The Difficult Hour

C1 Advanced · Work · about 2 min of audio

Play the audio: https://englishdictations.com/dictation/c1/the-difficult-hour/

Name _____ Date _____

Part 1 — Fill the gaps while you listen

1. Imagine that every workplace _____ had to survive its least convenient hour before anyone could call it efficient.
2. At a bakery, that hour might be the dawn shift, when one person unloads flour while _____ the delivery bell.
3. A new shelf could _____ the baker's reach yet block the narrow path used to carry hot trays.
4. Tested at noon, when the full team is present, the same shelf might appear _____ harmless.
5. The exercise exposes a quiet bias: systems are usually judged under _____ that flatter their designers.
6. Busy periods reveal pressure, but awkward transitions reveal where work depends on memory, _____, or someone else's patience.
7. An extra hook beside the door may matter more than a costly screen if wet coats keep _____ the safety notice.
8. Such details rarely impress during _____, since their value lies in preventing small failures from becoming routine.
9. Yet _____ is not the absence of disruption, but the ability to absorb it without passing it along.
10. _____, viewed from the worst hour, becomes less a measure of speed than a measure of care built into the work.

Part 2 — Write every sentence you hear

1. _____

2. _____

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Answer key

Part 1 — the missing words

1. improvement 2. answering 3. shorten 4. entirely 5. conditions 6. improvisation 7. obscuring 8. presentations 9. reliability 10. Efficiency

Part 2 — the full transcript

1. Imagine that every workplace improvement had to survive its least convenient hour before anyone could call it efficient.
2. At a bakery, that hour might be the dawn shift, when one person unloads flour while answering the delivery bell.
3. A new shelf could shorten the baker's reach yet block the narrow path used to carry hot trays.
4. Tested at noon, when the full team is present, the same shelf might appear entirely harmless.
5. The exercise exposes a quiet bias: systems are usually judged under conditions that flatter their designers.
6. Busy periods reveal pressure, but awkward transitions reveal where work depends on memory, improvisation, or someone else's patience.
7. An extra hook beside the door may matter more than a costly screen if wet coats keep obscuring the safety notice.
8. Such details rarely impress during presentations, since their value lies in preventing small failures from becoming routine.
9. Yet reliability is not the absence of disruption, but the ability to absorb it without passing it along.
10. Efficiency, viewed from the worst hour, becomes less a measure of speed than a measure of care built into the work.

More free dictations at every level, A1 to C1, with a new one every day:
https://englishdictations.com