



Sèrie 2

Comprensió d'un text oral

America's Best Known Architect

In the following conversation you are going to hear some new words. Read and listen to them. Make sure you know what they mean.

windbag: persona que pontifica

grace: honorar/honrar

flock: congregar

Ready?

Now read the questions on the following page. Read them carefully before listening to the conversation.

Interviewer: Welcome to our weekly program about famous Americans. Tonight, we go after the story of one of the most extraordinary men of our time. He is Frank Lloyd Wright, perhaps the greatest architect of the twentieth century and certainly the most famous American architect ever. And in the opinion of some, America's foremost social rebel. So, let's talk to Mr. Roger Wolf, Frank Lloyd Wright's biographer. Mr Wolf, how would you define him?

Mr Wolf: Well, I'm not the most appropriate person to define him. According to a story in *Life Magazine* not many years back, fellow architects have called him everything, from a great poet to an insufferable windbag. The clergy has deplored his morals, creditors have deplored his financial habits, politicians, his opinions. Admirers of Frank Lloyd Wright consider him as a man one hundred years ahead of his time. I'm an admirer.

Interviewer: One of his most famous statements was "If I had another fifteen years to work, I could rebuild this entire country, I could change the nation." Now, would you tell me why should he, one man, want to change the way of life of millions and millions of people?

Mr Wolf: Well, he thought the way of life in which the country... to which the country is committed needs change.

Interviewer: But don't you think these words show his ego, his self-centeredness? You're saying that practically everyone in the United States is out of step except Frank Lloyd Wright.



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Mr Wolf: Not at all, I'm not saying anything of the kind. It isn't their job to build, it was his. He thought people should have a right to look to their architects for suggestions for what they should build.

Interviewer: Well, as an architect...

Mr Wolf: ...and how they should build it.

Interviewer: As an architect, how would he have liked to change the way that we live?

Mr Wolf: He wouldn't have liked to change so much the way we live, as what we live in, and how we live in it. Wright always said that we ourselves are changing in the buildings we live in. Most people don't really understand what it is to live in an organic building with organic character.

Interviewer: Well now, organic building, organic character, these are words which are difficult to understand.

Mr Wolf: Well, let's say natural, would that suit you better? For Wright, a truly organic building developed from within outwards and was thus in harmony with its time, place, and inhabitants.

Interviewer: I'm still not... I would like specifically, to know what you mean, how would he like to change the way that we live?

Mr Wolf: He meant he'd have liked to have a free architecture, an architecture that belonged where you see it standing, architecture that graced the landscape instead of being a disgrace in the landscape. His clients told him how those buildings he had built for them had changed the character of their whole lives and their whole existence. And it's different now than it was before. Well, he'd have liked to do that for the whole country.

Interviewer: But, imagine New York. When he came to New York, and he saw the skyline of New York, didn't it excite him? After all, he did design the Guggenheim Museum in New York. Most of us think that New York is so spectacular and imposing.

Mr Wolf: In fact, it didn't impress him at all. Because it never was planned, it was all the result of a race for rent, and it is a great monument, he thought, to the power of money and to greed. It wasn't about ideas. He didn't see an idea in the whole thing anywhere. Do you? Where is the idea in it? What's the idea?

Interviewer: The idea is obviously, it seems to me, that a lot of people want to live together to make their livings, to make money, to... to enjoy what this large city has to offer. And I guess from time immemorial people have flocked more or less to one spot to exchange ideas as well as goods.



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Mr Wolf: But there was a justification for that. When there were no other means of communication than by personal contact. That's when the plans for the cities we now live in originated. They originated back in the Middle Ages, when the only way you could have a culture, the only way you could get social distinction or any education, was by joining other people. Today, however, we cannot get modern improvements here in the city anymore.

Interviewer: Let me see if I get your point. Is Fallingwater, Frank Lloyd Wright's most famous work, an example of good architecture? What is it that makes Fallingwater so special?

Mr Wolf: Fallingwater is Frank Lloyd Wright's house built over a waterfall in Pennsylvania for a rich family from Pittsburgh in the 1930s, and it's arguably *the* most famous house of the modern era. I think it's Wright's supreme example of architecture connected to nature, what he called 'organic architecture', because the house is integrated into the landscape. The water flows through the living room.

Interviewer: I get it now. Let's talk about other aspects of Wright's personality. Wright had faith in youth. However, he did not have faith in the mob, yet young people grow into adults and often turn into a mob. Or do I misunderstand?

Mr Wolf: I think you've got it right. He believed that many people were not properly educated and didn't have an opportunity to go right instead of left. He always said that he put a capital N on Nature, and that is where people had to go, go back to Nature. He said that when you go out into a big forest, with towering pines, and experience a feeling of awe, frequently you do connect with the presence of nature, you not only feel large, you feel enlarged and encouraged, intensified, more powerful.

