

The Listening Test

A 30-minute test of your understanding of spoken English

How many sections does the listening test have?

There are four sections in the listening test. Each section has 10 questions, making a total of 40 questions. The sections become progressively harder. The answers to the questions come in the same order as the information on the recording.

Section 1 (3–4 minutes)

A conversation between two speakers on an everyday, social topic.

Section 2 (3–4 minutes)

A talk by one speaker on a general topic.

Section 3 (3–4 minutes)

A discussion between two to four speakers on a topic related to education.

Section 4 (3–4 minutes)

A lecture or talk by one speaker on an academic or study-related topic.

The whole test lasts about 30 minutes, including the instructions, your reading and listening time, and the time allowed for transferring your answers from the question paper to an answer sheet. The instructions are included on the recording.



ON THE DAY

- The listening test is the first part of the IELTS test.
- Arrive at the test room in plenty of time.
- Take a pencil and rubber with you.
- You write your answers on the question paper as you listen. You can use abbreviations at this stage if you want to.
- You have to transfer your answers to an answer sheet after the test. The recording gives you time to do this.
- You cannot take any books into the test room.

What is the listening test like?



A CD player or overhead sound system is used to play the test. Once the recording has started, you cannot enter or leave the room, or stop or interrupt the test.

There may be a lot of people in the room, so be prepared for this.

You hear the IELTS listening recording only ONCE, so you need to keep up with the questions and make good use of the words on the question paper to help you do this.

Where do I write my final answers?

You transfer your answers carefully from the question paper to an answer sheet at the end of the test.



Will I hear different accents?

Yes, but they will always be clear and easy to understand. You will not hear any grammatical mistakes.

What sort of questions will I get?

There are different question types in the listening test (see pages 8 and 9) and *you can get any mix of question types in any section of the test*. Often you have to choose the correct letter or write up to three words.

Will I get every question type in the test?

No. Each section of the test usually contains two or three question types, so in one complete listening test you could get a maximum of 12 different question types (usually you will get about eight or nine). Sometimes the same question type occurs in more than one section of the test. Remember, you may get a mix of the listening question types in any section of the test.

Why are there different listening situations and question types?

IELTS tests a range of listening skills that you need to live, work or study in an English-speaking environment. This means that you need to be able to understand different types of spoken English in a range of formal and informal contexts.

How can I make best use of the reading time?

You get time to read the questions in each section before you listen. Use this time to work out the topic, underline or highlight key words and decide what sort of information and answers you need to listen for.

What are key words?

Key words carry a lot of information. They are usually words such as nouns or verbs that help you understand the questions.

What general approach should I take to the listening test?

Once the recording begins, use the words on the question paper to help you keep your place. There is an example at the start of the test and the first three sections are divided into two parts to help you follow the conversation, discussion or talk. Write your answers on the question paper as you listen.

How can I improve my score in the listening test?

You can help to improve your score by making sure that you know what each question type tests and by having a general approach for each set of questions. The following pages, divided into four sections, provide you with an **Action Plan** for each set of questions.

What else can I do to prepare for the listening test?

You should listen to spoken English as often as possible, e.g. English-language radio, TV and other forms of media – even music.

How is the listening test marked?

There is one mark per question and this makes a total of 40 marks. Your mark is converted into a Band Score of between 1 and 9. You can get half bands in the listening test, e.g. 6.5.

Is correct spelling important?

Spelling should be correct and handwriting must be clear. Both British and American spellings are acceptable, e.g. *programme/program, colour/color*, but you should not use abbreviations. Numbers can be written as words or figures.

Listening

Overview of the Listening Question Types

Question type	Action	Key points	Page
Pick from a list	You pick the correct answers from a list of options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write only the correct letters A, B, C, etc. • Answers may be worth one mark or more. • Answers can be written in any order. 	10
Form filling	You complete the gaps in the form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write up to three words and/or a number. • Check spelling. 	12
Labelling a map or plan	You identify places on the map or plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write up to three words and/or a number. • If there is a box of answers to choose from, write the correct letter A, B, C, etc. 	13
Sentence/summary completion	You complete the gaps in the sentences or summary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write up to three words and/or a number. • Check spelling. • Check grammar of sentence. 	15
Table completion	You complete the table.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write up to three words and/or a number. • Check spelling. 	17
Short answer questions	You answer the questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write up to three words and/or a number. • Answers may be worth one mark or more. • Check spelling. 	18

