The reading and listening both are about sending humans to Mars which scientists are considering the possibility of it. The author believes that there is a lot of problem in this project in comparison with sending humans to the Moon but the lecturer finds the idea dubious and casts doubt on the reasons proposed by the reading passage.

First of all, the author asserts that a trip to Mars and back is a too-long trip and the cargo capacity of space vehicles is too limited to carry enough supplies for the crew in a long time. Conversely, the lecturer explains that the astronauts can grow plants with their roots in the water instead of soil which takes up less space. Also, they can use the water of such cultivation in the spaceship for drinking. Moreover, plants absorb carbon dioxide and generate fresh air which is vital for astronauts.

Furthermore, the reading passage holds the view that astronauts would be in the zero-gravity environment of space for many months at a time which has negative effects on the human body, such as decreased muscle mass and lower bone density that can be dangerous because of the duration of the trip. This argument is challenged by the lecturer. She believes that astronauts have the experience of being in a zero-gravity environment for a long time in space stations. They do certain acts to solve the problems of being in these situations. For example, they do regular exercises and take calcium pills.

Finally, the essay argues that astronauts on the mission to Mars would be exposed to dangerous levels of space radiation, much of which comes from the Sun, and constructing a shield to protect the whole spaceship is impossible hence it would add too much weight to the ship. In contrast, the professor underlines that Sun's solar radiation is not dangerous all the time. Also, to avoid the Sun's particles in dangerous times, they can use special instruments to monitor space radiation. Moreover, they can build a small shield for a part of the spaceship. In dangerous times they can cover in the shielded part until the passing of the danger.

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