

*Ultimate IELTS Series Book 2*

# *LISTENING*

*for IELTS*

*Question types, tips  
and practice  
exercises with mp3  
audio files*

*Written and developed by Impact Learning*

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## About the IELTS listening test

\*Note that the listening test is the same for the General Training and Academic Module test

### Timing and requirements

There are four sections in the IELTS listening test, with each section having one recording. The recordings are approximately 6 minutes long, and you need to answer 10 questions in each section. At the end of all four sections, you are given 10 minutes to transfer your answers to the answer sheet. This is important, as it means you shouldn't waste time during the recordings writing answers neatly on the answer sheet; instead, use this time to pre-read the questions for the next recording.



**IMPORTANT TIP:** there is a short break in the middle of the recording for Sections 1, 2 and 3. However, there is NO break in Section 4 – this will play through from the beginning to the end. The sections become progressively more difficult, with Section 1 being approximately pre-intermediate level and Section 4 being an advanced level.

### Specific timings for the IELTS listening test

1. Introduction and one example: around 45 seconds
2. Break: 30 seconds to pre read the first set of questions for Section 1
3. First part of Section 1: around 3 minutes
4. Break: 30 seconds to pre read the second set of questions for Section 1
5. Second part of Section 1: around 3 minutes
6. Break: 30 seconds to check your answers for Section 1

7. Section 2 is announced: about 5 seconds
8. Break: 30 seconds to pre read the first set of questions for Section 2
9. First part of Section 2: around 3 minutes
10. Break: 30 seconds to pre read the second set of questions for Section 2
11. Second part of Section 2: around 3 minutes
12. Break: 30 seconds to check your answers for Section 2
13. Section 3 is announced: about 5 seconds
14. Break: 30 seconds to pre read the first set of questions for Section 3
15. First part of Section 3: around 3 minutes
16. Break: 30 seconds to pre read the second set of questions for Section 3
17. Second part of Section 3: around 3 minutes
18. Break: 30 seconds to check your answers for Section 3
19. Section 4 is announced: about 5 seconds
20. Break: 40 seconds to pre read ALL questions for Section 4
21. Section 4 played without a break: around 7 minutes
22. Break: 10 minutes to transfer your answer to the answer sheet

## **The difference between the sections in the IELTS listening test**

**Section 1** is a conversation between two people on a non-academic subject. For example, it could be two people talking about membership to a library or a shop assistant talking to a customer about a product. **Section 2** is a single speaker talking about a non-academic subject, such as buying your own home or a presentation about a holiday destination. **Section 3** is a conversation between two or more people about an academic subject, such as completing an assignment or working together on a project. **Section 4** is a single speaker discussing an academic subject, such as academic regulations at a university.

## **Recordings are played once only**

You only hear each recording once, with the exception of the first example in Section 1. All sections of the test have approximately 30 seconds reading time before the recording begins

and 30 seconds after the recording ends to pre-read the questions or check your answers. In sections 1 to 3, there is a pause midway through the recording for you to pre-read the remaining questions in the section. In section 4, there is no break in the recording.

## **IELTS listening test question types**

1. Short answer questions
2. Sentence completion questions
3. Form/summary/table/flowchart/notes completion questions
4. Labelling a diagram
5. Matching and classifying
6. Multiple choice

## **What accents do they use for IELTS listening?**

The IELTS test is not a purely British English test. You can expect to hear a range of accents – British, American, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian and even non-native English speaking English. It is important to use a range of different sources in your IELTS preparation so that you can become familiar with them. However, you will NOT be required to distinguish between accents.

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## **Listening for personal information**

In the first section of the IELTS listening test, it is common to have to take a note of some personal information from one of the speakers. This can be their name, their address, a telephone number or other similar details.

In this section of the test, it is also common for the speaker to spell a word (for example, that speaker may say 'I live in Arlene Road, that's A – R – L – E – N – E Road'.).



Here are just some of the points you may need to listen out for when listening for personal information:

- Surname / Family name
- Other names (this could include nicknames or abbreviations)
- Telephone number
- Current occupation
- Marital status (e.g. single, divorced, married, separated)
- Educational qualifications
- D.O.B (date of birth)
- Nationality
- Current address

These questions can often be the easiest way to pick up points in the IELTS listening test, but points can also be lost for not spelling the answer correctly. Practice by listening to the recording below and putting the word you hear in the boxes below. To simulate the real IELTS test, don't pause the recording – see if you can keep up with the spelling.

**Now practice! Listen to the recording and write the name and place you hear.**

*Play Personal information audio file #1*

1a. Name ..... 1b. Place .....

2a. Name ..... 2b. Place .....

3a. Name ..... 3b. Place .....

4a. Name ..... 4b. Place .....

5a. Name ..... 5b. Place .....

6a. Name ..... 6b. Place .....

7a. Name ..... 7b. Place .....

8a. Name ..... 8b. Place .....

Answers:

1. Edmund Hillary / Auckland
  2. Katherine Mansfield / Wellington
  3. Alexander Aitken / Dunedin
  4. Te Rangi Hiroa / Wairarapa
  5. Kate Sheppard / Liverpool
  6. Ernest Rutherford / Brightwater
  7. Colin Murdoch / Timaru
  8. John Britten / Christchurch
- 

## Multiple choice questions

In both the reading and the listening test, one question type you may be required to answer is multiple choice, where you have to choose the correct answer from three or four given options.

There are two basic styles of multiple choice question:

### 1. Answering a short question

Example: What did the student say about the lecture?

- A. It was boring.
- B. He couldn't understand.

- C. He had heard it before.
- D. He disagreed with the lecturer.

## 2. Completing a sentence

Example: One of the most notable changes in our leisure time is that

- A. we have longer holidays
- B. we get paid more for our holidays
- C. people are increasingly going abroad.

### Tip 1: Highlight the differences

Multiple choice in the IELTS test can be difficult because very often there is no grammatical or logical reason to reject any of the answers. When the answers have similarities and differences, the first thing you can do is highlight the differences between the options. Also remember that in most questions, parallel expressions may be used to express the same information

For example, in the question below, listening only for the word *flower* is obviously not good enough, as all the options include that word. Instead, concentrate on the differences between them – in this case, it is the colours.

The pohutukawa tree has...

- A. **yellow** flowers
- B. **dark orange** flowers
- C. **red** flowers.

### Tip 2: think of parallel expressions

In some multiple-choice questions, however, there are no real similarities. In this case, the second thing you can do is think of other ways the information may be expressed. Look at the example below.



Question: What does Professor Roberts say about sports injuries?

- A. Apply an ice pack to the injured area
- B. Bandage the area firmly and rest
- C. Call for medical help only in serious cases

- Option A could be rephrased as: *Put/press / something cold/frozen / painful/hurt*
- Option B could be rephrased as: *Wrap/bind tightly/hard / relax/sit down*
- Option C could be rephrased as: *Contact the doctor/ an ambulance / not trivial/light*

**Tip 3: All options may be mentioned**

It is common in the IELTS listening test to hear a reference to some or all of the options in the multiple choice question, but only one answer will be correct. Be careful to think about what is being said, what is being contradicted (directly or indirectly) and what is not exactly being said.

