



IELTS Listening Tips

Our Top 10



The **Listening exam** contains four parts, **40 questions** and lasts **30 minutes**. You are then given another **ten minutes at the end of the exam to copy your answers onto the answer sheet** provided.

Parts 1 and 2 focus on “**survival English**” – the kind of English you need on a **day-to-day basis** if you are living in an English speaking country e.g. asking getting directions or asking for information. Parts 3 and 4 concentrate more on the topics of **education or training**. You will hear a combination of dialogues between two or more people and monologues. It is common to hear **many different accents**, such as Australian, Canadian, British, etc.



Make sure you write something, even if you really don't know the answer. **Never leave a blank space!!** There are two good reasons for this – firstly, there is a chance you might get the question correct anyway! Secondly, if you leave a blank, it may confuse you and you could accidentally write your answers in the wrong boxes on the answer sheet...very, very bad move!!

Read the question very, very carefully before you listen. Try to predict what the answer might be. The time you are given to read the question is very important to you to start **getting predictions in your mind about possible answers**. When you listen to the recording, your ear will be tuned to listening for these answers and you'll get more answers correct.



Get your spelling right! Everything must be **spelled correctly**, or **you will lose marks**. Practice those tricky letters over and over. Do you know the difference between A, E and I? Can you hear the difference between G and J, or B and V? It sounds obvious, but many students don't get the band they need for listening because of small errors like this.

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Does the question give you any clues? For example, you might be required to fill in a table by listening for information. Are there any headings on the table? What do they say? If one heading says 'Adventure Sports', then it will give you a good idea about what to prepare yourself for.



Use your time well! You have a bit of time at the end of each section to check your answers. As soon as you have finished checking your answers, **move onto the next section** and start reading the questions to help prepare you for the next part of the text. **This will give you some valuable extra seconds.** It could make all the difference!

Don't write the answers down in too much detail. This is what the ten minutes at the end is for. Instead, you should **practice writing in short-hand form.** For example, if the word is *education*, then you can simply write 'edu'. Similarly, if the word is *competition*, you can write 'comp'. Again, this will give you **some valuable extra time to listen on and get more questions correct.** At the end, **write down the full answers clearly and correctly** in the ten minutes given to you.



One major problem that IELTS candidates complain about is that **sometimes they get lost whereabouts they are in the listening.** They might be listening for the answer to Question 8, when the tape is on Question 11. The result of this is disastrous, as you'll likely miss all the other questions, even though you have the ability to get them right.



This happens because sometimes two questions come very close **together.** Try to read two questions together, so you are always prepared if they answers follow each other closely.

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Whatever you do, **don't try to memorise the answers** before writing them down at the end. The information will come too quickly, and even if you have a great memory, you are **putting yourself in jeopardy** by doing this. You only have one chance to listen to the tape, so give yourself **the best possible chance of getting a high listening score!** Use **short-hand** to take a note of the answers.



Listen to audio books **in English**, or other high-quality audio recordings by native-speakers **trains your listening skills**. A good technique to develop your concentration is to listen to a sentence or so and then hit the 'pause' button, and then **repeat aloud what the speaker just said**. You don't have to get it exactly right word-for-word, but instead focus more on the **meaning and pronunciation**.



Progressively increase the amount of sentences you can listen to and repeat aloud to yourself. This is a great way to enhance your concentration that is vital for the Listening section in IELTS.

Stuart's #1 tip: BEWARE OF DISTRACTERS!!

These evil little monkeys will really cause you trouble if you are not careful! They are put in to trick you into writing down the wrong answer. I'll give you an example:

Question: Where are the Smith family flying to on holiday?

Tapescript: "Flight 3572 will be first flying to **Geneva** to re-fuel before flying on to **Moscow**."

The **correct answer** is **Moscow** and **the distracter** is **Geneva**. It is put in to try to throw you off from the correct answer. You can expect to have quite a few distracters in the listening exam. Don't write your answer too quickly – be aware and stay focused!



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