

TOP TIPS FOR IELTS

Listening



Top Tips for IELTS Listening

Official Cambridge IELTS Preparation

We provide you with the tools and resources you need to learn and show your skills to the world. Whether you're studying in a classroom, or at home, you can rely on us to help you get ready for test day.

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Introduction

Top Tips for IELTS Listening is an essential part of your revision for the IELTS test.

The tips are based on advice which IELTS materials writers have collected from many years' experience of involvement in the production of IELTS tests. Each section starts with a tip which is followed by an example taken from IELTS material and a clear explanation to help you understand exactly what it means.

How to use *Top Tips for IELTS Listening*

Top Tips for IELTS Listening is flexible. You can look at a different tip from a different section every day, or you can start at the beginning and work through until you get to the end of the tips. Whichever method you prefer, read the example and the explanation carefully to make sure that you understand each tip. When you have understood all the tips try the test on page 31.

Guide to symbols



This symbol introduces the tip which is at the top of the page. Each tip offers useful advice to help you find the right answer.



This is an extra piece of advice which is important for this particular part of the test.

Guide to IELTS Listening task types

Multiple choice You listen to a recording and answer some questions.

In Listening multiple-choice tasks, you usually have to choose one of three possible answers, A, B or C, for each question but in some multiple-choice tasks you have to choose several options from a longer list.

Sentence, summary, note, table, flow-chart completion You listen to a recording and fill in the missing information. Sometimes you complete the task by choosing words from a box rather than words in a recording. There is a limit to the number of words you can use, so pay careful attention to this when you are deciding what your answer should be.

Form completion You listen to a recording and fill in the missing information in a form. You must pay careful attention to the maximum number of words you can write for each answer.

Short-answer questions You listen to a recording and write short answers to questions. You must pay careful attention to the maximum number of words you can write for each answer.

Matching You listen to a recording and match each numbered item to one of a list of options (A, B, C etc.) according to the information you hear.

Plan, Map, Diagram labelling You listen to a recording and label the plan, map or diagram according to the information you hear.

How to revise for IELTS Listening

Even if you are a long way from an English-speaking country, there are a lot of things you can do these days to give you practice in the kinds of listening you will have to deal with in the IELTS Listening test. Here are some ideas:

- Go to the websites of universities in English-speaking countries – these often have links where you can listen to students or staff talking about the experience of studying in their institution.
- You can find TV and radio programmes on topics relevant to IELTS on the websites of national public broadcasting organisations like the BBC (www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer), PBS (www.pbs.org) and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (www.abc.net.au). You can access some of these wherever you are in the world, but some programmes are only available to people living in the country where the broadcaster is based.
- Find the tourist information website for a country that you would like to visit – such websites often now have video clips which provide useful listening materials.
- Many libraries and museums now also have websites with video materials which can provide useful listening practice.
- Search YouTube (www.youtube.com) for interesting recordings – use keywords like ‘lecture’ or ‘tutorial’, or ‘study skills’ or ‘lab reports’ and you should find plenty of clips to help you practise.

We hope these ideas will help you to make the most of your revision time. Above all, we hope that you enjoy your studies and wish you all the best for your exam.

Book your IELTS test at ielts.org/book-a-test



Top Tips for IELTS Listening test

What's in the Listening test?

Part 1  a conversation in an everyday social context between two people

Part 2  a monologue in an everyday social context

Part 3  a conversation in an educational or training context between two or more people

Part 4  a lecture or talk on a topic of general academic interest



1 mark for each correct answer



Approximately **40 minutes**
(including 10 minutes to copy your answers onto the answer sheet)

Each section has 10 questions.

The following question types are used in the Listening test:

- multiple choice
- matching
- plan, map, diagram labelling
- note completion
- form completion
- table completion
- sentence completion
- short-answer questions
- summary completion
- flow-chart completion

Any of these question types may appear in any section. Not all question types will appear in an individual Listening test.

Multiple choice



TIP: Don't choose an option just because you hear a word from it. Think about the whole meaning of what is said.

Example

Here is a question from a task about a field trip. Look at the first page for how to access the audio.



Q What did the students see on their walk in the mountains?

- A** a group of unusual animals
- B** some rare plants ✓
- C** an interesting geological feature

Track 01



TAPESCRIPT

TUTOR: How did you enjoy the field trip to Scotland?

STUDENT: Well, we had some fantastic walks. One day we walked along an amazing deserted beach. We must have walked for about fifteen miles and we saw a seal which was basking in the sunshine. It was there all by itself.

TUTOR: How lucky! They're such beautiful animals and it's quite unusual to see them there.

STUDENT: That's right. Another day we climbed the mountain behind the hut where we were staying. We were hoping to find some rare ferns that are supposed to grow there and nowhere else in Scotland. We'd just about given up hope when we found some at the bottom of a rocky slope. They have a number of very interesting features, for example ...

Explanation: The correct answer is **B**, but the mention of an unusual animal (a seal, although only one) might lead you to believe that **A** is correct. Similarly, the phrase 'interesting features' might tempt you to the answer **C**. In other words, you need to understand the recording as a whole rather than jump to a conclusion simply because you hear words from one of the options.

Multiple choice



TIP: Sometimes in a multiple-choice question you have to complete a half sentence with one of the options. If you change the first half sentence into a question it often makes it easier to choose the right answer.

Example

Here is a question from a task about a lecture on a scientific experiment.



The study was carried out in order to

- A** determine the health benefits of eating tomatoes.
- B** investigate whether tomato tablets could protect against heart disease. ✓
- C** establish the side-effects of a range of nutritional supplements.

Track 02



TAPESCRIPT

As we are all well aware, some nutritional supplements have some undesirable side-effects. The Robinson research that we're going to look at today seems to have determined quite conclusively that the tomato tablets under consideration have no significant side-effects at all. However, his main focus was on their health benefits. It's long been known that a diet rich in tomatoes seems to be very good for our hearts. However, until recently it has been impossible to preserve the health-giving, antioxidant properties of tomatoes in tablet form. Robinson wanted to find out whether these supplements would really have the same health benefits as a tomato-rich diet.

Explanation: In this case the question would be 'Why was the study carried out?' and **B** is the correct answer. **A** is incorrect because the speaker says that the health benefits of eating tomatoes have long been known – there was therefore no need for a further study into this. **C** is incorrect because it relates only to the side-effects of tomato tablets (and not a range of nutritional supplements) and also because the issue of side-effects was not the main focus of the study.