

## SPOKEN ENGLISH Fillers

Fillers give us time to think of what to say next.

'We stayed in a treehouse, well, er, a kind of treehotel ...'

'... because, I mean, it's a shock to see this, like, massive hole where the door usually is.'

Common fillers in English are:

well you know like I mean you see kind of  
sort of anyway so

Find examples in audioscript 2.4 on page 144.

### 2.4 Doing the bucket list

#### 1 Helen

They've always fascinated me, so a couple of years ago, I booked a trip to the north of Norway, and stayed in a treehouse, well, er ... a kind of ... treehotel really, and went sledding with husky dogs – that was actually three bucket list items in one trip for me! And ... I did worry beforehand about whether I'd actually get to see them – I mean, it's difficult not to, when you go all that way, pay all that money, and ... well, it's very possible they won't show up at all while you're there. So ... when we got there, um, it was so cold! I know that sounds silly, going up to the Arctic Circle and complaining about it being cold, but oh, I've never experienced cold like that before – it was minus 25! But ... anyway ... it was worth it, because, well, the first two nights were disappointing, nothing, but then, I felt so lucky ... I saw them the next two nights! And they really are so, so beautiful – an amazing shimmering curtain that goes from a greeny to a kind of purply-red colour. And, an interesting thing is that, er, not everyone hears it, but they make a sound as well, a sort of buzzing noise. It's the most incredible experience I've ever had – life-changing, really – it filled me with awe and wonder about the universe.

#### 2 Keith

I've been thinking of doing it for years now, cos I know they're short of people, and well, I'm glad I've finally done it. And it was an interesting experience! I was anxious on the way there, because ... well, you hear stories of people passing out, which would be so embarrassing, and, you see, I am a bit squeamish! So ... I thought of turning back at one point, but in I went, and, well, it was fine. They took a tiny drop first, for testing – I wanted to make the classic joke and say, 'Is that it? Can I go now?!' And, er, then they put one of those things on your arm, like when you have your blood pressure checked, and look for a vein. I looked

away at that point – I mean, why would anyone *want* to see the needle going in?! It's fine when it does, it's just a short, sharp pain, and then they leave you while the machine takes it out. I didn't want to watch the bag filling up either, because, you know, three quarters of a pint does look like a *lot* of blood to lose! So, I closed my eyes and waited for the beeping sound when the machine's finished. It was about eight minutes, but it seemed *much* longer. And then of course, I got tea and biscuits! And, er ... I think I'll do it again, because, well, it has made me feel better about myself!

### 3 Judy

I've always fancied the idea, so when our hotel in Spain said they could organize it, and it was pretty cheap, I went for it! It was cancelled first time, cos of the wind, which was a drag, but the weather was fine two days later. I was really nervous before take-off – that's the worst bit really, cos, well, it's the last chance to say 'I've changed my mind, can I get off?'; and well ... part of me really wanted to do that – I was like, 'Why am I *choosing* to fall to the ground at 180 km an hour?!' Still, once we were off, it was easier, although the seven-minute climb seemed to last *for-e-ver!* And getting to where you jump out was freaky, cos, I mean, I'm used to walking down the aisle on planes, but it's a shock to see this, like, massive hole where the door usually is! But, we jumped straight out, and ... well, you get 60 seconds of freefall, and that is totally amazing! It's, like, a massive rush of air and the ground is, like, spinning, and ... I literally forgot to breathe! And then your shoulders suddenly get pulled back as the chute opens, and then – it's suddenly really quiet, and you're floating through the sky. It's an incredible feeling, as if you've escaped your life completely. So ... would I do it again? Hell yeah, I definitely will! It's made everyday life seem a bit dull