Here's an example:

Question:

1. The doctor says the patient...

- A** should take regular exercise
- B** should not spend any time standing
- C** should stay in bed as much as possible
- D** should not go back to work yet

Transcript:

“Well, you are certainly looking better than the last time I saw you. For the next few weeks, I recommend that you do some gentle exercise but only when you feel you have the energy. Try

to spend some time on your feet rather than keeping immobile for too long. At this point, I would suggest arranging for another week away from work.”

**1. should take regular exercise**

*This is not exactly what is being said.* The speaker says ‘only when you have the energy’, so therefore not ‘regularly’

**2. should not spend any time standing**

*This is directly contradicted.* The speaker says ‘try to spend some time on your feet’.

**3. should stay in bed as much as possible**

*This is indirectly contradicted.* The speaker says ‘rather than keeping immobile for too long’, which is an indirect way of saying not staying still, in bed.

**4. should not go back to work yet**

*This is correct.* The speaker says ‘I would suggest arranging for another week away from work’

**Tip 4: Be sure to match the whole meaning of the option**

In the IELTS test (both listening and reading), it is important to match the whole meaning of the option. To illustrate, look at the question below and the notes the candidate has made. What’s wrong with the notes?

Sports psychologist Dr Johnson argues that today’s top athletes

A. win because of a positive mental attitude	CANDIDATES NOTES: They feel positive.
--	---------------------------------------

B. occasionally use performance-enhancing drugs	CANDIDATES NOTES: <i>They take drugs.</i>
C. are under considerable pressure from the media.	CANDIDATES NOTES: <i>They talk to people from newspapers, etc.</i>

What's wrong with the notes?

- A. The candidate's notes do not refer to 'win' which is an essential part of the option
- B. 'occasionally' has been ignored
- C. they don't *talk to*, they are *under considerable pressure from*

Now practice with this short test. Use the 4 tips above to answer this question. Listen to the recording and put a letter (A–D) in each of the columns below.

**Play *Multiple choice audio file #1***

According to the speaker, why do more people rent rather than buy their houses?

- A Most people do not have the money to put down as a deposit.
- B There are fewer worries about maintenance and repairs.
- C Job mobility means people do not want to make long-term commitments.
- D There is a risk of buying a house and losing money.

The correct answer:	
The option which is directly contradicted	

The option which is indirectly contradicted	
The answer which is not exact	

Answers:

The correct answer:	<b>C – ‘fluidity in the job market’</b>
The option which is directly contradicted	<b>D – ‘house prices are stable’, a direct contradiction to losing money.</b>
The option which is indirectly contradicted	<b>A – ‘This is not a reflection of financial pressures’ which indirectly means ‘do not have the money’ is not correct.</b>
The answer which is not exact	<b>B – ‘there is no need to worry’ is not an exact match for ‘fewer worries’</b>

Transcript

*Given the general standard of living in New Zealand, many people are surprised by the decline in the level of home ownership over the last 15 years the number of homeowners has fallen by over 7%, yet this is not a reflection of financial pressures. House prices in New Zealand are relatively stable, so there is no need to worry about a house losing value, and few people are dissuaded by the cost of maintenance on the building itself. The reason for the increasing popularity of renting is in fact the result of fluidity in the job market, and the fact that*

*obligations involved in a house often tie people to specific locations which do not support this lifestyle.*

## **Now test your skills with this complete practice exercise**

*Play **Multiple choice audio file #2***

Listen to the recording and answer the 6 questions below:

1. Emiliano is hoping to rent a house for...
  - A. 8 months
  - B. 6 months
  - C. 7 months
  - D. 12 months
  
2. 2 As proof of identity, Emiliano gives his...
  - A. passport and student card
  - B. passport and bank card
  - C. student card and bank card
  - D. student card and driving licence
  
3. Emiliano can be contacted...
  - A. on his mobile
  - B. by leaving a message at his homestay
  - C. by telephoning his school
  - D. by e-mail
  
4. Emiliano is looking for a house which is less than...

- A. half an hour away by bus
  - B. one hour away by bus
  - C. one hour away by bus or train
  - D. half an hour away by bus or train
5. He can find the weekly cost of the house by...
- A. asking the estate agent
  - B. looking at the house list
  - C. looking at the sign outside the house
  - D. asking the owner of the house
6. When he moves out, Emiliano will get back...
- A. his deposit and agent fee
  - B. the equivalent of one week's rent
  - C. his deposit
  - D. the equivalent of one week's rent and his deposit.

Answers:

- 1. B
- 2. A
- 3. A
- 4. D
- 5. B
- 6. C

## Short answer questions in the listening test

In the listening test, one of the common types of questions are short answer questions, where you have to write one, two or three words or a number as an answer.

As with all question types, make sure you read the question instructions carefully before you answer. Do not write more than the number of words / numbers the question asks for. Generally, the instructions and limits on word numbers are written in CAPITAL LETTERS, with **bold** and *italic* script.



For example: Answer the following questions ***USING NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS***

If you write three words for the answer here, your answer will be marked as wrong even if you have included the two words that are correct. However, it is OK to use only one word.

Here are some common instructions for this type of question:

Answer the following questions ***USING NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS***

This means the answers will be either one or two words.

Answer the following questions ***USING NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS OR A NUMBER***

This means that at least one of the answers will be just a number – a useful tip!

Answer the following questions ***USING NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND / OR A NUMBER***

This means that at least one of the answers will include a number and probably another word as well

Answer the following questions ***USING NO MORE THAN ONE WORD***

This means that all of the answers are single words only

## Practice with this short answer style sample

*Play Short answer questions audio file #1*

Listen to the recording and answer the three questions below:

Q1: Where is the festival held? .....

Q2: When does the festival start? .....

Q3: More than how many people go to the festival? .....

Answers:

1. Sydney
2. January
3. One / 1 million

---

## Tips and hints for IELTS short answer questions in the listening test

One of the most useful techniques with this type of question is to look at the question word being used. In the three questions above, the questions words are 'What (festival)', 'when' and 'how many'. This should tell you that you are looking for the name of the something for the first answer, a date or time for the second answer and a number for the third answer.

Here are some common question words and the type of information they are most likely looking for.

**Who** – A name, a person, a company, a group or community, an institution, a job title



**When** – A date, a time, a part of the day (morning, evening etc)

**Where** – A place, a location

**Why** – A reason, an explanation

**What** – A thing, a name

**Which** – One of a given or limited choice

**How** – A description

**How many** – A number of times

**How often** – A frequency (monthly, daily, every hour etc.)

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**Now practice a more difficult example by answering the 5 questions below.**

Answer the following questions ***USING NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND / OR A NUMBER***

Play ***Short answer questions audio file #2***

Q1: What specific problem is the speaker talking about?

Q2: Where is the speaking talking about?

Q3: How many people live there?

Q4: Why is the problem getting worse?

Q5: Who should be finding a solution to the problem?

Answers:

1. The correct answer was 'Overpopulation'
  2. Mexico City (The question word 'Where' should have told you to expect the name of a place.)
  3. Twenty million ('How many' should have prepared you for a number here)
  4. 'Poor sanitation' or 'Sanitation' (the question word 'Why' should have prepared you to listen for a reason)
  5. The international community (the question word 'who' should have prepared you to listen for a name, person, group etc.)
- 

## Text completion questions in IELTS listening

Text-completion questions in IELTS listening are the same as in the reading. They can be either in the form of a summary or as short sentences which you have to complete.



