

### Introduction

You are going to listen to an interview with Dorah, a black South African, talking about a traditional South African wedding. Dorah moved to London several years ago and she works as a senior nurse in a London hospital. Her mother tongue is Sotho, one of the six South African languages she speaks, including Afrikaans and South African English. Dorah speaks slowly and clearly.

### Stage 1: Pre-listening – activating schema

#### Key lexis

(These are key lexical items which you need to be sure your students know before they hear the recording. Try to elicit the meanings as far as possible rather than just giving the items and explanations.)

**a township** – a town in South Africa where only non-whites were allowed to live under Apartheid. (Apartheid, a period of legal racial segregation, lasted from 1948 to 1994.)

**a village** – a group of houses, shops and other buildings such as a church or a pub - much smaller than a town.

**a tradition/traditions** – Traditions are things which a particular society or group of people have continued to do for a long time. (For example: It's traditional for British people to open their Christmas presents on Christmas Day./It's a tradition in our family to go for a long walk after Sunday lunch, whatever the weather.)

**to slaughter something** – to kill an animal for meat

Words associated with weddings which feature in this interview:

**the bride**

**the groom/bridegroom**

**the bridesmaid(s)**

Ask your students how many wedding-related words they can think of, or find in their dictionaries.

- A Discussion questions**
1. Are you married? If so, describe your wedding day.
  2. Would you like to get married? Why?/Why not?
  3. Describe a typical wedding in your country.
  4. Have you ever been to a wedding in another country? If so, what was different from weddings in your country?
  5. What do you know about weddings in the UK or the USA?
  6. Can gay people (i.e. two men or two women) get married in your country?

### Stage 2: Natural listening comprehension practice



In contrast to traditional listening comprehension practice, this activity reflects what we all do in the real world when we are confronted with people speaking in another language. Unlike the recordings found in ELT coursebooks, this recording can be used with students of all levels. *(Remember that in real life we cannot select who we listen to on the basis of difficulty!)*

First ask your students to listen to the entire recording and tell you how much they understand as a percentage. Then ask them to tell you what they heard. Remember to be non-committal at this stage. Just listen to what they say and do not react. You can write key points on the board.

### Stage 3: Decoding and building meaning



Ask your students to listen to the recording again and to write down as many words as they can and compare their lists with other students, in pairs or in groups. How much more of the recording can they understand now? Can they use these words to build meaning? Add more key points to the board.

### Stage 4: Traditional listening comprehension practice



You can now use traditional listening comprehension practice to check how much your students have understood and identify places in the recording where comprehension broke down. Unlike traditional listening comprehension tasks where the recording is graded, in this approach it is the tasks which are graded. This makes these materials ideal for mixed ability classes.

Give your students sufficient time to look at the task for their level and predict their answers before they listen. The answers are given here to make your life easier and save you having to work them out.

### Elementary Level: Questions

*(Sometimes part of the answer is given in italics to help the students.)*

1. When did Dorah's cousin get married? *yesterday*
2. Where did she get married? *in her village*
3. How far is the wedding location from Pretoria by car? *1½ hours*
4. How is the bride related to Dorah? *She's her mother's sister's daughter.*
5. Which two of these activities had people been practising before the wedding day?  
*cycling, shouting, running, dancing, shooting, cooking, singing, cleaning, painting*  
*dancing and singing*
6. How long had the bridesmaids been practising their 'steps' and 'moves'? *for two or three months*
7. What time do the bridegroom's family have to be at the bride's home on the wedding day? *at 5 or 6  
in the morning*
8. What does the bride's family give the groom's family? *a live sheep or goat*

### Intermediate Level: Gap-fill

1. Dorah's cousin got married yesterday.
2. The wedding took place in a village about 1½ hours by car from Pretoria.
3. The bride was Dorah's mother's sister's daughter.
4. The interviewer says weddings in South Africa are very different to weddings in the UK.
5. Before the wedding people practise special dances and songs to sing.
6. The bridesmaids practise their dance steps and moves for two or three hours before the wedding.
7. The groom's family have to arrive at the bride's place early in the morning on the day of the wedding.
8. They have to be there at 5 or 6 o'clock.

