

Speaking Test 1 with Asia (transcript)

Robbie: Hello, my name is Robbie, can you tell me your full name, please?

Asia: My name is Asia Sedokhina.

Robbie: And can you tell me where you're from?

Asia: I am from Moscow, in Russia.

Robbie: And can I see your identification, please?

Asia: Yes, please.

Robbie: OK, thank you very much. Now in this first part I'd like to know a little bit about yourself, so to begin with tell me a little about your garden or a garden you know well.

Asia: Well, I live in an apartment so I don't have a garden. However, I have a favourite park. It's my favourite park because my first school was located at the edge of the park and had a back door which would lead into the centre of the park, which I loved very much. So in break, recess or field trips we would go to the park and we would always have, like, games and stuff like that and these memories, I really like them so...

Robbie: OK, if you had a garden would you prefer a flower garden or a vegetable garden?

Asia: I'm not sure which one, but I would say vegetable garden, because well there's a... vegetable garden gives you a product which you can also use or as a nutrition, so you can eat it, and you can see it grow... and the process, you can see it well. A flower garden is just, well, grass or plants that are there.

Robbie: Why do you think so many people like gardening?

Asia: Maybe it connects them with the nature or... and they find it relaxing or... interesting hobby for them, I don't know, maybe.

Robbie: Yea. So I'd like to move on and talk about pets. Do you have a pet?

Asia: Yes, I have a dog.

Robbie: You have a dog, OK. Why do so many people like to have pets?

Asia: There's... they're man's best friend, I guess. They're great companions, you can teach them, you can travel with them, and they will always stay your friend and always part of your family, so...

Robbie: And how do people's lives change when they have a pet?

Asia: Well, the responsibility changes a lot. They have a responsibility of a new life, they have to take care of the pet, feed it, walk it, especially dogs, and of course each pet has its own requirements, there're also special pets who maybe have illnesses, or other pets who are more active or something which means more exercise.

Robbie: OK, what can people learn from animals?

Asia: Patience. Patience, and, well, people with temper can, well, temper they need to, they can learn to calm it down, because sometimes pets when they don't listen you get frustrated and then you really want to, you know, do something so the pet starts listening to you, well you can learn patience, that pet is like a child, it needs time to learn.

Robbie: OK, right. I'd like now to ask some questions about marriage. What traditions are involved with marriage in your country?

Asia: In Russia mostly like many other countries the man proposes. Mostly it's a traditional wedding in church, mostly Orthodox, and there would always be a reception at the end with a lot of dancing, traditional foods, yea.

Robbie: OK, do you think that people meeting on the Internet can lead to a good marriage?

Asia: It depends what kind of person it is, or kind of people it is. If it's a correct match, why not, of course. If ... it's just a beginning of a relationship, it's like meeting someone on the street and asking them to go for a coffee or something - just starts from the Internet.

Robbie: What are your feelings about arranged marriages?

Asia: I am absolutely against them. I think that a person should have his or her own choice of who he or she wants to spend their entire life with. So, I think that it's not the parents' responsibility or choice, but it should be the person who, if, who wants to get married, who is in love with this person to get married and not because they are supposed to.

Robbie: What are people's attitudes to divorce in your country?

Asia: Almost like any other, I mean, it's always either the man or the woman or both, it just doesn't work in marriage, there is no real difference to other countries. Divorce you go to... you get documents, you sign them, and that's pretty much it.

Robbie: Now, I'm going to give you a topic and I'd like you to talk about it for one to two minutes. Before you talk you have one minute to think about what you're going to say. You can make some notes if you wish. Do you understand?

Asia: Yes.

Robbie: OK, so here is your topic, and take a minute to prepare.

Topic card

Describe a child that you know. Please say

- Who is he/she?
- What does he/she look like?
- What are your feelings for him/her?
- Explain why you like/dislike this child.

Robbie: OK, you are going to need one to two minutes, so don't worry if I stop you. Off you go.