Overview of the Listening Question Types

Question type	Action	Key points	Page
Multiple choice	You choose the correct letter A, B or C.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write only the correct letters A, B or C. 	22
Matching	You match things together, e.g. places and people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write only the correct letters A, B, C, etc. • Options may be used more than once. 	23
Labelling a diagram	You label the parts on a diagram.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write up to three words and/or a number. • If there is a box of answers to choose from, write the correct letter A, B, C, etc. 	24
Note completion	You complete the notes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write up to three words and/or a number. 	26
Flow chart completion	You complete the flow chart.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write up to three words and/or a number. • If there is a box of answers to choose from, write the correct letter A, B, C, etc. 	28
Classification	You decide which category some words belong to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write only the correct letters A, B, C, etc. 	29

Listening Section 1

These are the Question Types you will practise here
 PICK FROM A LIST
 FORM FILLING
 LABELLING A MAP OR PLAN

Section 1	Conversation (two speakers)	Social/survival	e.g. booking a hotel
Section 2	Talk by one speaker	General	e.g. radio talk
Section 3	Discussion (two to four speakers)	Educational	e.g. tutorial discussion
Section 4	Talk or lecture by one speaker	Course-related	e.g. university lecture

What is Section 1 like?

You will hear a conversation based on an everyday social/survival situation. Section 1 will help you get used to the listening exercises and test your understanding of simple facts, including names and numbers. There are always two speakers in Section 1. Here is an example of an extract from Section 1.



- 1 Tick the situations that you think belong to Section 1.
- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| a | arranging to meet a friend | e | a discussion on the value of TV |
| b | a recorded talk at a museum | f | making a dental appointment |
| c | booking a holiday | g | a lecture on river pollution |
| d | negotiating an essay extension | h | ordering a product |

Question Types and Practice Tasks



PICK FROM A LIST

You pick the correct answers from a list of options. There are usually two or three answers to pick from about six options. The options are labelled A, B, C, etc.

What does pick from a list test?

You have to pick out the correct facts from the recording and match these to words in the options. You may not hear the exact words that you read in the options, so you will be listening for a word or words with a similar meaning.

- 2 Match the words or phrases in Box A with words or phrases of a similar meaning in Box B.

A

identification study English
 fly building painting
 headgear vehicle meal
 bag thunderstorm
 winter sports

B

helmet suitcase passport
 car house wet weather
 learn a language
 go by plane lunch
 skiing picture

How should I write my answers?

You only need to write the correct letters (A, B, C, etc.) on an answer sheet. You can write these in any order. Sometimes a question is worth one mark (for finding all the answers) and sometimes the question has one mark for each answer. This affects how you write your answers on the answer sheet.

ACTION PLAN

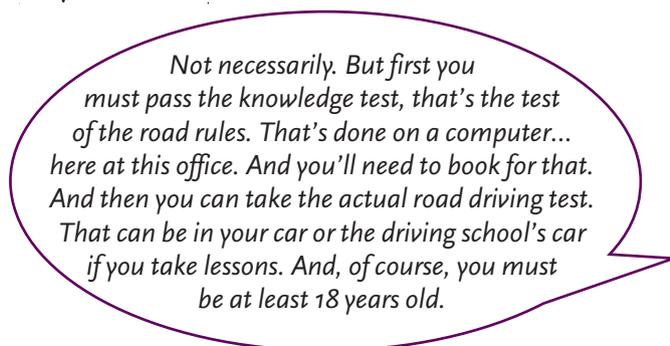
- ▶ Read the question carefully and note how many options you must pick.
- ▶ Underline or highlight the key words in the main question.
- ▶ Read the list of options and underline or highlight any key words.
- ▶ Re-phrase these options in your own words (if possible).
- ▶ As you listen, choose the correct answers.

NOW TRY THE TASK

Read the telephone conversation in the speech bubbles below and answer the questions.



Is that the Sydney Motor Registry? I'd like some information about taking a driving test. Do I need my own car, for instance?



Not necessarily. But first you must pass the knowledge test, that's the test of the road rules. That's done on a computer... here at this office. And you'll need to book for that. And then you can take the actual road driving test. That can be in your car or the driving school's car if you take lessons. And, of course, you must be at least 18 years old.

Questions 3–4

Choose **TWO** letters A–E.

- ← • Which **TWO** things must the girl do before she can take the road driving test?