9. In the old days it used to be 4 o'clock.
10. The bride's family give the bridegroom's family a live sheep or goat.

Advanced Level: Correct the mistake in each sentence

1. Dorah's niece got married yesterday in South Africa. her cousin, not her niece
2. She got married in a township. in a village
3. The wedding location is about 1½ miles from Pretoria. 1½ hours i.e. by car
4. The bride was Dorah's uncle's daughter. She was Dorah's aunt's daughter: 'my mother's sister's daughter'.
5. People practise songs and dances for a couple of weeks before a traditional wedding in South Africa. a couple of months
6. Dorah says the preparations are quite 'strange'. 'serious' (NB Dorah pronounces this 'sirrus').
7. The bridegroom's family have to arrive the night before the wedding. early in the morning
8. Sometimes the bride's family offer the groom's family a coat. a live sheep or goat
9. The groom's family have to look after the animal until it dies naturally. 'they have to slaughter it'

### Stage 5: Interesting language points

#### A Explaining where you live

When the interviewer asks Dorah where the bride's village is, Dorah replies:

'It's **about one and a half hours from** Pretoria.'

The interviewer knows she means by car because of previous conversations. This way of explaining where you live is very useful, particularly if you live in a small place which no one has ever heard of. You just describe the location relative to the nearest town or city. Look at these examples:

I come from Southampton. It's **about an hour from** London by car./It's **about 80 miles from** London.

I come from Trollhättan. It's **about 40 minutes from** Gothenburg by train./It's **about 75 kilometres from** Gothenburg.

We live in Walthamstow. It's **about 20 minutes from** Oxford Circus by tube.

Now ask your students to describe where they come from, using the models above.

#### B Speaker responses – showing the speaker that you're paying attention

The interviewer shows that she is listening and following what Dorah is saying by using these words and sounds:

Yeah.

OK.

Right.

Uh, huh. Mmm, hmm.

Ask your students to practise short conversations using these responses.

#### C Checking understanding

During the interview the interviewer checks with Dorah to make sure that she understands what Dorah has just said:

Dorah: The family from the bridegroom have to come to the bride's place early in the morning.

Interviewer: When you say 'early', what, 10 o'clock?

Here are some more examples:

Sarah: I went to bed really late last night.  
Dan: When you say 'late', what, midnight?

Patrick: Sorry I'm late. I had to wait ages for the bus.  
Claire: When you say 'ages', what, five minutes?

Ask your students to practise short conversations using this format.

### D Making deductions

Later in the interview we get this exchange:

Dorah: They will give them a sheep or a goat. It's for them and then they have to slaughter it.  
Interviewer: So they give them a live sheep?

Because she hears the word 'slaughter' the interviewer deduces that the sheep is alive.

Here are some more examples of this use of **So**:

Katie: I'll meet Patrick at the station and bring him back here.  
Sam: So Patrick's coming by train?  
  
Harry: I really need to study tonight.  
Jill: So you're not coming out with us?

Ask your students to practise short conversations where the listener has to make a deduction. Here are some examples and suggested answers:

I'm really tired! (So you stayed up late again?)  
I'm starving! (So you missed breakfast again?)  
I saw him out last night with Sarah. (So he's not going out with Alex anymore?)  
I have to be at work at 7 tomorrow. (So you are staying home tonight?)  
Mark is so annoying! (So you've had another argument?)

### E Have to do something

Dorah says the bridegroom's family '*have to come to the bride's place early in the morning*'.

The meaning of *have to do something* is that there is external obligation or pressure to do something. Here are some more examples from the interview:

## 1.5 A traditional black South African wedding

Page 7

There'll be some dance that they **have to practise** and some songs to sing.

There will be some steps, some moves that they **have to do**.

And on the day of the wedding... the family from the bride's groom **have to come** to the bride's place early in the morning.

They will give them a sheep or a goat... and then they **have to slaughter** it.

Here are some more examples of **have to do something**:

When it snows we **have to clear** the snow off the pavement outside our house.

I **have to cook** dinner tonight because it's my turn.

I **have to be** at work at 8 tomorrow morning.

My grandmother **has to take** 28 tablets a day.

Now ask your students to make up their own examples.

### F Four features of Dorah's South African accent

Dorah has a wonderful South African accent. Her mother tongue is Sotho, but she speaks a number of other South African languages, including Afrikaans and South African English. These all influence the way she speaks.