**Tip 1:** With either type, you can expect some information on the recording that will not be required to answer the questions. This is a good opportunity to use your note-taking skills, just in case you miss anything. You will have a little time after the listening test (while you are transferring your answers) to complete any remaining answers.

**Tip 2:** As with all question types in the listening test, the answer for text completion questions will come in the order of the recording. That is, if you hear the answer to question 2 but haven't heard the answer to question 1, you've already missed it!

**Tip 3:** The most useful skill with this question type is to look quickly through the summary or sentences you are completing and highlight key words. This will help you identify the important section of the recording when you hear it. You should also use predicting and anticipating skills (see page Predicting and anticipating in the IELTS listening test).

**Tip 4:** Once you believe you have found the correct answer, read the completed text including your answer, making sure that the sentence is grammatically accurate. For example:

*Many people argue that harsher (1)\_\_\_\_\_ would reduce crime rates.*

You hear the speaker referring to 'laws' and 'the law' during the recording, and you think the answer is 'the law', so you add this to the sentence and it becomes...

*Many people argue that harsher (1) **the law** would reduce crime rates.*

This is grammatically incorrect, so when transferring your answers at the end of the test, your best chance of getting the correct answer is to change your response to better suit:

*Many people argue that harsher (1) **laws** would reduce crime rates.*

However, it is **VERY STRONGLY** recommended that your answer stay within the word or words you hear on the recording.

### **Practice exercise 1 – summary completion**

Listen to the recording and fill in the gaps using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND OR A NUMBER**. Remember to use predicting skills before starting the recording (spend no more than 30 seconds!)

*Play **Short answer questions audio file #3***

Amongst increasing (1)\_\_\_\_\_ and political pressure to quit, there is finally some good news for smokers. Research presented to the (2)\_\_\_\_\_ of Cardiology states that there are sufficient beneficial (3)\_\_\_\_\_ in two glasses of red wine to suspend the negative impact that smoking (4)\_\_\_\_\_ has on the functioning of arteries. Of course, the (5)\_\_\_\_\_ do not suggest that drinking red wine allows you to smoke as much as you like, and it is still some distance from finding any kind of drug that is capable of reversing the harmful effects of (6)\_\_\_\_\_ smoking. The health effects connected with red wine are not really new. The Romans and (7)\_\_\_\_\_ all considered it as a form of medicine, possibly because of the abundance of polyphenols, naturally occurring chemicals which have a (8)\_\_\_\_\_ effect on the arteries.

Answers:

1. Social
2. European society
3. Chemicals
4. One / 1 cigarette
5. Findings
6. Long term
7. (The) Greeks
8. Cleansing

## Practice exercise 2 – sentence completion

*Play Short answer questions audio file #4*

Now listen to the recording and complete the sentences using **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND OR A NUMBER**.

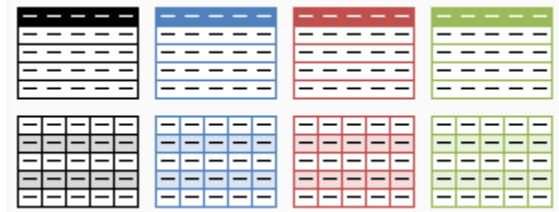
- 1 The Health Sciences building is next to the \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 There are \_\_\_\_\_ each term.
- 3 In the first module, students will study health and safety in \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Students will have to complete a \_\_\_\_\_ by the end of the course.
- 5 There will be speakers from various \_\_\_\_\_ backgrounds.

Answers:

1. History department
2. 2 / Two modules
3. The workplace
4. Thesis
5. Medical

## Table completion questions in IELTS listening

Often in the IELTS listening test, you are required to complete missing information given in a table. One of the most useful skills with this type of question is to look at the information already given and predict some of the answer types you will be listening for.



For example, what type of answer would you expect for the table-completion question below?

*NOTE: There is no recording for this exercise.*

Complete the table below with **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS OR A NUMBER.**

***Travel Abroad Ltd*** – summer trips to Europe departing from the UK

Destination	Paris	Berlin	(1) _____
-------------	-------	--------	-----------

Mode of transport	(2) _____	Coach	Train
Date of departure	12 May	17 May	(3) _____
Cost of trip	£712	(4) _____	£245
Travel time	Less than one hour	18 hours	2 days

This is a relatively simple example (although this is something you could be required to complete for Section 1), but it shows the basic skills that you should use. With table-completion questions, look at the other data in the table. Often you will see patterns which will indicate the type of information you should be listening for. If one column has nouns, then it is reasonable to expect you are looking for a noun. Also, be logical – use the information you have to roughly predict the information you will be listening for. For example, it is logical that a coach trip will be cheaper than a train trip.

Here's some of the information you could have predicted about each answer:

**Answer 1:** logically, this would be a place, and likely a city (possibly even a capital city as Paris and Berlin are both capitals). If your geography of Europe and surrounding areas is good, you should also have predicted it is likely to be some distance from Paris, Berlin or London as the trip is by train and will take 2 days. However, it is still in Europe as stated in the title of the table ('trips to Europe').

**Answer 2:** you should have predicted that this is a more expensive but faster trip to the destination, so likely to be by aeroplane.

**Answer 3:** Clearly this a date, but you should also be able to estimate that it is likely to be close to May as this is the date for the other two trips, and also that the date must be in summer (the title of the table is 'Summer trips')

**Answer 4:** obviously a price in pounds sterling (UK currency). This is probably going to be the cheapest of all three because it is travelling by coach, which is generally cheaper than a train, and takes 18 hours.

**Now try with an audio recording.**

Before listening to the recording, look at the table and predict the type of missing information. Use the table headings at the top and on the left hand side to help you. Then play the recording and complete the table.

NOTE: This is a practice exercise – there are no word limits for these answers.

	Sam	John	Mary
Attitude to recycling	Doesn't have time	(1).....	(2).....
Availability	(3).....	No local recycling areas	(4).....
Ideas for the future	—	(5).....	A reward scheme for people who recycle

**Play *Short answer questions audio file #5***

Answers:

*NOTE: This is a practice exercise with no word limit, so you do not have to have the EXACT wording below.*

1. Thinks it can be difficult
2. Always recycles

- 3. Limited local facilities
- 4. *Very* limited facilities
- 5. Fine offenders

## Labelling a diagram in the listening test

One of the question types that you may face in the IELTS listening test is when you are required to label a diagram, map or plan. Typically, you will be given an illustration with some labels already in place, but others you need to add as you listen to the recording.

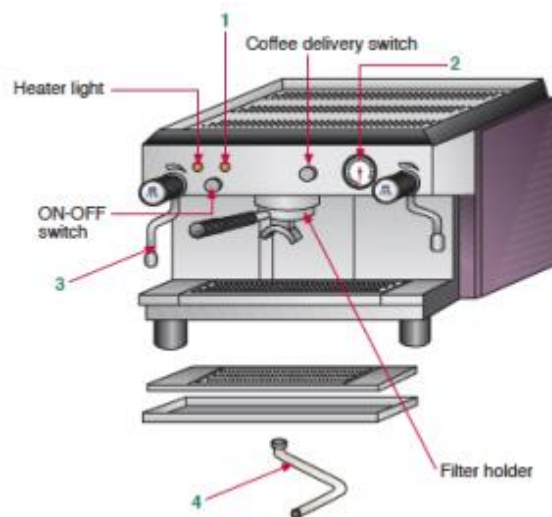
One useful hint is that the answers in the listening test always come in order, so in the example below, the first answer you can expect to hear is the answer to question 1, then question 2, then question 3 etc.

