

THE INTERVIEW



a You're going to watch an interview with Charles Collingwood, a British actor who has worked in the theatre, on TV, and on radio. He is most famous for his role in *The Archers*, a radio soap opera about a family of farmers, which has been broadcast every day on BBC radio since 1951 and is the longest running radio serial in the world. Before you listen, read the glossary and look at how the words are pronounced to help you understand what he says.

Glossary

RADA The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, a college where people train to become actors

learn your lines to memorize the words you have to say

props *n* /'prɒps/ small objects used by actors during a play or in a film

rehearse *v* /rɪ'hɜːs/ to practise for a performance or recording

ad-lib *v* /æd 'lɪb/ to say something in a play that is not in your script, to improvise

producers' gallery place in a studio where the producer and technicians sit

stale *adj* /steɪl/ hard, not fresh, e.g. cake

- b **1.1** Listen to part 1. Mark the statements T (true) or F (false).
- 1 He enjoys radio more than TV because he feels very relaxed doing it.
 - 2 As a young actor he thought he would be a TV or film actor.
 - 3 He is pleased to have spent half his life doing the same soap opera.
 - 4 The first advantage he mentions of being a radio actor is that you don't need to dress well.
 - 5 TV soap operas have longer scenes than radio soap operas.
 - 6 Radio actors have to rehearse a scene many times.

- c **1.2** Listen to part 2. Answer the questions with a partner.
- 1 Why do actors sometimes get a nasty surprise when the envelope with the latest script arrives?
 - 2 What example does Charles give of how he sometimes changes the script?
 - 3 What does he try *not* to sound like when he plays his character?
 - 4 Which two examples does he give of sound effects which the actors do themselves now?
 - 5 When Charles first worked on *The Archers* how did he do the sound effect for kissing?
 - 6 Why was the woman in the supermarket so surprised when Charles interrupted her conversation with her son?
- d **1.3** Listen and complete the phrases with one or two words. What do you think they mean?

COMMON WORDS AND PHRASES

- 1 I'm able to just _____ myself into it and enjoy every moment.
 - 2 I of course thought I'd have a life in the theatre, but it didn't _____ out that way...
 - 3 Television acting _____ a very long _____.
 - 4 ... you rehearse once, possibly twice and then you _____.
 - 5 What we don't know in _____ before the scripts arrive is to what's happening to your character.
- e Listen to the interview again with the tapescript on page 9. Would you prefer to be a radio or TV actor? Why?

IN THE STREET

a **1.4** You're going to watch five people talking about listening to the radio. Listen once and complete the *Where...?* column.



Steve Sarah Nick Jane Elke

	Where do you listen to the radio?	What do you listen to?
Steve		
Sarah		
Nick		
Jane		
Elke		

b Listen again. Complete the *What...?* column.

- c **1.5** Listen and complete the phrases. What do you think they mean?

COMMON WORDS AND PHRASES

- 1 _____ in the car, when I'm driving...
- 2 ...my housemate listens to the radio in the morning, and when she puts it on I listen to it _____.
- 3 ...often the news and just debates and that _____ of _____.
- 4 Yes, I listen to the radio _____ when I'm driving to work.
- 5 I drive to work in the car and it takes _____ a long _____.
- 6 ...it takes an hour _____.

d Listen to the interviews again with the tapescript on page 9. Then ask and answer the same questions with a partner.

UNIT - 1

SCRIPT

1.1 Interviewer You have worked in theatre, TV and radio. Which do you most enjoy?

Charles Collingwood Now, I enjoy radio most because it's the medium I've spent so long in, so I'm so familiar with it that I can relax, it doesn't make me nervous, I'm able to just throw myself into it and enjoy every moment. As a young actor, theatre was what I enjoyed most. All actors, I think, become actors to work in theatre, that's what you set out to do and when I left RADA in, when I was a young man aged 21 or 2 in 1963, I of course thought I'd have a life in the theatre, but it didn't work out that way, I've spent over half my life in the longest running soap opera in the world and I'm jolly proud of it.

I What advantage does radio acting have over TV acting?