Asia: So, the child I am going to talk about is my brother, his name is Boris Sedokhin, he's 13 years old, and two years younger than me, he's in the same school as I, in the 8th grade. He speaks the same languages as me, English, Russian and German, he... over the past year or two he started to grow extremely, now he is almost the same size, almost higher than me, which a little freaks me up, because, well, he's always my small brother, that's always been the tiny one. He's extremely athletic, plays soccer, it's his favourite sport, he's been playing soccer since he was 5. Every day after school he has training with my father who is enthusiastic about his passion. Because of his sports enthusiasm and soccer he is extremely thin, very bony. He... as I said before he's my size, blond hair as me, he has blue eyes and looks a lot like my mom. Well, he's always been my kid brother, I always loved him a lot. Of course he gets annoying sometimes as most small brothers do. For example there was a story when he was 2, I was 4, we were walking down the street, and as every child he gets tired of walking himself so he starts crying and then apparently he sits down on the pavement on the middle of the road, and as normal parents, he would, my mom says "OK, you want to stay here, please, we're going to go, we're going to go." She took my hand and she told me to walk forward while my brother just sat on the pavement back. I started to get scared that my mom would actually leave my brother there, so I would start crying myself and sit down on the pavement and wait until my mom...

Robbie: OK. Do you think you would continue to get on with him, as you get older?

Asia: Hopefully, if he accepts me.

Robbie: OK, right. I'd like to ask now some questions related to this topic. To begin with, I'd like to talk about childhood. So what kind of things make up a happy childhood?

Asia: A happy childhood comes firstly from the parents, that's my opinion. So if the parents are enthusiastic and happy and... about having a child and giving a child the best that they can, then there's no better childhood that you can think of.

Robbie: What kind of things should parents do to be good role models for children?

Asia: They're supposed to, they must be responsible and responsible for their own sake as people... as parents that are not responsible would go drinking and would sometimes even hurt their children, which I think is absolutely irresponsible and should be illegal everywhere. So, parents should be responsible and take care of their children, and only want the best for them.

Robbie: What things have you learned from your childhood about bringing up a child?

Asia: It's extremely hard. Every child varies so if a child is like their parents it's easier for them to confine in them and to relate to them so they would know what to do, for example. However, there are different kinds of children so you never know, you can't exactly say it.

Robbie: OK. And how has childhood changed since you were young?

Asia: Well, I am on the last brick of the century where... or the generation where technology hasn't taken out everything, so when I was younger I still had wooden dolls and toys like

that, while the generation that is coming after me only had technology, computer screens, video games which is kind of scary.

Robbie: OK, let's move on now to talk about growing up. What are some of the changes of growing up in your country nowadays?

Asia: Well, in Russia, especially in Moscow, it's very large city, well the apartments, so it's so crowded, it's extremely crowded that apartments aren't as big as they would be in other countries. I guess the environment is much different, it's more polluted, it's so many cars, so many people, it's dangerous, so children need to grow up a little more to go out alone than they would in other, safer countries.

Robbie: How do parents punish the children in your country, in Russia?

Asia: When there's punishment, it gets really loud. Especially with the mother and the daughter, from my own experience. Sometimes also physical punishment, I mean not terrible physical beating, but sometimes, I don't know, you know, slap on the butt, or tugging of the ear, something like that is appropriate.

Robbie: How do you feel about corporal punishment?

Asia: From my opinion it's horrible and should be banished from everywhere against never ever, ever. I think that's not to... Yes, you have a temper but you shouldn't take it out on your children. If they annoy you, well that's what children are there for, to annoy you, you can't, you can't change it.

Robbie: And finally, how do you think the change of growing up will change in the next 20 years?

Asia: Well as I said before, technology will take over world fully and the children will become lazier, won't want to work, will have to stay with their parents and won't accomplish as much as maybe the generations before us. That's my worry.

Robbie: OK, right, thank you very much. That's the end of the test.

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