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|  | General Listening, lesson 5 |
|  | **For this question, click in the correct box for each speaker. You have 45 seconds to read the question and look at the table. You will hear the recording twice.** |
|  | **Speaker 1**  Studying literature undoubtedly paved the way for my career as a journalist, and then later on as a novelist. It showed me that reading novels prompts us to consider our place in the world, the meaning of life and the best ways of living it. But I was also taught that not all published writing had to just be accepted as it stood – it could also be analysed and deconstructed. I’ll always be grateful to the course for showing me that. It meant I acquired the ability to do that kind of literary analysis, rather than unquestioningly admiring authors’ work as examples of perfection. I’m relieved, though, that I never lost my tendency to also react emotionally to what I read.  **Speaker 2**  You wouldn’t think studying literature would have much bearing on my job as a politician –but actually nothing could be further from the truth. Reading different genres, from novels to literary criticism, meant I was given an insight into realms other than my own, which built empathy. I was required to imagine the situations of those with vastly different experiences from mine. And I’d say that’s one of the most essential qualifications for my job. The course also included the work of innovative thinkers throughout history, helping me consider how things might be tackled differently in future. And having already acquired good communication skills by the time I joined the course, I could put my ideas across persuasively in writing.  **Speaker 3**  My fellow managers are always surprised to hear that I did a literature degree, as though literature has absolutely no relevance to anything outside the rarefied realm of novels. In fact, I still vividly recall the worlds it invited me to dip into and the characters I encountered there – perfect for someone who’s always tended to analyse everyone I’ve ever met, to see what makes them tick. Above all though, it taught me how to combine different trains of thought, and then put them into writing so that I got my message across – that was invaluable. And learning to read at speed helped me deal with the problem of the sheer volume of reading required – a skill I still find useful from time to time.  **Speaker 4**  In retrospect, the course I did was a tad more inflexible than I’d hoped, and the list of writers we studied was somewhat limited. However, the stated aim, according to our professors, was to teach us to think and analyse rather than merely feel about what we were reading. So although we often discussed whether we found the characters we encountered appealing or recognisable, an emotional response wasn’t really what was required – the focus was on developing careful, detached observation. And that technique has stood me in good stead for various tasks I’ve been faced with in my current job in the medical world.  **Speaker 5**  When I first mentioned my plans to study literature, most people said it’d never get me a job. But that wasn’t really my aim. In fact, the joy of literature is that it’s given me enough to think about to fill a whole lifetime. Anyway, while at college, I got into student theatre, before subsequently deciding to become an actor – and the study of literature was the cornerstone of it all. It taught me to value stories, handle them almost as you would precious stones – the truly exceptional ones reveal much more than their superficial appearance when you hold them up to the light. And I remember that, whenever I’m presented with a new theatre script. |