

## Hörverstehenstexte 2023

### Teil 1: Plans for an exciting holiday in New Zealand

(Audiotrack: QR-Code rechts / Aufgaben S. XX)



- Travel Agent:** Hello, my name is Ida Dickenson. Welcome to our travel agency. Please have a seat. What can I do for you?
- Mrs Kendrick:** Hello Mrs Dickenson. My name is Helen Kendrick, and this is my husband Benny. It's about our next holiday trip. You see, Benny and I had two of our best friends over for dinner last weekend. And they just couldn't stop talking about their vacation in New Zealand last month. In a way, they have really managed to whet our appetite for a trip to New Zealand as well.
- Travel Agent:** Well, New Zealand is indeed a truly wonderful holiday destination, not only in terms of landscapes and wildlife, but also in terms of culture and outdoor activities. Are you into hiking and maybe even mountain climbing?
- Mr Kendrick:** We both love hiking a lot, especially in wild and exciting landscapes. As for mountain climbing, that is not really my cup of tea.
- Mrs Kendrick:** But I am really fond of mountain climbing, Mrs Dickenson. Because I grew up in Colorado, in a small town right in the middle of the Rocky Mountains. And my father used to go mountain climbing with me a lot when I was a teenager. Maybe you can find a region in New Zealand where I can go mountain climbing and where Benny and I can go hiking, too.
- Travel Agent:** Well, I think I know where you should go then. My first idea was Mount Cook, the highest mountain in New Zealand, but that is only suitable for professional and very experienced mountain climbers. But where you can find perfect opportunities for both hiking and climbing is Fiordland National Park, which is located on the southern tip of the South Island. Are you also into water activities such as kayaking or canoeing?
- Mr Kendrick:** We are indeed. Are there guided tours or would it be safe enough to go kayaking or canoeing on our own?
- Travel Agent:** In Fiordland National Park there are lots of companies offering guided tours which are absolutely safe, of course. But you can also just hire kayaks or canoes to make trips by yourselves.
- Mrs Kendrick:** That sounds absolutely thrilling. But there is one more thing, Mrs Dickenson. I know this may sound a bit childish, but I cannot go to New Zealand without seeing the Hobbiton Movie Set with my own eyes.
- Travel Agent:** I don't think that's childish at all. Most foreign tourists are keen to go and see the iconic locations where some scenes from the movies 'Lord of the Rings' and 'The Hobbit' were shot.
- Mr Kendrick:** How far is it from Fiordland National Park to the Hobbiton Movie Set? Could we get there by car within a couple of hours or so?
- Travel Agent:** It is literally at the other end of New Zealand in the northern part of the North Island, I'm afraid. However, there are relatively inexpensive domestic flights from Invercargill, which is close to the park, to Auckland, which is a two-hour drive away from the Hobbiton Movie Set.
- Mrs Kendrick:** That sounds great, Mrs Dickenson. Benny, what do you think?
- Mr Kendrick:** I agree. This sure sounds like an exciting holiday plan, Mrs Dickenson. Would you kindly make us a good offer for two weeks around Christmas, including flights, rental cars and tickets for a guided tour of the Movie Set?
- Travel Agent:** Yes, of course. Give me a couple of days to put together an offer which I will then send to you by email. There is one thing, however, I would ask you to do. Please let me know within 2 days after receiving my offer whether or not you are willing to accept it because prices for flights cannot usually be guaranteed for more than 48 hours.

## Teil 2: Typically British

(Audiotrack: QR-Code oben / Aufgaben S. XX)



When people in Germany are asked to state three personality traits or characteristics that they associate with British people, here is what Germans come up with most often: The British are polite, they have a unique sense of humour and they are reserved, which means that they are generally unwilling to show their emotions in public.

While the three above characteristics are mentioned most often, some Germans argue that eccentricity is another quality which can be found among the British more often than among people of other nationalities. Before giving you some examples of British people who have made a name for themselves not only as excellent scientists, artists or politicians, for instance, but also as a result of their eccentricity, let me first explain what it means when we say that somebody is eccentric. A person can be called eccentric when they have extremely unusual habits, manners, lifestyles, outfits, hobbies or philosophies of life. For example, a person who wears a Zorro, Spiderman, Robin Hood or Dumbledore outfit in everyday life can certainly be called an eccentric. However, the term 'eccentric' does not necessarily mean that these people are mentally ill and should be treated by a psychiatrist or in a psychiatric clinic. Apart from having a particular quirk or spleen, an eccentric person may otherwise lead a relatively normal life, with a regular job, a flat or a house, and a family.

Let me now give you two examples of famous British scientists who displayed such peculiar patterns of behaviour that they can arguably be called eccentrics. To begin with, most of you have presumably come across the name Alexander Graham Bell, a Scotsman who invented the telephone in the late 19th century. He was undoubtedly a scientific genius, but this did not prevent him from doing something that lots of people will qualify as eccentric. In fact, he stubbornly tried to teach his dog to speak English, without any noteworthy success, of course. The world-famous British mathematician and physicist Sir Isaac Newton is another brilliant British scientist who might also be called an eccentric. While Newton is famous for his ground-breaking discoveries in mathematics and physics, at times he also tended to behave in highly unusual ways, to put it mildly. For example, he is said to have stuck a small needle in his eye, out of scientific curiosity, just in order to find out what effect this might have on his eyesight.

Quite a number of Britain's most famous artists have also shown unmistakable signs of eccentric behaviour. The well-known early 19th-century poet William Blake, for instance, liked to act out renowned literary works in quite unusual ways. For example, together with his wife he is reported to have read those works out aloud, sitting completely naked in his garden. Another example of a British artist with clearly eccentric tendencies is Freddie Mercury, the leader of the legendary 20th-century British rock band called 'Queen'. Mind you, Mercury's homosexuality has, of course, next to nothing to do with the fact that he has often been described as an eccentric person. It is rather his unusually theatrical performances, his shrill and at times provocative outfits as well as his extremely extrovert behaviour both on and off stage which led to him being referred to as one of the most eccentric celebrities of the 1970s and 1980s.

Last but not least, I would like to draw your attention to one of quite a few British politicians, both past and present, whose public appearances can be called highly unusual and at times even downright eccentric. I am talking about one of Great Britain's more recent prime ministers, namely Boris Johnson. His notoriously unkempt hair is only one of many oddities that Johnson is usually associated with. For example, another eccentric streak of his came to light in 2012. In his then capacity as mayor of London, he rode a zip-line through Victoria Park, waving a British flag in each hand. This media-hyped activity was meant to be a promotional activity for the London Olympics, which were scheduled to start a few weeks later. Last but not least, Johnson's eccentricity is also reflected in the highly unusual things he sometimes says in interviews. When asked by a journalist in 2010, for example, whether he would ever attempt to become prime minister, he answered jokingly that he was 'more likely to be decapitated by a Frisbee or locked up in a disused fridge'.



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**Bergmoser + Höller**  
Verlag AG

Karl-Friedrich-Str. 76  
52072 Aachen  
DEUTSCHLAND

**T** 0241-93888-123

**F** 0241-93888-188

**E** kontakt@buhv.de  
www.buhv.de

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Vorstand:

Andreas Bergmoser

Peter Tiarks

Aufsichtsratsvorsitz:

Holger Knapp

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aufgaben:

Joachim Krick (Englisch)

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Rimbert Chrobok, Antonia Neher

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Sprecher/-innen: : Ida-Lee Dickenson,  
Joe Ginnane, Kirsten Marshall

Paul Harriman, dropD GmbH,  
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