Guinness: From Ireland to the World

Listening Questions 1:

1. How long was the original lease that Arthur Guinness signed?
2. How much was the annual rent?
3. Why did Guinness stop producing ale?
4. In 1784, how much did Guinness agree to pay Dublin for access to water?

Listening Questions 2:

1. In how many countries is Guinness available?
2. How many pints of Guinness are sold per year?
3. What is the name of the Guinness brewery in Dublin?
4. How many pints of Guinness were expected to be consumed on St. Patrick's Day 2013?

Transcript 1:

Guinness is one of the most famous beer brands in the world and it has an interesting history.

Arthur Guinness started brewing beer in 1759 when he was 34. Later that year, he signed a 9,000-year lease on a defunct brewery in Dublin for £45 a year. He originally brewed ale, but in the 1770s a black beer called porter gained popularity in Dublin so he began brewing porter as well. In 1799, he decided to stop producing ales and concentrate entirely on porter.

We now know that he made the right decision as Guinness' porter went on to become the iconic product that the company is still known for today.

Another interesting point in his 9,000-year contract was the right to use the city water supply free of any additional charge. The city government demanded that the brewery pay for its water supply, but Arthur Guinness refused to comply. In 1784, the two sides agreed to an 8,795-year lease that required Guinness to pay £10 a year for access to the city water supply.

Transcript 2:

Over the years, the popularity of Guinness spread well beyond Ireland and the UK. Guinness is now available in over 100 countries and it is brewed in nearly 50, however its top two markets are still the UK and Ireland. Every year, over 1.8 billion pints of Guinness are sold around the world.

For over 70 years, the Guinness sold in the UK was brewed in London, but in 2005, the company moved production back to its historic St. James Gate Brewery in Dublin.

One of the biggest days of the year for consuming Guinness is St. Patrick's Day, which is celebrated on March 17th. According to a study conducted at Northumbria University in 2013, approximately 13 million pints of Guinness were expected to be drunk on St. Patrick's Day. On an average day, about 5.5 million pints of Guinness are consumed.