It is a good idea to familiarise yourself with the other labels already given, and to think about how the other parts of the diagram, map or plan which you are required to label may be described.

Practice by taking this short example below (this is an extract from a Section 2 IELTS speaking test). Start the recording, then type your answers into the boxes below. Click 'Check your answers' to see if you are correct.

Play **Labelling questions audio file #1**

- 1. ....
- 2. ....
- 3. ....
- 4. ....





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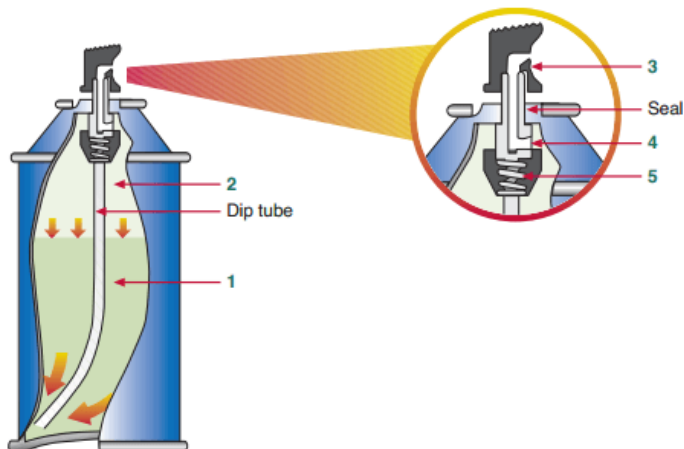
Answers:

- A Water level light
- B Boiler metre (or Boiler meter)
- C Steam tap
- D Drainage pipe

Practice again! Listen to the recording and identify the labels for questions 1 to 5.

**Play Labelling questions audio file #2**

*NOTE: This is not a complete IELTS recording – it is only a short excerpt.*



1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

Answers:

1. Product
  2. Propellant
  3. Nozzle
- E** Inlet
- F** Spring
- 

## IELTS test day listening exercise

For this listening exercise, we've used ALL the different question types you will find in the IELTS listening test.

The listening is about a candidate's experience on test day – this is not a topic you would normally have in the IELTS test (and it is easier than normal IELTS recordings), but is an opportunity for you to get some idea of what other people feel on test day!

*Play Test day audio file #1*

Answer the following using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** (this is a short answer question).

1. How did Eileen feel before the test?
- 

Circle the correct answer **A–C** (this is a multiple choice question).

2. She felt calmer...

- A. when her friend got her results
  - B. after she had spoken to her mother
  - C. the night before the test.
-

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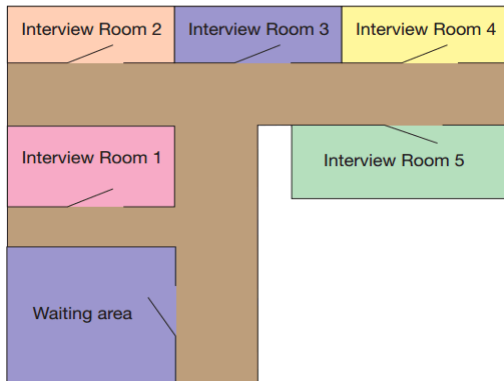
Complete the sentence below in **ONE WORD** (this is a sentence completion question).

3. The hardest part of the listening test was .....

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Label the diagram below (this is a labelling a diagram question).

4. In which room was Eileen's speaking test?



---

Match a problem with a solution (this is a matching/classifying question).

- A. If you feel nervous...
  - B. If you make a mistake...
5. stop and rephrase your sentence. ....
6. stop and take a deep breath. ....
- 

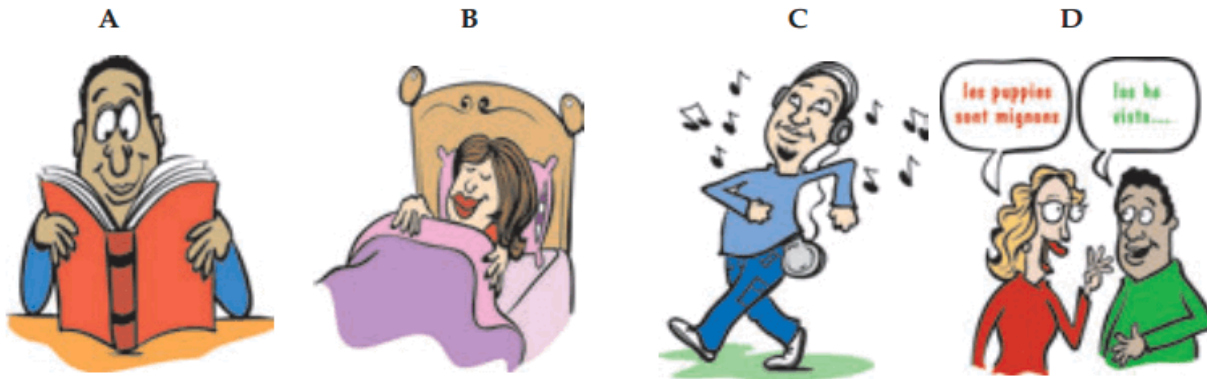
Questions 7-9. Complete the table below using **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS/AND OR A NUMBER** (this is a table completion question).

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	The most difficult section	The most difficult question type
Writing	(7) .....	Writing about tables
Reading	(8) .....	(9).....

Choose the correct letter A–D (this is a labelling a diagram question)

10. What does Eileen recommend just before going in to the test? .....



Answers:

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. NERVOUS          | 6. A               |
| 2. B                | 7. TASK 1/ONE      |
| 3. SPELLING         | 8. PASSAGE 2/TWO   |
| 4. INTERVIEW ROOM 5 | 9. MULTIPLE CHOICE |
| 5. B                | 10. C              |

## Transcript:

Teacher: So Eileen, tell me how you felt just before your test.

Eileen (student): Well, it was the first time I had taken a test for such a long time that I was very nervous. Actually, didn't sleep very well for nearly a week before the test. I felt a little under pressure because a friend of mine had got results a week before, and just his he'd done very well. Anyway, rang my parents the night before, and my mother reminded me that there was no point in worrying, and that made me feel a little calmer.

Teacher: So tell me how things went on the day. What about the listening test?

Eileen (student): Surprisingly, the listening test wasn't as difficult as I'd thought. The hardest part was spelling, but didn't feel that the sections got much more difficult as the test went on. By the end I felt quite confident in my answers.

Teacher: Tell me about the speaking. What was that like?

Eileen (student): I didn't make a very good start. From the waiting area, I was supposed to go up to in end of the corridor and turn right. My interview room was on the right, but I the the room on the left and when showed the interviewer my ID he told me I was in wrong room! Anyway, he took me where I was supposed to go so it wasn't too bad. Anyway, my real interviewer was great She made me feel so relaxed. Before the interview began, she asked me if taken the test before, and when told her was my first time, she just smiled and said "relax. I did find myself getting a nervous, but have little just took a breath and relaxed. As for the actual interview, I felt that I could done a little better but then I suppose most people feel that. Once or twice I realised I'd made a mistake so just corrected myself and went on

Teacher: Okay. What about the writing test?