Many features of her accent show up in this short extract. Ask your students to look at the words of the extract, and say them to themselves. Then ask them to listen to the original extract, and repeat what they hear. What differences do they notice between Dorah's accent and standard UK or US English?



Track 2

practise dance, singing, you know, just to make the day

1. Dorah's 'short-a' (as in the word 'trap') is close to the vowel in 'dress'. Ask your students to look at the clauses and phrases below and say them to themselves, paying particular attention to the underlined syllables. Then ask them to listen to Dorah. What do they notice about her pronunciation of the underlined syllables?



Track 3

they have to practise so they can practise the family from the bride's groom  
the girl's family There'll be some dance...

Remember, a good language learner will realise that when a speaker produces one non-standard pronunciation feature, the speaker is likely to produce this feature in all other words in English containing that sound. Ask your students how a South African might say these words:

map, tap, lack, crack, sat, flap

2. Dorah's 'short-i' (as in the word 'kit') is close to the long vowel in the word 'fleece'. Ask your students to look at the clauses and phrases below and say them to themselves, paying particular attention to the underlined syllables. Then ask them to listen to Dorah. What do they notice about her pronunciation of the underlined syllables?



Track 4      and then there is (um)      singing      to sing      they have to practice

Ask your students how a South African might say these words:

thin, win, kiss, miss, tin, twin

3. Dorah's 'v' at the end of the words 'of' and 'have' sounds like the letter 'f'. Ask your students to look at the clauses and phrases below and say them to themselves, paying particular attention to the underlined syllables. Then ask them to listen to Dorah. What do they notice about her pronunciation of the underlined syllables?



Track 5      It's one of our tradition(s)...      and then they have to (slaughter it)

Ask your students how a South African might say these words:

cave, love, move, shove, over, cover

4. Dorah's 'r' is often a 'tap' or a 'trill'. Ask your students to look at the clauses and phrases below and say them to themselves, paying particular attention to the underlined letters. Then ask them to listen to Dorah. What do they notice about her pronunciation of the underlined letters?



Track 6      around um.      round four      serious

(NB You might like to point out that Dorah does not pronounce the 'r' at the end of 'four', and that 'serious' has only two syllables, not three.)

Ask your students how a South African might say these words:

tree, fridge, transport, trade, cried

### Stage 6: Further listening practice

#### Exercise 1 Dictation

First ask your students in pairs or groups to decide how many words they hear in each track. Then ask them to listen again and write down the words they hear.



**Track 7** 1. I think weddings in South Africa are very different to weddings over here.



**Track 8** 2. They've been practising for quite a long time.



**Track 9** 3. And in the olden days they say it used to be around 4.



**Track 10** 4. They will give them a sheep or a goat.

#### Exercise 2 Weak forms

The expression 'weak forms' refers to the grammatical or function words between the stressed lexical, or content, words in an utterance which tend to be unstressed and assume a weak form. This makes it difficult for students to recognise them in a stream of speech.

Ask your students to fill in the missing words in the following extracts from the recording.



**Track 11**

1. Is she getting married in a township?
2. All for the special day.
3. So they can practise for maybe two or three months before.
4. So you've got the bride and the groom.
5. Special songs for the day.
6. There will be days that they will prepare the goat.

#### Exercise 3 Linking

Linking occurs when the end of one word runs into the start of the next word. It is very common in informal spoken English. It occurs if a word ends in a consonant and the next word starts with a vowel, or if one word ends with the same letter as at the beginning of the next word. However, it also occurs frequently with the final letter –s of one word linking with a consonant at the start of the next word. Linking makes it difficult for students to distinguish individual words in the steam of speech.

Ask your students to listen to these extracts from the recording and fill in the missing words.



Track 12 1. Um, Dorah, you said your cousin was\_getting married yesterday.



Track 13 2. Is\_that near Johannesburg?



Track 14 3. Tell me about this\_wedding.



Track 15 4. ...it's\_like people will be singing...



Track 16 5. It's\_for them and then they have to slaughter it.



Track 17 6. Who brings\_the sheep or the goat?

#### Exercise 4 Recognising different intonation patterns

There are traditionally some classic intonation patterns in spoken English, for example a falling tone at the end of a statement and a rising tone at the end of some questions. However, very often you can find examples of speakers breaking 'the rules'. This exercise is simply designed to train students to recognize rising, falling and level tones.

