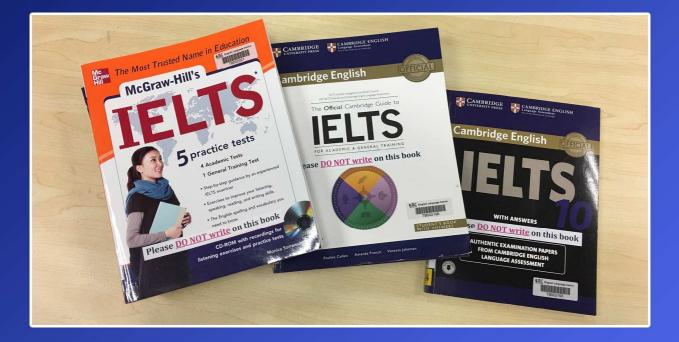
Chan Feng Men-ling Chan Shuk-lin Language Centre

# How to prepare for IELTS Listening





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Make sure you have a copy of the **How to prepare for IELTS – FAQs booklet** in addition to this booklet.

# **Details of the Listening Test**

#### **Procedure of the test**

The listening module is the **first test** you do on the test day.

The tape is only **played once**.

You are given a question paper and an answer sheet. While you listen you write your answers on the **question paper**.

When the tape stops you are given **10 minutes** to **transfer** your answers to the **answer sheet**.

The test takes about **30 minutes**.

#### Structure of the test

The first **two sections** are concerned with **social needs**.

#### Section 1

In this section you will hear an informal or semi-informal **conversation between two people**. For example, you might hear a discussion about what's on television; or you might hear someone making a complaint about their rented flat or a faulty product, or someone asking for information or making a booking.

#### Section 2

In this section you will hear a **monologue** in a similar context to section 1. For example you could hear someone talking about the restaurants in a town or describing the rules or regulations in a hostel or the procedure you need to follow in order to make a complaint.

The **last two sections** are concerned with situations related to **educational or training contexts**.

#### Section 3

In this section you will hear a **conversation** with up to **four speakers**. It will be more formal than Section 1. The speakers could be students discussing a lecture or planning something for class or talking to someone in authority at a college or university.

#### Section 4

In this section you will hear a **monologue** in the form of a **lecture or talk**. It will also be more formal.

All the topics will be of general interest and not biased towards students of particular disciplines.

#### **Test instructions**

At the **beginning** of **each section** the speaker will give a **brief introduction** to the situation. For example,

You are now going to listen to a conversation in a language school. Paulo is registering for a course and talking to a lady at the student services counter.

You will then be **given instructions**:

Read questions 1 to 6. As you listen to the tape, write the correct answer in the spaces provided.

#### You are then **told to look** at the **questions**:

First you have some time to look at the questions 1 to 6.

The tape will be **silent for about 30 seconds**. Then the speaker will repeat which questions you have to answer:

Now listen and answer questions 1 to 6.

#### **Question types\***

The types of tasks are:

- 1. Multiple Choice
- 2. Short-answer questions
- 3.Sentence completion
- 4.Notes/table/summary flow-chart/diagram completion
- 5. Labelling a diagram which has numbered parts
- 6.Classification

There are **40 questions** in total and about **10 questions in each** section and at least two types of questions in each section. Both the texts and the tasks increase in difficulty as the test progresses.

#### Marking

You are given a mark for each of the 40 questions and your result is converted into a score which corresponds to one of the bands from 1-9 which you will see on your result sheet. You can be awarded a whole or a half band in the listening section. *(See IELTS Handbook: p.20 or Focus on IELTS: p.7 for details.)* 

# The Question Types

#### 1. Multiple Choice

#### The questions

There are **three types** of multiple choice questions in the IELTS listening exam.

- 1. Where there is **one possible answer**. (These are sometimes picture multiple choice.)
- 2. Where there are multiple answers for only one mark.
- 3. Where there are multiple answers and one mark for each.

For these questions you may be given the **start of a sentence** which you have **to complete** with one out of four or more choices. **Or** you may be presented with a **question** and asked to **find two, three or four items** in a list of answers.