Eileen (student): Well, I spent a few minutes too long on Task One I had to write about a table, a they're easier to write about. Actually, I think tables was hoping for a graph because the title

was are the most difficult Task wasn't too bad though to something I had studied in my class. I wrote a plan, so I just followed what I had written. Near the end I changed a few parts the plan a of didn't follow my original idea but I still felt that Id done a good job

Teacher: And finally, then, the reading?

Eileen (student): Well, when the examiner handed out the test, I thought the size of the booklet was a little intimidating. To calm me down, I had a quick look through the three passage before began, and didn't have much problem with the first and the third, but though Reading Passage 2 was quite difficult. There were some multiple-choice questions and I've always found them a little difficult. But just left them and moved on, an found I had a few minutes a the end to go back and answer them

Teacher: Good. Well, just before we finish, do you have any advice you would give to someone just about to take their test?

Eileen (student): Yes, a couple of things actually. A few days before the test, look through the work yo have done, but the night before the test, don't do anything. Relax and go to bed ear In the morning, have a good breakfast. But the most important advice I would give to avoid speaking or listening to anything but English on the day. Listen to the radio when you get up, and take a portable cassette player to listen to when you're waiting to go into the test room. Don't speak your native language even if there are people that you know at the test centre.

Teacher: Well, thanks very much, Eileen. When do you get your results?

Eileen (student): Next Friday, I think.

Teacher: I hope you've done well.

Eileen (student): Thanks

## Listening to and writing numbers as answers

In the listening test, some answers may be in number form.

Often, the instructions will indicate whether a number is required if it states NO MORE THAN (ONE/TWO/THREE) WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER. When transferring your answer, make sure you write it correctly as often an easy point is lost for making a simple mistake.



One thousand = 1000

Half a million = 500 000

One million = 1 000 000

One billion (UK)= 1 000 000 000

One billion (US)= 1 000 000 00

Practice by converting the words below into numbers

**NOTE 1: these are slightly harder than anything you will need to do for the IELTS test**

**NOTE 2: there is no audio recording for this exercise**

Example: Four thousand six hundred and eighty-two = 4682

1. Twelve thousand six hundred and eighteen	
2. Seventeen thousand and two	
3. Seventy-four thousand two hundred and seventy two	
4. Eight million four hundred thousand Show answer	
5. One million, four hundred and twenty-two thousand six hundred and nineteen	
6. Eight hundred and eighteen million six hundred and fourteen thousand	

Answers:

1. 12618
2. 17002
3. 74272
4. 8400000
5. 1422619
6. 818614000

---

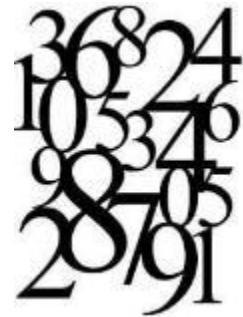
## Listening for details

In the IELTS listening test, you are often tested not just on your ability to listen for general information or to follow the approximate flow of the recording, but also to listen for very specific information.

Sometimes specific information questions will also be spelled, but this is not guaranteed, so you need to develop the skills of listening for a specific piece of information, while at the same time continuing to listen to the general direction of the dialogue or monologue.

There are a number of different types of specific information you may need to listen to, including:

- names and other personal information
- numbers
- places / addresses
- times and dates



### Practice #1



***Play Listening for details audio file #1***

Listen to the recording and see if you can identify what the following numbers refer to.

A. 1946	
B. 180	
C. 60	
D. 2001	

Answers:

- A** This was the year that UNESCO was formed
- B** This is the number of nations in UNESCO
- C** This is the number of worldwide offices UNESCO has
- D** This is the year of the General Conference

**Practice #2**

Now practice by listening for specific dates. Listen to the recording below and note the following dates for these events:

***Play Listening for details audio file #2***

- A** Bastille Day
- B** Elvis' death
- C** Burns' Night
- D** Martin Luther King Day
- E** ANZAC day

Answers:

- A Bastille Day – 14th July
- B Elvis' death – 16th August
- C Burns' Night – 25th January
- D Martin Luther King Day – 4th April
- E ANZAC day – 25th April

### Practice #3

*Play Listening for details audio file #3*

Now a third practice recording. Listen to the audio and identify the specific information needed to answer these questions:

- 1. What is the speaker's name? .....
- 2. Where is he from? .....
- 3. What group of people is he referring to? .....
- 4. What language did they speak? .....

Answers:

- 1. (ADRIAN) WOLFFE
  - 2. LLANGOLLEN
  - 3. NAVAJO (Indians)
  - 4. ATHAPAKSAN
-

## Listening for numbers in IELTS listening

In the IELTS listening test, it is very common to have to listen for numbers to get a correct answer. In this exercise, you can practice your listening by listening to the recording and entering the numbers and dates into this news report.

**There are three different ways you can try this exercise!**

1. Look at the numbers below, read the text carefully and logically there is only one place each number can go.
2. Listen to the recording and enter the numbers as you hear them.
3. Look at the numbers first, then listen to the recording and enter the numbers as you hear them (the easiest option!)



Play *Listening for numbers audio file #1*

- 0.3
- 6
- 5.6
- $\frac{1}{4}$
- 17
- 1100
- 7 00 000
- II
- 24 000 000
- 30

Good evening and welcome to the **(A)**..... o'clock news. Tonight's top story: a second earthquake in months has struck Japan. Preliminary reports claim that up to **(B)**..... people are missing and the damage is estimated to be over \$(**C**)..... In other news, unemployment statistics released today show a slight decrease at **(D)**.....,

a **(E)**..... % drop over last year's figure of 5.3%. This has come as welcome news to the government, especially with the upcoming general election.

Plans to make Auckland city the new capital of New Zealand have been scrapped. Despite home to over **(F)**..... of the population, there has been overwhelming popular support to maintain Wellington's status as the nation's capital.

In entertainment news, Tom Cruise has denied that he will be returning to New Zealand to start filming *The Last Samurai* **(G)**..... In the first movie, *The Last Samurai*, Cruise was reported to have earned \$US **(H)**....., and stated that he was looking for another eight-figure deal before signing the contract to do the sequel.

Now to sport, where the All Blacks have come home victorious once again, beating Wales by only one point in a thrilling ending. Wales had kept the lead with 16 points up to half time, but were unable to score again as the All Blacks dominated the second half to finish on **(I)**..... points.

Finally, the weather. It looks like summer has finally arrived with the temperatures on the east coast reaching a high of **(J)**..... degrees tomorrow.

Answers:

- |                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| <b>A.</b> 6       | <b>F.</b> 1/4        |
| <b>B.</b> 1100    | <b>G.</b> 11 .       |
| <b>C.</b> 700,000 | <b>H.</b> 24,000,000 |
| <b>D.</b> 5.6     | <b>I.</b> 17         |
| <b>E.</b> 0.3     | <b>J.</b> 30         |

## Matching and classifying in IELTS listening

Matching and classifying questions test your ability to understand a rephrased sentence and identify key points in the recording, as well as understand relationships between ideas.



You can think of matching questions as trying to find a pair of socks – one sock will match another. Classifying questions are a little different in that you have a

category that the sub-sections fit in. Here's a VERY SIMPLE example: you could have categories like FOOD, CLOTHING and WEATHER. The question would then ask you to 'categorise' items like trousers, apples and sunshine.

