very cheap so it gave the idea of a well-being person. Things have changed a lot.

Feedback

First of all I'd like to thank Arturo for taking part in this Skype interview. You can comment on his talk at the Splendid Speaking website.

Now for some feedback. Arturo's decision to base the first half of his talk on personal experience had the immediate effect of transforming an academic subject into an interesting personal anecdote. There were also clear examples of Arturo using signposting words as we can see from these extracts:

"...First of all when I was young very young a child ..."

"...Secondly people could go to the market very few times in a month ..."

"...And above all I think it became a social status"

When doing mini-presentations such as this some people tend to pause frequently during their talk, either because they're considering the subject itself and what to say next or because they're thinking of the language they need in order to express themselves. To avoid being penalized for what could be considered hesitancy, Arturo could practice making short presentations of this kind as often as possible.

Finally, listen to the following extracts from Arturo's talk. Can you spot the mistakes in each one?

"... so I've experienced along ... these years ..."

"... my mother was very eager because ... people ... could be helped in ... a running the house ..."

"... Secondly people could go to the market very few times in a month ..."

"... it became ... a social ... status ..."

"... so it gave ... the idea ... of a ... well-being ... person ..."

OK. There are some vocabulary issues here that Arturo could try to remember for future reference.

"... so I've experienced along ... these years ..."

Rather than 'along' we would say 'through' or 'throughout' these years.

"... my mother was very eager because ... people ... could be helped in ... a running the house ..."

'Eager' is the wrong word here 'Enthusiastic' is more appropriate.

"... Secondly people could go to the market very few times in a month ..."

This sentence would be better expressed as:

'Secondly people could go to the market a few times a month' or 'People could go to the market less.'

"... it became ... a social ... status ..."

This should be 'It became associated with social status' or 'linked with social status'.

"... so it gave ... the idea ... of a ... well-being ... person ..."

This should be 'It gave the idea that the person was well off.'

OK. That's the end of this podcast. Once again, many thanks to Arturo. Until next week it's 'bye' from me Pete Travis. Bye!

Answers to Comprehension Questions

1) Attitudes to food have changed.

Ans: True

2) Children welcomed the emergence of canned food.

Ans: False

3) Arturo used to help his mother with the running of the house.

Ans: False

4) Processed food gave people more free time.

Ans: True

5) Canned or processed food was less expensive than fresh food.

Ans: False

6) People who bought processed food were seen as having high social status.

Ans: True

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- 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).

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