In the recording, some words and phrases are repeated with different intonation. These are:

in the morning

and some songs

the bridesmaids

Ask your students to listen to the pairs of phrases and words and underline the description of the tone that they hear on the underlined syllable. They will hear each pair twice. First at the original speed and then slowed-down.



Track 18

1a and some songs (rising or **level**)

1b and some songs (**rising** or level)



Track 19

2a the bridesmaids (**rising** or falling)

2b the bridesmaids (rising or **falling**)



Track 20

3a in the morning (rising or **falling**)

3b in the morning (**rising** or falling)

#### Exercise 5 Recognising two different accents

The students will hear the words 'early' spoken five times at original speed. As they listen to each excerpt, ask them to underline 'D' if they hear Dorah's voice, or 'S' if they hear Sheila's voice. The first one has been done for them. Warning – the words come very fast!

## 1.5 A traditional black South African wedding

Page 11

Track 21	early	1	2	3	4	5
		<u>D</u> /S	<u>D</u> /S	D/ <u>S</u>	D/ <u>S</u>	<u>D</u> /S

Now ask your students to do the same for the words 'about', 'wedding', 'the' and 'bridesmaids'.

Track 22	about	1	2	3	4	5
		<u>D</u> /S	D/ <u>S</u>	D/ <u>S</u>	<u>D</u> /S	D/ <u>S</u>
Track 23	wedding	1	2	3	4	5
		<u>D</u> /S	D/ <u>S</u>	<u>D</u> /S	D/ <u>S</u>	<u>D</u> /S
Track 24	the	1	2	3	4	5
		<u>D</u> /S	D/ <u>S</u>	<u>D</u> /S	D/ <u>S</u>	<u>D</u> /S
Track 25	bridesmaids	1	2	3	4	5
		D/ <u>S</u>	<u>D</u> /S	<u>D</u> /S	D/ <u>S</u>	D/ <u>S</u>

### Exercise 6 Working with speech units, or rhythmic groups

Sheila and Dorah say the words 'for ... a long time' in quick succession, each in rhythmic groups (speech units) with five syllables in each group. Sheila adds the word 'quite' in her speech unit, and Dorah adds 'yeah' to the beginning of her unit. Sheila speaks first.

Ask your students to listen to Richard saying 'for quite a long time' (Sheila's words, but not her voice) in three different rhythmic patterns, shown below. The capital letters mean that the words are prominent (or stressed). Ask your students to repeat patterns 1, 2 and 3 after Richard. There is a gap after each pattern to allow them to do this.



Track 26

- Rhythmic pattern 1      for QUITE a LONG TIME (repeat)
- Rhythmic pattern 2      for QUITE a long TIME (repeat)
- Rhythmic pattern 3      for quite a LONG TIME (repeat)

Now ask your students to listen to Sheila. Which rhythmic pattern best matches Sheila's version – 1, 2 or 3? Listen and repeat to yourself what Sheila says, and then decide. (NB Dorah says 'Yeah' while Sheila is saying these words.)



Track 27 for quite a long time

The best match is 2: for QUITE a long TIME

Now ask your students to listen to Richard saying 'yeah for a long time' (Dorah's words, but not her voice) in these different rhythmic patterns shown below. The capital letters mean that the words are prominent (or stressed). Ask your students to repeat patterns 1, 2 and 3 after Richard. There is a gap after each pattern to allow them to do this.



Track 28

Rhythmic pattern 1	yeah for a LONG TIME
Rhythmic pattern 2	yeah FOR a long TIME
Rhythmic pattern 3	YEAH for a LONG time

Now ask your students to listen to Dorah. Which rhythmic pattern best matches Dorah's version: 1, 2 or 3?



Track 29 yeah for a long time

The best match is 3: YEAH for a LONG time

## Stage 7: Further language development

### Exercise 1: Gap-fill

Ask your students to fill in the blanks in these new sentences with words which they heard during the recording. The words are listed in the box to help them.

bride	bridegroom	bridesmaids	early	place
present	serious	songs	village	

1. I'm really sad. My best friend is moving out of London to a village in the country.
2. I'd rather work early in the morning than late at night.
3. The bride wore a long ivory satin dress, the bridegroom wore a top hat and tails and the bridesmaids looked beautiful in pink dresses with pink bows in their hair.