### Matching questions in IELTS

Here's an example of a matching question (there is no recording for this exercise – it is just an example. See below for a full exercise with audio):

*Match the following dates to the statements that follow. Write **A**, **B** or **C** in your answer sheet.*

- A. 2011
- B. 2013
- C. 2015

1. *The first scientific discovery was made.*
2. *Dr Ignatius published a landmark research paper*
3. *The experiment was abandoned.*

With this type of question, you are simply matching a number and a letter. Classifying questions are very similar, but commonly use the same letter more than once.

### Classifying questions in IELTS

Here's an example of a classifying question:

Which person states the following:

*A. Dr Jameson*

*B. Dr Walker*

*C. Dr Bell*

*1. Further research is essential*

*2. More finances will be required*

*3. Government support is not welcome*

*4. The conclusions drawn in 2013 were incomplete*

*3. The process of extraction is too expensive*

---

## **Now practice!**

This is a complete Section 3 example – Questions 28-30 are classifying questions.

*Play Matching and classifying audio file #1*

### **Section 3 Questions 21-30**

#### **Questions 21-25**

Answer the questions below

Write **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS OR A NUMBER** for each answer

21. What was the student's assignment marked out of?

22. For which area of the assignment did the student get the best marks?

23. In addition to the internet, what was the only other reference source used by the student?

24. Which orientation did the student not attend at the beginning of the course?
25. What should the student have included into their question about food and drink bought in cafes?

### **Questions 26 and 27**

Complete the sentences below

Write **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer

26. When designing a questionnaire, the writer should not assume a .... or point of view exists without sufficient evidence.

27. The student's questionnaire would have required too much .....to be effective for business use.

### **Questions 28-30**

What does the lecturer tell the student about each book?

Choose your answers from the list and write the correct letter **A-F** next to questions 28-30

- A. Needs updating
- B. Up to date
- C. Easy to understand
- D. Expensive
- E. Too simplistic
- F. Realistic

28. Qualitative Analysis, (Gaston) \_\_\_\_\_
29. Effective Research Analysis (English & Gatehill) \_\_\_\_\_
30. Techniques that Work (Sandbrookes) \_\_\_\_\_

Answers:

31. 50
32. Report format
33. (The) course textbook
34. (The) library orientation
35. (An) additional category
36. Preference
37. time (and/&) labour
38. F
39. D
40. A



---

## Predicting and anticipating in the IELTS listening test

As the listening begins, you hear a voice on the recording telling you what section you are about to complete, as well as the question numbers. Then you are given a short amount of time to read the questions.

During this preparation time, it is important that you read the questions, thinking about some of the language you might hear so that you can predict the approximate type of answer.



Here is a typical set of questions for a Section 1 recording (there is no audio for this exercise):

APPLICATION FORM

**NAME:** *Mary* \_\_\_\_\_ (1)

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_ (2), *Lansdale Street, Meldon, Warwickshire*

**TELEPHONE NUMBER:** \_\_\_\_\_ (3)

**REQUIRED MEMBERSHIP TIME:** \_\_\_\_\_ (4)

**MEMBERSHIP TYPE** *Circle as appropriate: FULL / GYM AND SWIMMING / GYM ONLY* (5)

**HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT US?** \_\_\_\_\_ (6)

Using the time you are given before the speakers begin, you should be able to logically predict or anticipate the following information:

General: the title of the questions says application form, so this is someone who is joining or enrolling in something. Question 5 refers to a gym so logically it is a gym enrolment form. It is likely to be for new members, not a renewal of membership because it is asking for basic personal questions.

Question 1: The answer here is likely to be a family name. Listening for 'Mary' will also be a useful indicator, as generally people in English speaking countries state their first name followed by their last name (in some cultures, it is common to use the family name first).

Question 2: This is likely to be a number (e.g. 14) or a number and a letter (e.g. 14 A), because the street address is given afterwards, followed by the suburb and the county.

Question 3: This is highly likely to be a string of numbers, possibly including an area code.

Question 4: The answers here are given – it will be FULL, GYM AND SWIMMING or GYM ONLY

Question 5: Looking at this logically, the answer is likely to be something like 'From a newspaper', 'On the internet', 'From a friend' or something similar.

### **Important note: KEEP AN OPEN MIND!**

Although it is essential to use the time you are given to predict or anticipate some of the answers, it is very important that you listen closely for the unexpected. For example, it is possible that for TELEPHONE NUMBER, the person may not have a telephone, meaning that the answer could be 'NONE'.

### **Test yourself**

Look at the following form and predict as much as you can. Remember that you will have a limit on the number of words, so think of possible answers that do not go beyond the limit.

*Play Predicting and anticipating audio file #1*

Now listen to the recording and fill in the missing information **USING NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND / OR A NUMBER**

#### **Evening Classes for Adults**

1. Courses will run for \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. Maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ students per class.
3. Cost will depend on \_\_\_\_\_

4. Those interested should contact \_\_\_\_\_ Edwards on 263-8147.
5. Evening courses will be held at the \_\_\_\_\_ .

Answers:

1. 10 / ten weeks
2. 8 / eight
3. Income
4. Mike
5. Town Hall

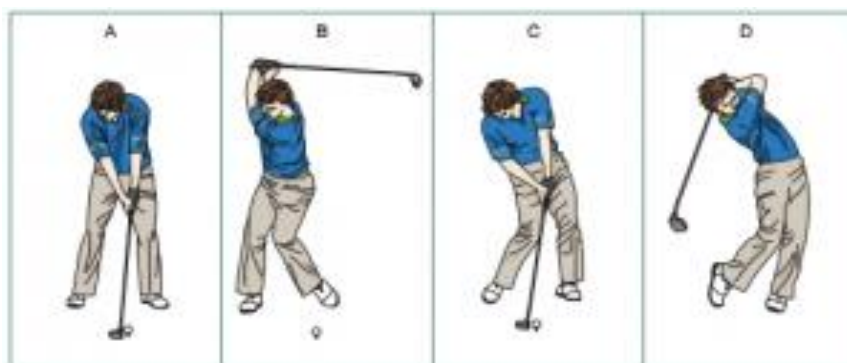
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### Predicting and anticipating for pictures / diagrams

Predicting and anticipating in the listening is also useful when you have to select a picture or diagram in a multiple-choice question.

Look at the pictures below – they have the same context but there are obvious differences, and spending a few seconds thinking of those differences can help you identify the correct answer.

NOTE: There is no audio for this exercise



Here are some of the points you could have noted:

Legs – straight in picture A, left leg bent in pictures B and C

Head – faces straight down in picture A, to the side in pictures B and C and forward in picture D

Golf club – vertical to the floor in picture A and C, horizontal above the head in picture B and behind the back in picture D.

### More practice

Practice your skills with these 10 questions by predicting as much as you can.

**NOTE: there is no audio for this exercise – this is to improve your predicting skills.**

Questions 1 to 5. Complete the missing information. Use **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS OR A NUMBER** for each answer.

Rugby International – receipt

Name of ticket holder: Carl Hawkins

Payment method: (1) \_\_\_\_\_

New Zealand All Blacks v (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Starts at: (3) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people (4) \_\_\_\_\_

Seat number(s) K112 and (5) \_\_\_\_\_

Questions 6 – 10.

Answer the following questions using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS**.