Look at the examples below.

#### Type 1

Questions 1 and 2	
Circle the correct letters A-C.	
<ol> <li>When did John finish the book?</li> <li>A on the way to Japan</li> <li>B in Japan</li> <li>C on his way back from Japan.</li> </ol>	<ul><li>2 What did John think about the book?</li><li>A He thought it was funny.</li><li>B He couldn't understand it.</li><li>C He didn't enjoy it.</li></ul>

#### Type 2

Questions 3 and 4	
Choose <b>TWO</b> letters <b>A-E</b> .	
<ul><li>3 John likes to read novels</li><li>A on his way to work</li><li>B during his lunch break</li><li>C on his way home from work.</li><li>D after dinner.</li><li>E when he goes to bed.</li></ul>	<ul> <li>4 John would like the library</li> <li>A to open on Sundays.</li> <li>B to have more magazines and journals.</li> <li>C to employ more staff.</li> <li>D to have exhibitions.</li> <li>E to do some renovations.</li> </ul>

#### Туре З

Questions 5-7
Circle <b>THREE</b> letters <b>A-F</b> .
<ul> <li>What types of books does John like to read?</li> <li>A Science fiction</li> <li>B Thrillers</li> <li>C Adventure</li> <li>D Romance</li> <li>E War</li> <li>F Biographies</li> </ul>

Also note that you may be asked to circle **ONE, TWO, THREE or FOUR** letters.

#### How to do the multiple choice questions

• **Read** the **instructions carefully** and check how many letters you need to circle.

• Skim the questions and the answer choices quickly before the recording starts and during the 30 seconds given. As you do this,

- underline the key words the words that give you the most information, such as the 'wh-' words and nouns.
- try to work out what you are going to hear from the vocabulary of the questions and/or pictures.
- **translate** any **pictures** into words and look for details that are different in the options.
- decide what kind of information you need to listen out for.
- Listen to the introduction given carefully.

• **Answer** the questions **as you listen**. Circle the letters. The information will be given in the same order as the questions, although it might be expressed differently. Be prepared **not** to hear the first or even second answer choices mentioned.

• Remember to **make notes** beside the question if you are not sure of the answer, so you can go back later.

• Don't leave any questions unanswered.

#### Remember

to listen for people correcting themselves when speaking. They may discuss one of the answer choices and then reject it.
 to eliminate unlikely answers.

## Practice

#### Books in the SAC

Do as many of the following multiple choice questions as you can:

Insight into IELTS: p.15, pp.17-18, p.21, p.27 Focus on IELTS: p.19, p.65, pp.115-116, p.163, p.170, p.171 IELTS Preparation & Practice (Listening & Speaking): pp.3-4, pp.15-21 Focusing on IELTS: pp.5-7 Helpful Hints for IELTS: pp.86-88, pp.91-92, pp.107-108 IELTS Preparation and Practice Speaking and listening: p.8-9, p.15-16, p.23, p.37, p.42, p.43, p.49, p.52 IELTS Foundation: p.7, p.10, p.11, p.12, p.15 Focus on IELTS Academic Practice Tests: p.5, p.6, p.7, p.8, p.11, p.12, p.18, p.21, p. Test Builder: p 9, p.10, p.12, p.38, p.39, p.41, p.43, p.71, p.72, p.74, p.77, p.101, p.102, p.105, p.108, p.109 IELTS to Success: pp9-11, p.45, p.46, p.47, p.48, p.50, p.52, p.53, p.55, p.56, p.57, p.58, p.60, p.62, p.63 Action Plan For IELTS: p.92, p.94, p.95 Academic Practice Tests:pp.5-8, p.11, p.12, p.15, p.16, p.18, p.21, p.22, p.23 Cambridge IELTS 1: pp.12-13, p.16, pp.18-19, p.36, p.38, pp.75-76 Cambridge IELTS 2: pp.9-10, pp.54-56, pp.60-61, p.79, p.81 Cambridge IELTS 3: p.10, p.12, p.34, p.59, p.79 Cambridge IELTS 4: p.14, p.34, p.36-38, p.58-59, p.61-62, p.64, p.83, p.85, p.87 Cambridge IELTS 5: p.11, p.13, p.33, p.34, p.56, p.58, p.81, p.82, p.83, p.84 Cambridge IELTS 6: p.14, p.17, p.36, p.38, p.57, p.61, p.79, p.82, p.83 Cambridge IELTS 7: p.12, p.13, p.15, p.36, p.37, p.38, p.58, p.62, p.63, p.83, p.85, p.87

# 2. Short answer questions

## The questions

These questions require general information or specific details which you will find by listening to the text.

