

TRANSKRYPCJA NAGRAŃ

Task 1.

The European Safety Agency has given the go-ahead for mobile phones to be used during flights. We asked what our listeners thought of this idea.

Speaker A

Allowing mobile phone conversations on board is likely to lead to some very difficult and confrontational situations. In a bygone age when people acted with more decorum, the discreet use of phones on flights wouldn't have presented a problem. However, in these days of boorishness and utter contempt for others, the airlines should avoid providing this service. I'm sure they will be drawn into introducing it because the profit motive is irresistible – another case of knowing the cost of everything and the value of nothing. But it doesn't make sense. In my opinion, the very idea of permitting the use of mobile phones will be enough to put a great number of passengers off flying altogether. Apart from the fact that it would be extremely anti-social, it might lead to antagonism between passengers. Surely this is the last thing airlines and their crew would wish for.

Speaker B

The idea that the mobile-free environment on planes is in jeopardy seems appalling to me. Long-haul flights in particular, which frequently straddle several time zones, could easily become a nightmare if phones aren't switched off. I sincerely hope airlines realize that not everyone feels the need to have their mobile phone turned on at all hours. Personally, I'd take considerable care to choose an airline that remains mobile-free, should others decide to allow using mobiles on board in the future. By the way, I find the best method of dealing with mobile junkies who can't bear to switch off their infernal machines in public places is to show them that you're totally engrossed in their conversation. Having an obvious audience hanging on your every word soon results in an embarrassed silence.

Speaker C

The prospect of passengers being permitted to use mobile phones on aircraft fills me with dread, surpassing even stealth taxes and troublesome infants. The ringing of a mobile phone and the subsequent boring one-sided conversation that everyone in the vicinity is forced to hear would certainly dissuade me from using any airline permitting this intrusion into my private world. Perhaps a sound-proofed area could be built into the aircraft for these people to receive or make calls. Or better still, could they be accommodated on one of the wings? I often wonder how mankind managed before the advent of the mobile phone. Somehow it did, so surely it can manage for several hours on board an aircraft.

adapted from www.telegraph.co.uk

Task 2.

Text 1.

In 2012 the whole world watched the Curiosity Rover pull off a spectacular landing on Mars. But that smooth landing might not have happened at all. Just days before it, I discovered an error. It turned out that our team had placed the spacecraft's unit essential for landing a few inches above where the software expected it. I wasn't sure if the mistake would affect anything, but theoretically it could have destroyed the rover upon landing. I realized we had two options: do nothing and risk a crash, or send a special programming command to the spacecraft and hope it wouldn't have any nasty consequences.

I went to see Pete, the project manager, and I explained the error, taking full responsibility. We took it to the board of experts that deals with these things, and they voted that change was not necessary. I felt relieved the decision had been made.

But that night, I started thinking. Had we considered all the aspects? In this business, you need to be paranoid to be successful. You have to assume that an error could be the tip of an iceberg. I got anxious and I couldn't sleep all night.

In the morning I went back to the project manager, and we agreed to call another meeting for Saturday morning. We worked that whole night, filling whiteboard after whiteboard with equations. At 10 a.m. on Saturday, just one day before the landing, we met with upper management and we heard that NASA headquarters in Washington had been told about this issue. Most of the team members voted for "no change", but when the project manager's turn came, he said he wanted the change and overruled everybody. I knew that our equations had convinced him. There was grumbling, with some people openly disagreeing and trying to change the project manager's position, but he contacted the headquarters and convinced them we'd better send the software fix to the Curiosity Rover.

When the decision was finally made, the project manager looked at me and said, "Miguel, excellent job." I was startled because I felt that I'd let him down, but he told me that it was excellent because, first of all, I had found the error and got to the bottom of the problem; secondly, I had come and told him about what had been bothering me. I was proud that I worked in a team in which openness was appreciated. We sent the programming fix to the Curiosity Rover that night. The next day, the landing went fantastically well.

adapted from BBC Focus Magazine

Text 2.