6. Why didn't Carl Hawkins go to the match?

7. Where had they planned to meet?

8. Why was Jane angry?
9. What are they doing next Saturday?
10. When is Jane's brother arriving?

Possible answers:

1. This question is looking for a method of payment. Likely to be either cash or credit card but could also be telephone, Internet or in person.
2. Given that the receipt is for an international game, you should predict it's a country, possibly also the nickname of the team (e.g. South Africa or Springboks)
3. Very likely that this is a clock time, likely to be in the afternoon. Slim possibility that the date will also be required.
4. You should be able to work out that because it is a receipt, it is asking not for the number of people attending the whole match, but how many people are included in this transaction. Judging by questions 6 – 9 it is likely to be only 2. Question 10, with its future grammar referring to the brother, suggests he is not there at the time. Also question 5 only has space for two seat numbers.
5. Logically from question 4, you should be looking for one seat number. As they were booked together this is more than likely to be sequential (K111 or K113) but you should keep an open mind as it could also be J112 or L112.
6. The question word is obviously looking for a reason.
7. This is likely to be a location in reference to a stadium. This could include door number, stand number, seat number, etc. You should also be listening for a preposition of place (i.e. inside, outside, beside, in front) given that the word limit is three words.
8. We know from question 6 that Carl couldn't go to the match but it was his name on the receipt. This leaves it probable that Jane was either left waiting or couldn't go herself.
9. You should be able to predict a change in tone of the conversation, referring away from past events and using future grammar. You could also anticipate hearing the word

'Saturday' or similar (weekend, first day off work, etc.). and also listening for an action verb, possibly connected with Jane's brother arriving (cleaning the house, meeting him at the airport, etc).

10. This could be a day of the week, a date or a clock time.

---

## Signpost words in IELTS listening

In the listening test, the type of linking words you hear can help you predict the general direction of what you hear. You can tell if points are connected as:

- comparisons
- concessions
- additions
- sequences
- opposites
- cause and effect constructions.

These are called 'signpost words' (also 'discourse markers'), as they are a signpost to tell you what is happening next. Understanding and following signpost words can be a very helpful way to improve your IELTS result as it will help you better follow the conversation.

Listen to the recording. You will hear the first part of a sentence. What point do you think it will be followed by? Write the linking word that helped you decide. The first one has been done for you.

*Play Signpost words audio file #1*

Sentence 1 (*example*): The next point is likely to be ***an opposite*** because of the word ***although***.

Sentence 2: The next point is likely to be ..... because of the word .....

Sentence 3: The next point is likely to be ..... because of the word .....

Sentence 4: The next point is likely to be ..... because of the word .....

Sentence 5: The next point is likely to be..... because of the word .....

Sentence 6: The next point is likely to be..... because of the word .....

Answers:

Sentence 2: **SEQUENCE** because of the words 'NEXT STEP'

Sentence 3: **ADDITION** because of the words 'NO ONLY...BUT ALSO'

Sentence 4: **CONCESSION** because of the word 'ADMITTEDLY'

Sentence 5: **CAUSE/EFFECT** because of the words 'AS A RESULT'

Sentence 6: **COMPARISON** because of the words 'IN THE SAME WAY'

Linking words in listening are only one example of discourse markers – the words and expressions used to show how speech is constructed. They are particularly useful for you in Sections 2 and 4 of the listening test as they indicate changes in the direction of a thought, idea or opinion. That means if you have a question asking about reading ability and the next question is asking about new additions to the school building, then you can expect to hear a discourse marker announcing the change of topic.

Here are some of the more common signpost words and phrases, with their meanings.

First = This is the beginning of a list of points.

Like = An example is going to be given.

Anyway = This could mean a change of subject or nearing the end of the talk.

I mean = The speaker is about to rephrase or give an example.

So = An effect or a result of a previous point is about to be stated.

Moving on = Another point is going to be introduced.

As I said = The speaker is going to recap an earlier point.

To make myself clear = The speaker is going to rephrase a point.

Right = This could mean the speaker is about to begin, change the subject or is nearing the end of the talk.

To put it another way = The speaker is about to rephrase a point.

This isn't always so = The speaker is about to give exceptions to or contrasts to a previous comment

Now = The speaker is about to begin a new subject.

Talking about that = The speaker is going to expand on a point.

**Test your skills! You can either try completing the text below using the list of signpost words presented above then listen, or you could just listen and complete the answers!**

*Play Signpost words audio file #2*

(1)..... I'd like to thank you all again for coming to this meeting, and to say that I have received apologies from Mrs Brownlow, who won't be able to attend today. (2) ....., I'd like to talk to you about our English language department. (3)..... in the last meeting, we are looking for some of you to act as mentors for our international students arriving over the coming weeks. Although our college prides itself on having a welcoming environment in which international students can feel at home from the very first day, we know (4)..... Feelings of homesickness, isolation and loneliness are somewhat unavoidable, but I would like, as much as possible, to reduce these factors by teaming new students with existing students who have been here some time. (5)....., I am looking for volunteers to show the new students around, introduce them to people and generally ease them into their studies, so if any of you are willing to help, then please come to my office anytime during the week and let me know. (6)....., I'd also like to talk to you about a temporary teacher who will be joining us for the next week or so. He will be teaching history and sociology, and substituting for Miss Kinsale until her recovery. (7)....., if anyone wants to send her a card then just let me know by the end of the day as I will be going to the hospital this evening to visit her. (8)....., unless there is anything else you want to add, we'll close the meeting. I hope to see some of you during the week.

Answers



1. First
2. Now
3. As I said
4. This isn't always so
5. To put it another way
6. Moving on
7. Talking about that
8. Right

In addition to discourse markers, the intonation pattern of the speaker's voice can also indicate a change of topic. The tone of voice generally falls at the end of one topic, followed by a pause then starts on the next topic in a higher tone.

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## Tips for IELTS listening

On this page are tips for listening in the IELTS test. If you have a question or a tip that you think would benefit others, let us know using the message form at the bottom of the page.

**\*Note that the listening test is the same for the General Training and Academic Module test**

### Speaker giving the wrong answer first

One of the common traps in the IELTS

listening test is when a speaker makes a statement which is then changed. For example:

*'My phone number is 833 6634 – oh no, sorry, that's my old number – my new number is 356*



8232'. It is important to keep listening to the following sentence or two to confirm that the answer has not changed in any way.

### **Keeping focused on the listening**

A common issue with the IELTS listening test is not staying focused on the recording so that you catch the answer when it comes. It is surprising how often, even though you are serious about passing the IELTS test, your mind can start to wander when listening to a recorded conversation, and you can easily miss an answer. One technique to help is to imagine that you are actually part of the conversation, even though you are not actually saying anything. Think about where they are, how old you think the speaker or speakers are, what they are wearing etc. By putting yourself 'in the picture', it is often easier to keep focused.

### **Always be two questions ahead**

Having only the next question in your mind as you are listening means that you can lose points quickly – if you miss the answer, you may find yourself waiting and waiting, only to find that the answer has gone as well as the next two or three answers. Get into the habit of planning the next questions ahead. For example, if you are waiting for the answer to Question 3, also make sure you know what is required for Question 4 – if you hear the answer to Question 4 first, then you have already missed Question 3 (the answers come in order). You may have lost a point, but at least you are back on track.

### **Pre-read the questions**

In between Sections 1, 2 and 3, there is a short break for you to read the questions, but at the end of each of these sections, you are also given half a minute to check your answers. Although it is worth having a quick check to make sure you have an answer for each question, this time should be spent pre-reading the next set of questions, not reading old answers. The more prepared you are for the next set of questions, the better your results. Remember that you are given time at the end of the recording to transfer your answers to the answer paper, so don't worry about writing neatly on your question paper.