C I think many. The obvious answer is that we don't have to learn our lines, because nobody can see us. It's quite interesting if you watch a television soap, very few scenes will last longer than two minutes, because the actors have got to learn the lines, and there is only so many words an actor can get into his head before recording; we don't have that problem at all. The more artistic thing for me, the thing that I get from it as an actor, is its immediacy. Television acting takes a very long time - setting it up, getting the lighting, the sound - everything has to be exactly in order, and then you do the scene, and something goes wrong, one of the props doesn't work, or somebody makes a noise or an aircraft flies over, or a car goes by, you know, you don't know what's going to happen. The joy of radio is that you turn up, you read it through with the other actors, you go in the studio, you rehearse once, possibly twice and then you record it, and then you move on, so I love the immediacy of radio.

1.2 I Do you get your script before you go to the studio to record the programme?

C Well, we do get them in advance, correct. What we don't know in advance before the scripts arrive is to what's happening to your character. There have been occasions in the past when actors have opened their envelope of scripts and to their horror found that they've gone under a tractor or hit a tree or something like that, and that's not much fun for them.

I Do you follow the script strictly or do you ad-lib sometimes?

C I follow the script 90%. If the line is 'Are you coming to see us tonight?' and the reply is 'We'll be there at six,' I might just go 'Yeah, yeah, I'll be there at six,' just to make it more conversational. I also try not to sound too much like an actor. Actors, because we've been trained, tend to have good voices and good speech, good projection, while the public don't, so I don't play my character as deliberately as I am talking to you.

I How are the sound effects done in radio drama?

C Well, a great many of them are played in by the technicians from the producers' gallery and they're on CD or disk or whatever it is, but we still do quite a lot ourselves. I mean, if we are required to walk, we walk and you hear our footsteps; if we eat, we eat - we don't eat anything very nice, you know, if it's a full Sunday roast, it's probably a rather stale piece of cake. When I first joined, if you had a love scene, and I'm delighted to say my character has had many love scenes, when you kissed the character, when they heard kissing, all it was was kissing the back of your hand, so I would go 'oh darling, mmm' like that, kiss the back of my hand, which is quite sad really; well gladly that's now stopped...

I Do you ever get recognized by your voice?

C Amazingly, more often than you'd believe, quite extraordinary. I was in a supermarket not long ago, and I overheard a woman with her child saying to her little boy - he was 11 or 12 - 'Now, concentrate. I'm going to drop you home before I

go out to play tennis, but make sure when you get home that you don't forget to record *The Archers* at 7 o'clock, all right?' And I just jumped in between the two of them and said, 'Do as your mother's told,' she nearly had a fit this woman, because she immediately recognized my voice and that was very funny.

1.4 Interviewer Do you listen to the radio?

Steve Yes.

I When and where do you listen to the radio?

S Mainly in the car when I'm driving or sometimes at home in quiet moments.

I What kind of programmes do you listen to?

S Generally listen to Radio 2, which is generally sort of music and comments about the world.

Interviewer Do you listen to the radio?

Sarah I do sometimes because my housemate listens to the radio in the morning and when she puts it on I listen to it as well.

I What kind of programmes do you listen to?

S It's usually Radio 4 and often the news and just debates and that kind of thing.

Interviewer Do you listen to the radio?

Nick Yes, I do.

I When and where do you listen to the radio?

N On the computer, on the Internet, and just in my bedroom.

I What kind of programmes do you listen to?

N 50s rock and contemporary music.

Interviewer Do you listen to the radio?

Jane Yes, I listen to the radio most mornings when I'm driving to work. I have a journey of about 40 minutes to take me to my work, so I listen to the radio then.

I What kind of programmes do you listen to?

J I often listen to Radio 2, I like the quiz programme in the morning. I listen to it coming home from work and I listen to the news programmes, I like the classical programmes, and I like Radio 4.

Interviewer Do you listen to the radio?

Elke Yes, I do, I really like listening to the radio.

I When and where do you listen to the radio?

E Usually in the mornings in the car. I drive to work in the car and it takes quite a long time, it takes an hour at least, and I always listen to the radio then.

I What kind of programmes do you listen to?

E In the mornings it's *The Today Programme*, which is all about politics and then sometimes I listen to music, whatever is on.