

Try not to look at this until you've done all the exercises that go with the listening.

**Useful or useless?**

Richard: This week we received through the post a catalogue from a company called Lakeland in the UK who are very famous for making small kitchen appliances.

Jackie: And for the home.

Richard: And for the home, yes. So we looked at the catalogue and we found that some of the items were much more useful than others.

Jackie: It seemed to us mainly, a lot of gadgets. What do we mean by gadgets, Richard?

Richard: Useful handheld appliances that you don't really need.

Jackie: So for this week's podcastsineenglish.com we've looked at the catalogue and we've chosen a couple of the gadgets which have caught our eye um... which we thought were particularly interesting that we would like to share with you.

Richard: Yes. So, Jackie, what's the name of your item?

Jackie: It's called Masha [laughs].

Richard: The clue's in the title, I think.

Jackie: Yes but it's not M-A-S-H-E-R, it's M-A-S-H-A.

Richard: Ah, right, okay.

Jackie: But it is a masher.

Richard: For mashing potatoes, I presume.

Jackie: Yeah, basically it mashes potatoes.

Richard: Something which we've been doing with a hand masher for years, quite successfully.

Jackie: Exactly

Richard: So what's so special about this one then, Jackie?

- Jackie: Well, the catalogue says the Masha gets perfect results in as little as 20 seconds.
- Richard: [laughs] Not much quicker than a hand masher, I would have thought.
- Jackie: I think it is probably a little bit quicker. I mean the benefits they say are the time it takes and then it's a little bit easier. But of course it's an electric blender at the end of the day. It's an electric masher, it needs batteries. Erm... and it's not cheap.
- Richard: And how much does it cost?
- Jackie: It costs, Richard, £35.
- Richard: Wow. That won't be in our Christmas stocking I don't think.
- Jackie: You can buy quite a modern, stainless steel, traditional, handheld one for £6. Okay, you've got to beat that then, Richard. What's the name of yours?
- Richard: Mine is the best thing since sliced bread.
- Jackie: Oh right. [both laugh] That's the name?
- Richard: It's called, the Evenslice.
- Jackie: Oh yes, so is the clue in the name again?
- Richard: It is, yes. When you slice bread with a normal knife are you sure that all of your slices are exactly the same?
- Jackie: Well, Richard I use a knife and a chopping board and I do it all by eye. Does it really matter?
- Richard: To some people obviously it does. Because this little gadget makes sure every slice of bread is exactly the same thickness.
- Jackie: Oh, really? [both laugh]
- Richard: And for that, a mere £21.
- Jackie: £21 to get your bread sliced the same thickness?
- Richard: Exactly
- Jackie: Oh wow, okay.
- Richard: What a waste of money.
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Jackie: The catalogue is definitely aimed at people with more money than sense and what we would like you to do. We put the er... website on our worksheets, haven't we...

Richard: Yes.

Jackie: ...We would really like you to have a look at the other items for sale and see if you can find any others which are...

Richard: Well, any which you think are really useful, or any which you think are really useless.

Jackie: We'd love to hear from you.