

Audioscript

Listening comprehension

*For items 1–10 listen to the introduction to a radio show about the American entertainer, Liberace, and decide whether the statements (1–10) are **TRUE**, or **FALSE** according to the text you hear. You will hear the text **twice**.*

You have 20 seconds to study the statements.

(pause 20 seconds)

Now we begin.

When you look at American TV - and TV all over the world - it's hard to imagine that in the 1950s, the early days of television, the biggest star in the USA was a classically trained pianist. His name was Liberace, and he dominated American and world entertainment, both on and off screen, for four decades.

Liberace was born in West Ailis, Wisconsin, which is about as Midwest as it gets. He was the son of immigrants, however - on his mother's side Polish and Italian on his father's. Liberace's father was a musician who struggled to make a living doing what he loved, and he was sometimes forced to take factory jobs to make ends meet. He encouraged his children to play music, however, in stark contrast to Liberace's mother, who thought it was a waste of time. Liberace was musically gifted, and more importantly he had passion. He began playing the piano at the age of four and at age eight met his idol, Polish pianist Ignasy Paderewski, backstage after one of his concerts. After their brief conversation, Liberace was convinced that this was what he wanted to do with his life.

He began to play in clubs and theatres, at dancing lessons and weddings, and though these were the years of the Great Depression, he managed to make a decent living. By the time of the Second World War, he was a recognised classical pianist who had played in the Pabst Theatre and toured the Midwest. It was during the war that his performances began to change - he started playing popular tunes alongside the classics and cutting out the long and difficult bits of the great composers. It was, as he called it 'classical music with the boring bits left out' and, combined with his sense of style and showmanship, it rocketed him to the top of the entertainment industry.

Never overly modest, he dubbed himself 'Liberace - the most amazing piano virtuoso of the present day'. He was a confident showman who never really seemed to be off stage. If the truth be told, he rarely was: ever the workaholic, he performed incessantly to audiences large and small, appeared in films and then, in 1952, made his appearance on television. He had always avoided radio, as it did not do justice to

his stage presence, but TV was made for him. His habit of talking into the camera between tunes made it seem like he was in the viewers' living room, and his popularity soared even further. Despite the white piano, huge rings and increasingly outrageous costumes, Liberace never lost the chatty small-town charm and warmth that instantly connected him with audiences between the two coasts. His shows were glamorous, but they were always conventional family shows; he played classical tunes, but always accessibly. He continued playing and remained a huge draw - especially in his beloved Las Vegas. Many mocked his kitsch, over-the-top style, but his stock response was the catchphrase which he himself coined: 'I cried - all the way to the bank.'

You have 20 seconds to check your answers.
(pause 20 seconds)

Now listen to the text again.
(text repeated)

You have 20 seconds to check your answers.
(pause 20 seconds)

*For items 11–15 listen to the dialogue. Choose the correct answer to answer questions 11-15. You will hear the text **only once**.*

You now have 25 seconds to study the questions.
(pause 25 seconds)

Now we begin.
I = Ian, R = Rika

I: What happened there, Rika? Did you just sign that guy's book?

R: You saw that?

I: Yeah! It was like you were famous or something.

R: That's because...I don't know. I guess I am, kind of - if you're a judo fan.

I: What?

R: Well, in my other life, away from selling books, I do judo and last week I was in a competition on TV. That guy recognised me from there.

I: Seriously? That's amazing!

R: Oh, it's no big deal. I didn't win it or anything. I lost in the semi-finals.

I: You got to the semi-finals! I can't believe it! I mean, no offence, but you don't look big enough to fight.

R: Well, you fight according to your weight in judo, so size doesn't matter. Although being big isn't always an advantage. It's more about balance. Someone can be big

and strong, but if they're off-balance, you can easily throw them.

I: So how long have you been doing it, then?

R: Ever since I was a kid. At school, the big kids often used to bully me because I was so small and I got into fights, so my dad suggested I did a martial art to defend myself and that was it, really.

I: So, how often do you have to train?

R: Well, I usually practise all the techniques for at least an hour a day once I get home in the evening, and then two or three times a week I go to a special judo school to practise fighting.

I: Wow! And this competition the other week ... what was it exactly? Was it a big thing?

R: Urn, yeah ... it was the women's national finals!

I: No! And you got to the semi-finals!

R: Yeah! I'm a bit annoyed I didn't win it, but I had quite a bad back injury last year, which stopped me doing any training or fighting.

I: Really? How long were you out of action?

R: Well, I didn't do anything for a couple of months and I only started full training a few weeks before the finals.

I: OK. Well, it sounds as if you did well to get to the semi-finals then.

R: I guess. And the girl who beat me went on to win the whole thing, so ... still, I hate losing!

I: Amazing. You learn something new every day!

This is the end of the listening comprehension part. You have 1 minute to complete your answer.