Interviewer: It is clear in your biography that he was rebellious, a radical in his art and life. Do you agree?

Mr Wolf: Absolutely. But don't forget that if you ask the average citizen to name a famous American architect, you can bet that their answer will be Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright gained such cultural primacy for good reason: he changed the way we build and live.

Interviewer: Mr. Wolf, I thank you for talking with us today.

Mr Wolf: Well, you're welcome.



Clau de respostes

1. Why is Frank Lloyd Wright a famous American?

His designs for buildings are admired by architects everywhere.

2. Frank Lloyd Wright wanted people to look to architects and to consult them more because

he wanted to change the type of buildings we live in.

3. What did Frank Lloyd Wright want to reform in the U.S.?

The general way of life.

4. Frank Lloyd Wright liked buildings that

fit into the natural area where they were built.

5. Why did Frank Lloyd Wright not like New York City?

He thought the type of buildings there represented a money-oriented view of society.

6. Why is Fallingwater so famous?

Because a stream runs inside the building.

7. The text says that in certain circumstances we can “experience a feeling of awe.” Which of the following expressions is a synonym for awe in the text?

admiration.

8. According to Mr. Wolf, Frank Lloyd Wright

deserves his fame.



Comprensió lectora

1. The horses we see in Assateague Island are described as “feral”. This means that they...

descend from domestic animals that have become wild over the years.

2. These horses are unique because they...

have adapted to very tough living conditions.

3. How did the horses arrive on the island?

They were most probably taken there to avoid paying tax.

4. Which of the following sentences is NOT true?

The National Park Service is in charge of all the horses on the island.

5. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service...

issues a permit allowing the horses to feed on its grounds.

6. The Pony Penning festival

is a local festival in which horses swim to a nearby island to be sold.

7. The Assateague horses

have adapted to their environment and developed a complex social structure.

8. Visitors to Assateague Island

must treat the horses as wild animals and respect their habitat.



SÈRIE 5

Comprensió d'un text oral

The Surprising History of Handwashing

In this radio programme you are going to hear some new words. Read and listen to them. Make sure you know what they mean.

go delirious: *entrar en un estat de deliri / entrar en un estado de delirio*

ward: *sala d'hospital / sala de hospital*

midwife: *llevadora / comadrona*

puzzling: *misteriós / misterioso*

aisle: *passadís / pasillo*

Ready? Now read the questions on the following page. Read them carefully before listening to the radio programme. [Now listen to the interview.]

Interviewer: We take it for granted now that washing our hands is a tool to fight disease. But somebody had to discover that, and most of the credit goes to a Hungarian doctor named Ignaz Semmelweis. How did he come to realize that handwashing was so important for our health? To answer that, we've invited Dr. Diana Tulane, a professor of the history of medicine at Purdue University in Indiana who has studied Ignaz Semmelweis, to our program.

Welcome and good morning, Prof. Tulane.

Prof. Tulane: Good morning, and thank you for inviting me.

Interviewer: My pleasure. How did you become interested in Ignaz? Is he famous?

Prof. Tulane: Actually, I was interested in medicine as practiced in the 19th century, and Ignaz Semmelweis became an important name in medicine from that period.

Interviewer: I'm assuming he had something to do with handwashing.

Prof. Tulane: Yes, that's right. The history of handwashing is actually complicated, and it's pretty amazing that someone discovered the importance of handwashing at a time when most people thought disease was caused by something like bad air.

Interviewer: How can the history of handwashing be complicated? It seems like a pretty basic thing to do.



Prof. Tulane: Now it seems basic, but that wasn't always so. The story begins in 1844 in Vienna, Austria, where Ignaz worked in Vienna General hospital, which was the largest maternity hospital in the world. As you can imagine, hospitals at that time were very different from what we know today. They didn't know about germs, and hospitals were so crowded that it wasn't really that rare for there to be more than one patient in a single bed. Conditions for healing were very poor. Not surprisingly, the mortality rate in hospitals of the time was extremely high.

Interviewer: I can imagine.

Prof. Tulane: One disease that was particularly deadly at this time was child bed fever, which was responsible for the death of many, many women. Women would notice symptoms just a few days after giving birth. Child bed fever was a particularly dramatic disease because it occurred at a time when people were supposed to be very happy, as their child had just been born, but things could go very bad for the mother in a very short period of time. She would start screaming because of the pain and **go delirious**, and die a horrible death.

Interviewer: How terrible. What caused this disease?

Prof. Tulane: We know now that this disease is caused by a bacterial infection, but that wasn't known at the time. Remember, they didn't know about germs.

Interviewer: So what happened at the hospital in Vienna?