Today my guest is Jackson Galaxy, an expert on cat behaviour. Could you tell us a little more about catification, the idea from your new book?

From the very beginning of my career I have been talking about getting to know your cat and accommodating its needs, especially providing vertical spaces and shelves around the house, the so-called cat superhighways. About two years ago I met Kate Benjamin. I totally agree with her approach. She emphasizes that catifying your place, that is adjusting your place to your cat's needs, does not mean that your house has to look weird. Everybody has a sort of image of what the 'crazy cat lady's house' looks like. It is essential to show people that's not necessarily true, convince them that, despite a cat's presence, their house can still be stylish. I decided to write this book because many behaviour problems can be overcome by properly catifying the house. Among other things in the book I show examples of spaces which I consider best adapted to cats' needs.

What do you feel is the biggest misconception that people have about cats?

The common perception of cats is that they are aloof. That's why many people feel cats are not an active part of the family, they're more like furniture in the house. Yet, this is just a misreading of their nature. We expect cats to behave like dogs or humans, which is a mistake. They are a different species and they express affection in a different way. The problem is that by thinking that cats are not socially needy, we often stop interacting with them. I hear people complain that their cat sleeps all day and doesn't play. But that's natural for cats. Cats sleep a lot and spend a lot of their time staring out the window. But when we come home from work, our cats are right there, waiting for us. It's not just about them wanting food. They want our attention. When we wake in the morning, they're completely up, eager to play and awaiting affection. Why not take the time then and interact with them when they are most alert?

In the UK, most rescue centres will only consider a healthy cat going to a new home if the house has access to the outdoors, whereas in the US people are encouraged to keep their cats indoors. What's your viewpoint?

It has been a constant struggle for me. When I work with cats that are to be kept indoors, I work extra hard on accommodating the place for cats' needs and, if possible, giving them enclosures where they can experience the outdoors, but in a safe way. In the States, we deal with a lot of missing cats. If you don't have your cat micro-chipped and it goes missing, you have a two percent chance of reclaiming it. Two percent! Between traffic, predators and the world at large, would you be willing to take the risk? I think it's better to have your cats around and enrich their lives in such a way that they won't miss wandering around the neighbourhood. But the decision is yours.

adapted from <http://cat-behaviour-and-cat-grooming.com>

Task 3.

Welcome to the programme “The buildings are biting back”. It sounds like a scene from a science fiction movie, where the world’s skyscrapers take on a life of their own and start terrorising innocent pedestrians, but one grand addition to London’s skyline seems to have been doing exactly that. On an extremely hot day the innovative 37-storey building gave passers-by a shock when it began beaming an intense ray of light down onto a neighbouring street. The skyscraper curves from a narrow base to a wider top. The higher floors of the building are larger than those below, creating more space on less land. However, the curved glass that slants down towards the street created a magnifying glass effect. As a result, the concentrated rays of sunlight reflected from the façade were reported to have damaged cars parked in the area. The building’s first victim was a Jaguar parked below. A beam of light melted the paint and bodywork of the vehicle. Some damage was beyond repair. The City of London suspended three parking bays in the street while they investigated the issue. Until a more permanent solution could be found, the developers installed a two-storey netted shield to cover the front of the building.

Architect Rafael Viñoly admitted that he knew the façade of his curvy London skyscraper might focus intense beams of sunlight onto a neighbouring street and so the building was originally designed with horizontal sun louvres, that is special blinds which were to prevent such a strong glare. However, at the time such a costly precaution was not considered essential and the developers decided to economize by getting rid of the louvres. In the interview, Viñoly suggested that global warming should also be blamed. “When I first came to London years ago, summers weren’t that hot,” he said.

One may wonder. There have been so many famous instances of contemporary buildings with gleaming curved surfaces causing glare that it’s a bit astonishing to see another such example of architectural malpractice. Viñoly’s infatuation with concave surfaces on his buildings has already proven harmful at a Las Vegas hotel he designed. Why does he keep doing this?

adapted from www.londonlovesbusiness.com