

Listening Practice #6

Comprehension Questions

You'll hear three speakers talking about a new hobby that they started and the reason why they started it. Answer the questions below based on what each speaker says:

Speaker 1: Why did the speaker start painting?

Speaker 2: What motivated the speaker to start cycling?

Speaker 3: How does the guitar help the speaker?

Vocabulary and Phrases

Speaker 1

Take (something) up: to begin a new activity or hobby.

- She **took up** photography after her trip to Iceland.

Mess (something) up: to make a mistake or do something poorly.

- I **messed up** the invitation and sent it to the wrong address.

Give it a shot: to try something, even if you're unsure about the outcome.

- He wasn't sure about salsa dancing, but he **gave it a shot**.

Wind down: to relax after being busy or stressed.

- After the meeting, I needed a walk to **wind down**.

Go with the flow: to accept things as they happen without trying to control everything.

- On group trips, I usually **go with the flow**.

Be/Feel burned out: feeling exhausted or overwhelmed, especially from work or stress.

- She felt **burned out** after studying for finals all week.

Lift (someone's) spirits: to make someone feel happier or more hopeful.

- A kind message from a friend **lifted my spirits**.

Speaker 2

Sit around: to be inactive or lazy.

- We **sat around** all day watching movies.

Get moving: to begin being active or doing something.

- Let's **get moving** or we'll miss the train.

Dust (something) off: to clean or prepare something that hasn't been used in a while.

- He **dusted off** his old violin and started practicing.

Hit the road: to begin a journey or leave a place.

- We packed our bags and **hit the road** at sunrise.

Keep up with (someone): to stay at the same level or pace as others.

- She walks so fast I can't **keep up with** her.

Come a long way: to make a lot of progress or improvement.

- His writing has **come a long way** since last year.

Blow off steam: to release stress or anger.

- He went for a run to **blow off steam** after the argument.

Stay in shape: to maintain physical fitness.

- Swimming helps me **stay in shape**.

Grow on someone: To become more liked over time.

- The new song **grew on me** after a few listens.

Speaker 3

Pick (something) up: to begin learning or doing something.

- She **picked up** French while living in Montreal.

Put (something) off: to delay or avoid doing something.

- I kept **putting off** cleaning the garage.

Sign up for (something): to register or agree to join something.

- He **signed up for** a cooking class last week.

Get the hang of (something): to learn how to do something well.

- It took me a while to **get the hang of** driving.

Tune (something) out: to ignore or block out distractions.

- I put on headphones to **tune out** the noise.

Stick with (something): to continue doing something and not quit.

- Even when it's hard, I **stick with** my goals.

Hold (someone) back: to prevent someone from progressing or trying something.

- Fear of failure **held him back** from applying.

Transcripts

Speaker 1:

I recently took up painting. At first, I thought I'd mess it up, but I gave it a shot anyway. Now I paint every weekend. It helps me wind down after a long week. I don't worry about making it perfect—I just go with the flow. I started because I was feeling burned out from work and needed something to lift my spirits. It turns out, playing with colors really brightens my mood. I'm not great yet, but I'm sticking with it.

Speaker 2:

I've started cycling lately. I used to sit around all day, but I knew I had to get moving. So I dusted off my old bike and hit the road. At first, I could barely keep up with the others, but I've come a long way. Now I ride almost every morning. It helps me blow off steam and stay in shape. I didn't expect to enjoy it so much, but it has really grown on me.

Speaker 3:

I picked up the guitar last month. I've always wanted to learn, but I kept putting it off. One day, I finally said, "Why not?" and signed up for lessons. It's tough, but I'm slowly getting the hang of it. I practice every evening, even if I mess up. Music helps me tune out the noise in my life and focus. It's not easy, but I'm sticking with it. I'm glad I didn't let fear hold me back.

Answers:

Speaker 1: Because she was feeling burned out from work and needed something to lift her spirits.

Speaker 2: She wanted to stop sitting around and get moving (become active).

Speaker 3: It helps him tune out the noise in his life and focus.