- A have her own car
- B have her own computer
- C pass the road rules test
- D book driving lessons
- E reach the age of 18

Note that this question is worth two marks because you have to understand quite a long conversation to get both answers.

Listening



FORM FILLING

You complete the gaps in the form using up to three words and/or a number. Some of the information may already be completed to help you.

What does form filling test?

Like all completion tasks, form filling tests your ability to predict what is missing in the gaps. You need to listen for important details like names, dates, places, times, etc. Sometimes these are spelt out. If they are not, you still need to try to spell the answers correctly. Make sure you can match spoken numbers to written numbers.

- 5 Say these times in two different ways, e.g. *two ten / ten past two in the afternoon.*
 2.10 pm 7.50 am 6.45 am 10.15 am 1.00 am 13.00 hrs
- 6 Say these dates in two different ways, e.g. *the first of February / February the first.*
 1st February 21st November 24 March December 22nd August 18
- 7 Look at the form below and decide what type of information you would need to listen for. Make a note in the column on the right.

Casualty Department	Patient's admission details	Type of information
Family name	<i>Mitchell</i>	<i>a name</i>
Given name	a
Address	<i>26 Lake Street, Newport</i>	<i>an address</i>
Date of birth	b
Name of doctor	c
Reason for admission	d

How should I write my answers?

Write the correct words and/or numbers on the answer sheet. Use no more words than you are told to use and make sure you spell them correctly. You can write numbers in words or figures.

ACTION PLAN

- ▶ Read the instructions carefully to see how many words you can write.
- ▶ Look at the form and the information and decide what it is about.
- ▶ Note the order of the questions.
- ▶ Look at the gaps and any headings and decide what type of information is required.
- ▶ Underline or highlight the key words around each gap and use these to help you listen for the answer.
- ▶ As you listen, complete the form.

NOW TRY THE TASK

(((Listen to Extract 1. (CD Track 1)

Questions 8–11

Complete the form below.

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

Motor Registry – Telephone messages	
Caller's name	8
Date of birth	9
Telephone	10 0412.....
Type of car	11

RECORDING SCRIPT PAGE 117



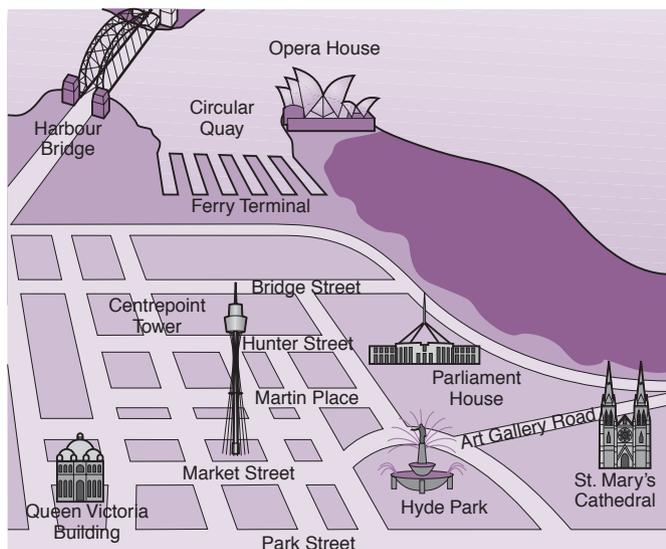
LABELLING A MAP OR PLAN

You identify places on the map or plan, using words and/or a number from a box of options. The parts to be labelled will have an arrow and the question number beside them.

Alternatively, places may already be identified on the map with letters. You match these letters to the information in the numbered questions.

What does labelling a map or plan test?

This type of question tests your ability to understand words and expressions of place and location. You must answer with information from the recording.



To practise using a map, look at the picture and answer the questions.

- 12 What is the building in the bottom left-hand corner?
- 13 Where on the map is St. Mary's Cathedral?
- 14 Name two streets that are parallel to Park Street.
- 15 What structure is at the top of the map in the middle?

How should I write my answers?

If you have a box of options, you only need to write the correct letter A, B, C, etc. Otherwise you write the words you hear on the recording. Only use the number of words you are told to use and remember to spell them correctly.