Prof. Tulane: The conditions at Vienna General hospital were so crowded that they had to divide the maternity ward into two clinics, one that was served by doctors, and the other that was served by midwives. Soon it became apparent that many more women were getting child bed fever and dying in the doctors' clinic than in the midwives' clinic. This was very puzzling to everyone, because doctors had more training than midwives, so everyone expected that doctors would be able to provide better care. No one understood why more women in the doctors' clinic were dying.

Interviewer: I bet it was Ignaz who solved the puzzle. And how did he do it?

Prof. Tulane: Well, first he analyzed some of the explanations that people had already suggested. Many people thought that child bed fever was caused by overcrowded conditions, but he knew that that could not be the only factor because both the clinic served by doctors and the one served by midwives were equally crowded, so there was no difference there that would explain the difference in mortality. But he did observe some other differences between the two clinics.

Interviewer: Really? How did he do this?

Prof. Tulane: He did what any good scientist would do: he set up controlled experiments. He had the women in one clinic give birth while lying on their sides, while



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those in the other clinic gave birth while lying on their backs. He then switched the positions for each group, but this had no effect. More of the doctors' patients were still dying. Then, he noticed that in the doctors' clinic, a priest was walking down the aisles ringing a bell. He thought that maybe psychological terror played a role because the women in the doctors' clinic knew that they were dying once they saw the priest and heard the bell, but that he couldn't prove that, either.

Interviewer: It sounds like this process took a long time.

Prof. Tulane: Oh yes, it took him several years. Then, in 1847, his best friend Robert, a doctor, was accidentally cut while doing an autopsy and died soon afterwards. Ignaz noticed that his dying friend shared a lot of characteristics with the women dying from child bed fever, so he hypothesized that they all had the same disease, and it obviously wasn't only related to giving birth. He then observed that the doctors would do autopsies and afterward go directly to the maternity ward to deliver babies. He realized that the disease might be caused by the contact with dead bodies.

Interviewer: So, in effect, the doctors were spreading the disease from cadavers to mothers who had just given birth.

Prof. Tulane: Exactly. To test his hypothesis, Ignaz had the doctors wash their hands with a disinfectant after they performed an autopsy and before they entered the maternity ward. Once the doctors started doing this, the mortality rate of women in their clinic decreased to the same level as that in the midwives' clinic.

Interviewer: So, did Ignaz become a hero? It sounds like he saved a lot of women's lives.

Prof. Tulane: Well, yes and no. At first, the medical community was skeptical. Most of the doctors agreed to his idea of handwashing, but Ignaz was not an easy person to work with. For example, he insisted that all cases of child bed fever were caused by contamination from autopsies, even when that really wasn't possible. In the end, he was taken to a psychiatric hospital and died alone.

Interviewer: How sad! But his realization that handwashing could prevent the spread of disease turned out to be very important.

Prof. Tulane: Yes. At about the same time as his death, scientists discovered that germs cause disease, and that would not have happened without the work of people like Ignaz Semmelweis.

Interviewer: That's all we have time for today. Thank you, Dr. Tulane, for this very interesting history of handwashing.

Prof. Tulane. Thank you.



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Text adapted from the program "[The Surprise History of Handwashing](#)" on National Public Radio, January 26, 2021.



Clau de respostes

1. Where did Ignaz Semmelweis work?

- In a large hospital in Vienna.

2. Which of the following statements about Vienna General Hospital is NOT TRUE?

- It only served veterans of war.

3. Child bed fever was a disease affecting

- women who had just given birth.

4. Why did the hospital divide the maternity ward into two clinics?

- Because the hospital had too many maternity patients.

5. As he tried to discover why more women were dying in one of the clinics, what did Ignaz do first?

- He considered solutions that others had proposed.

6. Which of the following statements is TRUE about Ignaz's work?

- He discovered the importance of handwashing because he had done controlled experiments.

7. Ignaz discovered that child bed fever

- was spread by the doctors' lack of personal hygiene when working.

8. Once the doctors started to wash their hands after performing autopsies,

- the number of women dying in the clinic served by doctors decreased.



Comprensió lectora

GINKGO TREES NEARLY WENT EXTINCT. HERE'S HOW WE SAVED THESE 'LIVING FOSSILS'

1. According to scientists

- ginkgo trees losing their leaves later in the year is possibly due to climate change.

2. Which one of the sentences is FALSE?

- ginkgos almost went extinct because of human carelessness with nature.

3. According to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature

- practically no ginkgos exist in the wild.

4. Which one of the sentences is TRUE?

- ginkgos produce seeds.

5. Fossilized plants confirm that

- ginkgos have actually changed very little through time.

6. The undomesticated population of ginkgos found in western China

- might have been cultivated by monks.

7. Today domesticated ginkgo trees

- are common around the world.

8. Crane is not worried about the future of the ginkgo because

- it is a popular species of tree.