## 1.5 A traditional black South African wedding

Page 13

4. When he was younger, my brother got into some very serious trouble.
5. Would you like to come back to my place?
6. I hope you'll like your present. I wanted to get you something special because you've had such a difficult year.
7. I think Robbie Williams is great, but he's better when he's performing his own songs, rather than other people's.

### Exercise 2: Transformations

Ask your students to change the word in each bracket that appeared in the recording to form a word that fits the gap. Let them use their dictionaries if necessary.

1. When is our next (practising) practice session?
2. Who's your favourite (singing) singer?
3. It's (traditions) traditional in the UK to have a roast dinner on Sundays.
4. What's the (different) difference between hamburgers and beefburgers?
5. Are you (serious) seriously telling me you won't be coming on Friday? I don't believe it!
6. I'm not (prepare) prepared to pay £100 for that. It's way too expensive.
7. A lot of young people nowadays no longer believe in (married) marriage.

### 1.5 Interview with Dorah about a traditional South African wedding: Part 1 transcript



Track 1

3 minutes, 18 seconds

S: Sheila

D: Dorah

S: Um, Dorah, you said your cousin was getting married yesterday...

D: Yeah.

S: ...in South Africa.

D: Yeah.

S: OK. Is she getting married in a township or...?

D: No, it's in a, in a village.

S: In a village. OK.

D: Yeah, it's in a village.

S: Right. Is that near Johannesburg?

D: No, it's about um, one and a half hours from Pretoria.

S: OK. Right.

D: In a village.

S: And so she's your cousin. Is she your mother's sister's daughter, or...?

D: Yeah.

S: Right. OK.

D: It's my mother's sister's daughter.

S: OK. Now, I think weddings in South Africa are very different to weddings over here.

D: Yeah. Yeah, they are.

S: Yeah, so tell, tell me about this wedding.

D: OK. Um... *(clears throat)* Like er... yesterday, which was the wedding day...

S: Mmm, hmm.

D: ...um, at the bride's place.

S: Right.

D: So what happens is, prior to, to, to, to the wedding...

S: Mmm, hmm.

D: ...the wedding, the preparation... some of the preparations um, it's like people will be singing, practising their, their... There'll be some dance...

S: Mmm, hmm.

D: ...that they have to practise and some songs to sing.

S: All, all for the special day.

D: Yes.

S: So they've been, they've been practising for quite a long time.

D: Yeah, yeah, for a long time.

S: OK.

D: The.... What do you call the...?

S: So you've got the bride and the groom.

D: And the other ones – what do you call?

S: The bridesmaids.

D: The bridesmaids. The, the bridemaids and the... the bridesmaids and the...

S: Groom and the...

D: Yeah, they will practise. There will be some, some steps, some moves that they have to do.

S: Uh, huh.

## 1.5 A traditional black South African wedding

Page 15

D: So they will practise for maybe two or three months before.

S: Really?

D: And some songs.

S: Uh, huh. Special songs for the day.

D: Yeah. For the, for the... yeah.

S: OK.

D: And it's, it's quite serious.

S: Mmm.

D: You know, there, there will be days that they will prepare the goat, prepare... practice dance, singing, you know, just to make the day...

S: ...really special.

D: Yeah.

S: And on the day of the, of the wedding on the bride's side in the morning the, the family from the bride's groom...

S: Mmm, hmm.

D: ...have to come to the bride's place early in the morning.

S: Well, when you say 'early', what, 10 o'clock or...?

D: No, around um, 5, 6.

S: 6? In the morning.

D: In the morning, yeah. And in the olden days they say it used to be around 4. It's our tradition in, in my... people.

S: Uh, huh.

D: They would come in the morning and then there is um... Um, I won't say it's, it's a present, but, it's um... It's one of our traditions. There will be... an offering – if I may call it?

S: Mmm, mm.

D: ...they will give them – a sheep or a goat.

S: Right.

D: It's for them and then they have to slaughter it.

S: So they give them a live sheep?

D: Yeah, a live sheep or a live goat.

S: To the... Who, who brings the sheep or the goat? Is it the...

D: It's there. It's, it's there. The, the, the, the girl's family.

S: Yeah.

D: They've, they've got this to give to the bri... husband's-to-be.

S: OK.