### **Highlighting key words**

In the time you have to pre-read the questions, make sure you are highlighting key vocabulary or points that you think will help you identify the correct answers. You are given a question paper and a separate answer sheet, so you can write on, underline, circle or otherwise mark your question paper as you see fit. Underlining or circling key words will help you stay focus and be clear about what you are listening for.

### **ALWAYS write an answer**

You are not penalised in the IELTS test for an incorrect answer in the listening or reading sections, so even if you are not sure or don't know, always write something, even if it's just a guess. You might get lucky, and it certainly won't harm!

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## **Listening strategies for Section 4**

Over the 4 sections of the IELTS listening test, there recordings and questions become more challenging, so by the time you reach Section 4, you should expect it to be the most difficult. In order to get a good result, here are some useful tips and suggestions.



### ***Tip 1 – be prepared!***

Knowing what to expect when the Section 4 recording begins is a great advantage, so here's what you can expect. Unlike Sections 1, 2 and 3, Section 4 does not pause midway through the recording for you to read the next set of questions. However, you have more time before the recording begins to read through the questions (40 seconds instead of the normal 20 seconds).

### ***Tip 2 – use the time given in Section 3***

At the end of Section 3, the recording will say 'You now have 30 seconds to check your answers'. However, we strongly recommend you use this time to only briefly check your

answers to Section 3 – it is more important to quickly move on to Section 4 and start looking through the questions there.

***Tip 3 – underline, circle and highlight important words in the questions***

As you look through the questions in your preparation time, make sure that you are identifying key words and qualifying words in the question. Don't just read them – circle them, underline, highlight them – anything that will make it easier to focus on the key points.

***Tip 4 – use the questions to help you understand the recording***

As Section 3 ends and you start looking through the questions for Section 4, you should be building a mental picture of what the Section 4 topic relates to. Are they talking about people, places, animals etc.? As Section 4 begins (but before your 40 seconds preparation time), the announcer in the recording will give a brief description as well (e.g. 'You will hear a lecturer talking about the subject of deforestation') – this should add to your understanding of the recording and make following the context easier.

***Tip 5 – use the questions to show you where the recording may change direction***

Keeping track of where you are in the recording in relation to the questions is very important, so before the recording begins, try to identify where the focus of the questions changes. For example, if the first three questions are talking about one particular place, then the fourth question refers to a person, this should indicate a change in direction for the speaker and will let you know where you are in the recording.

***Tip 6 – always read one question ahead***

This is not specifically a tip for section 4 only – it is a good idea to know not just the next question, but the next two questions so if you miss one answer you are prepared for the next. It is particularly useful in Section 4 because if you lose your place in the first few questions, there is no midway pause for you to catch up!

***Tip 7 – be realistic about getting ALL the answers***

During the test you may find that you are waiting for an answer that you don't hear, but you do hear the answer the subsequent question. Because the questions in the listening test are all answered in order, this tells you that you have missed an answer. The main point here is not to panic or become stressed about that missed answer – simply move on with the recording. Remember that at the end of the test, you have 10 minutes to check your answers, so will have time then to make an educated guess for any missing answers.

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## Improving your result in the listening test

So you've practiced, you've listened to the radio, taken practice tests, you've even taken the IELTS test – often a number of times – and you're still not getting the result you're looking for in the IELTS listening test. What's going wrong?

Here's a handy **7-point checklist for IELTS listening** to work through when taking practice tests to help you identify your weakness and strengths.

### 1. Using the available time

Throughout the listening, there are breaks in the recording where the narrator will tell you 'You have now time to...'. Some of these breaks are to give you time to read the next set of questions, but there are also breaks given so you can check your answers from the previous part. Although checking your answers is important, remember that you have 10 minutes at the end of the test for this too, so spend the majority of the 'free' time you are given moving on to the next set of questions. The more prepared you are for what is coming, the better the result will be.



**DO: use the time given to check upcoming questions.**

**DON'T: spend too much reviewing answers you have already written down.**

## 2. Did you answer all of the questions?

Never leave an answer empty! In the 10 minutes given at the end of the listening test, put an answer that (a) seems logical (b) suits the requirements of the question – e.g. if the instructions say NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS, your answer isn't three words (c) very often is a word or words from the text. Remember that you do not lose points for giving the wrong answer, so there's no harm in taking an educated guess!

**DO: Put an answer for EVERY question**

**DON'T: leave an answer key blank**

## 3. Is there one particular question type that is causing more difficulty than others?

By looking at your answers, check if there is a particular question type that you seem to make more errors with more often than others. For example, did you know that most multiple choice questions will have at least part of each option mentioned? Knowing some tips and hints for each question type can definitely help.

**DO: identify question types that you find difficult, study any tips and hints about those question types, practice them repeatedly**

**DON'T: keep making the same errors with the same question type!**

## 4. For questions you answer incorrectly, do you understand why the given answers are correct and why your answer was incorrect?

Analysing your own work, focusing on the answers you got wrong, retracing why you put that answer and spending time looking at why the correct answer was correct will help you work a lot faster through the listening test. Taking practice tests is a good plan, but you need to spend at least the same amount of time working through the test after you know the answers. Reading through the transcript where available (let us know in the comments section if we're missing a transcript!) while listening to the recording again can help you improve your overall listening ability.

**DO:** spend as much time analysing your incorrect answers as you did taking the test, even if that means playing the recording or reading the transcript repeatedly until you can see the logic of the correct answer.

**DON'T:** simply move on to a new practice test hoping it will improve – without looking at your own mistakes, your result is likely to stay the same!

## **5. Maintain your focus by using active listening**

This is a tricky skill to master for IELTS as you are not allowed to make any noise, but 'active listening' means being a part of the conversation or monologue that you are listening to. Imagine you are there as part of the discussion – what are the speakers wearing? How old are they? Are they smiling or looking stern? By imagining yourself in the recording, it's a lot easier to keep focused and stay with the flow of the conversation. You can nod your head, smile in agreement or shake your head in disagreement – all of these actions have the ability to fool your brain into thinking that you are there, and natural good manners means you will keep listening rather than drifting off thinking about other things.

**DO:** Become an active (although silent) part of the conversation

**DON'T:** think of yourself in a room taking a test

## **6. Always be one question ahead**

So you're listening carefully for the answer to Question 2, which you're sure is a person's name, but you don't hear it. Then you find that you've been waiting for the name for so long that you've missed the next two questions! To avoid this, be prepared by knowing what the next question is too. If you hear the answer to Question 3 before you hear the answer to Question 2, then you'll just have to accept that you missed it and move on – losing one point is better than losing two or more because you lost your place!

**DO:** know what the next TWO questions are

**DON'T:** focus only on the next question

## **7. Make the question paper your own**

Once the test is finished, the test invigilator will collect all of the papers on your desk. However, your answer paper is separated from the questions and the markers will not see what you have written on the question paper, so make a mess of it! Underline key words, put large circles around qualifying words – even write synonyms for words you think might be rephrased.

**DO: Write on your question paper; underline / circle key words**

**DON'T: leave your question paper in a neat and tidy state!**

**We hope the 7 point checklist helps, but we're always open to new ideas, so if you have a technique you think would benefit other IELTS candidates!**

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