

IELTS Listening Module

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 Tuesday, 24 April 2007
 Last Updated Wednesday, 16 May 2007

The Listening module of the IELTS consists of a total of 40 questions.

There are four sections: Social Needs ‐ Conversation between two speakers
 Social Needs ‐ Speech by one speaker
 Educational or Training ‐ Conversation between up to four speakers
 Educational or Training ‐ Speech by one speaker
 Main Ideas

Important words and main ideas in conversation are ones that will come up again and again. Listen carefully for any word or words that come up repeatedly. What words come up in nearly every statement made? These words with high frequency are likely to be in the main idea of the conversation. For example, in a conversation about class size in the business department of a college, the term 'class size' is likely to appear in nearly every statement made by either speaker in the discussion.

Voice Changes

IELTS expects you to be able to recognize and interpret nuances of speech. Be on the alert for any changes in voice, which might register surprise, excitement, or another emotion. If a speaker is talking in a normal monotone voice and suddenly raises their voice to a high pitch, that is a huge clue that something critical is being stated. Listen for a speaker to change their voice and understand the meaning of what they are saying.

Example:

Man: Let's go to Wal-mart.

Woman: There's a Wal-mart in this small town?

If the woman's statement was higher pitched, indicating surprise and shock, then she probably did not expect there to be a Wal-mart in that town.

Specifics

Listen carefully for specific pieces of information. Adjectives are commonly asked about in IELTS questions. Try to remember any main adjectives that are mentioned. Pick out adjectives such as numbers, colors, or sizes.

Example:

Man: Let's go to the store and get some apples to make the pie.

Woman: How many do we need?

Man: We'll need five apples to make the pie.

A typical question might be about how many apples were needed.

Interpret

As you are listening to the conversation, put yourself in the person's shoes. Think about why someone would make a statement. You'll need to do more than just regurgitate the spoken words but also interpret them.

Example:

Woman: I think I'm sick with the flu.

Man: Why don't you go see the campus doctor?

Sample Question: Why did the man mention the campus doctor?

Answer: The campus doctor would be able to determine if the woman had the flu.

Find the Hidden Meaning

Look for the meaning behind a statement. When a speaker answers a question with a statement that doesn't immediately seem to answer the question, the response probably contained a hidden meaning that you will need to recognize and explain.

Man: Are you going to be ready for your presentation?

Woman: I've only got half of it finished and it's taken me five hours just to do this much. There's only an hour left before the presentation is due.

At first, the woman did not seem to answer the question the man presented. She responded with a statement that only seemed loosely related. Once you look deeper, then you can find the true meaning of what she said. If it took the woman five hours to do the first half of the presentation, then it would logically take her another five hours to do the second half. Since she only has one hour until her presentation is due, she would probably NOT be able to be ready for the presentation. So, while an answer was not immediately visible to the man's question, when you applied some

logic to her response, you could find the hidden meaning beneath.

Memory Enhancers

You have scratch paper provided to you while taking the test. This can be a huge help. While you listen, you are free to make notes. If different people are talking, use short hand to describe the main characteristics of each speaker. As you hear main adjectives that you think might be hard to remember, jot them down quickly in order that you can refer to them later during the question stage. Use your notes to help you remember those hard to remember facts. Don't end your test without making use of your scratch paper ally.

Example:

Speaker 1: I'm Bob Thomas, and I'm majoring in business development.

Speaker 2: I'm Matt Smith, and I'm majoring in chemical engineering.

Speaker 3: I'm John Douglass, and I'm majoring in speech therapy.

Your short hand might read:

Bob ‐ Bus.

Matt ‐ Chem. E

John ‐ Sp. Th.

On subsequent questions about the characters, you'll be able to remember these basic facts and answer more accurately. However, don't spend so much time making notes that you miss something on the tape. You won't be able to rewind it and catch what you miss. The idea is that the notes should only supplement your memory, not replace it.

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