Listening

ACTION PLAN

- ▶ Look at the map or plan to form a general idea of the content.
- ▶ Look at the parts of the map or plan you need to label and decide what kinds of words are needed.
- ▶ Use the words already provided in the map or plan to guide your listening.
- ▶ When you listen, pay particular attention to expressions of location such as *in the middle*, *on the corner*, *next to*, *above/below*, *straight ahead*, etc. as the answer may depend on your understanding these words.
- ▶ As you listen, choose the correct answers.

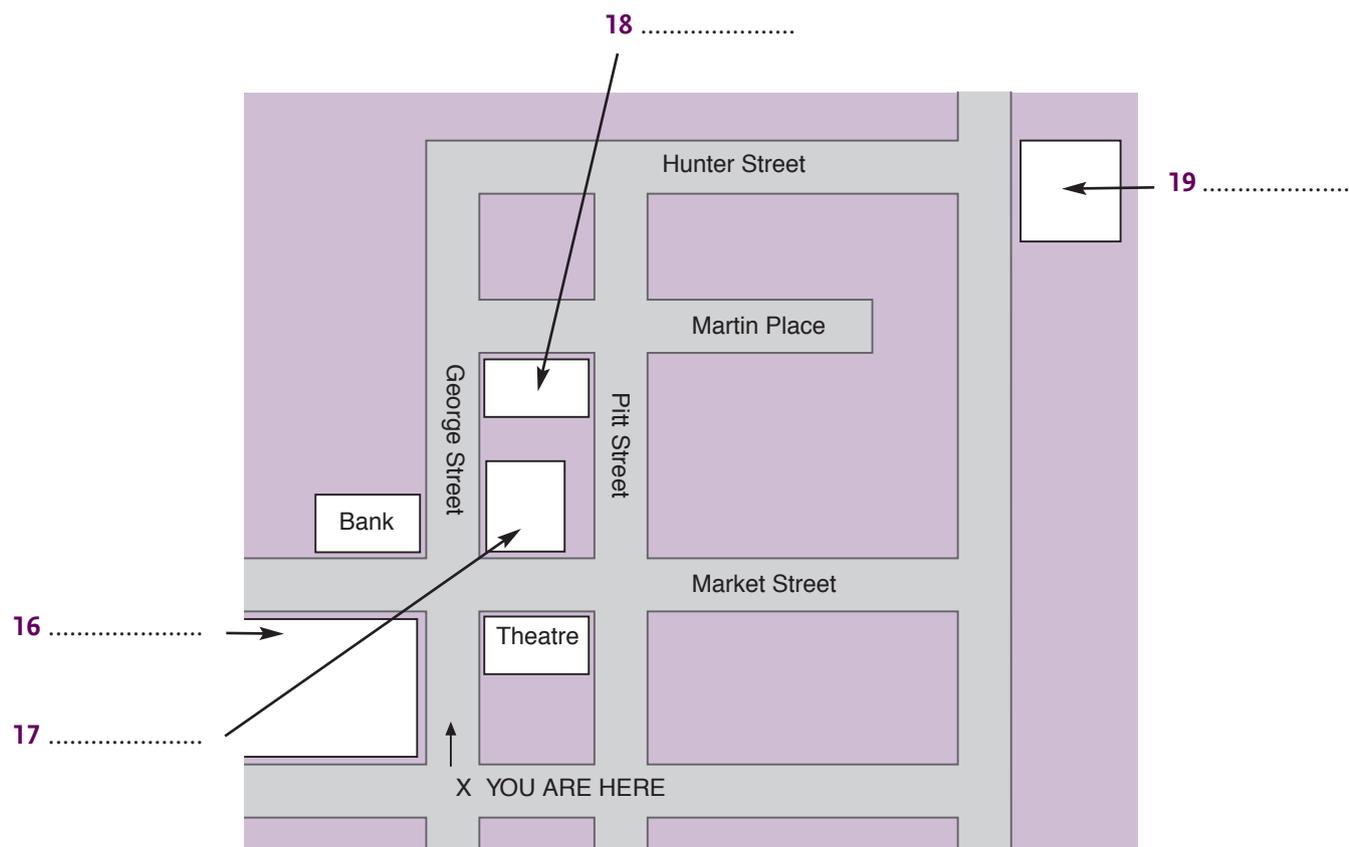
NOW TRY THE TASK

((▶ Listen to Extract 2. (CD Track 2)

Questions 16–19

Label the street plan below.

Write **NO MORE THAN THREE** words for each answer.



RECORDING SCRIPT PAGE 117

ANSWERS PAGE 108

KEY PRACTICE TEST PAGE 92