There are **two types** of short answer questions in the IELTS listening exam.

Type 1. Questions

Type 2. Lists

These questions will always tell you to write your answers in **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS**. So you can answer with one word, two words or three words but no more.

Also note that the **answers** should **not require a hyphenated word** (e.g. non-smoker) **or** a **contraction** (e.g. They've).

If the answer requires a **number**, you can write it as a **numeral** (e.g. 6) or a **word** (e.g. six) or a **combination** of a numeral and a word (e.g. 6 million).

Look at the examples below.

Questions 1 and 2
Write NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS or A NUMBER for each answer.
1 On which day of the week is the museum closed?
2 How old is the museum?

#### Type 2

Questions 3 - 5

List **THREE** things which the museum has recently bought.

Write NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS for each answer.

3 .....

4 .....

5 .....

#### How to do short answer questions

• Read the instructions carefully.

• **Skim** the **questions quickly** before the recording starts and during the 30 seconds given. As you do this,

- **\* underline** the **key words**.
- try to work out what you are going to hear.

- decide what you need to listen out for.
- Iook out for question words like 'where' and 'who' which indicate you should listen for specific things like places and people.
- Listen to the introduction given carefully.

• **Answer** the questions **as you listen**. The answers will be given in the same order as the questions although they may be expressed differently.

- You may use your own words.
- Make notes beside the question if you are not sure of the answer.

#### Remember

- if you don't know the meaning of any of the words in the questions look at the other questions. They might have some associated vocabulary in them to help you guess the meaning.
- the answer could be one word, two words or three words but not four or more.
- □ if you think you need more than three words your answer is probably incorrect.

#### Practice Books in the SAC

Do as many of the following short answer questions as you can:

Focus on IELTS: p.36, p.66, p.114, p.169 IELTS Preparation & Practice (L&S): p.17, p.43, p.46, p.50 IELTS Foundation: p.13, p.15 IELTS Academic Practice Tests: p.7, p.10, p.12, p.15, p.16 Test Builder:p.39, p.41, p.70, .71, p.72, p.106 IELTS to Success: p.50, p.52, p.56, p.61, p.63 Action Plan for IELTS: p.93 Academic Practice Tests: p.7, p.10 Cambridge IELTS 2: p.8, p.11, p.32, p.78 Cambridge IELTS 3: p.9, p.81 Cambridge IELTS 5: p.34 Cambridge IELTS 6: p.15, p.62, p.81 Cambridge IELTS 7: p.35, \* Helpful Hints for IELTS: p.90, p.111 \* recommended

#### 3. Sentence completion questions The Questions

These questions require you to **complete the end of a sentence or insert a word or phrase** in the middle of a sentence or one sentence may require a word in the middle and a word at the end. The sentences **may be** in **a table**.

They are similar to the short answer questions in that they will always tell you to write your answers in **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS**. So you can answer with one word, two words or three words but no more.

As with short answer questions:

Also note that the answers **should not require** a **hyphenated word** (e.g. non-smoking) or a contraction (e.g. They've).

If the answer requires a **number**, you can write it as a **numeral** (e.g. 6) or a **word** (e.g. six) or a **combination** of a numeral and a word (e.g. 6 million).

Look at the example below.

#### How to do sentence completion questions

- **Read** the **instructions carefully**.
- **Read** the **sentences carefully** before the recording starts and during the 30 seconds given. As you do this,
  - **\* underline** the **key words**.
  - try to work out what you are going to hear.
  - decide what you need to listen out for.

- **\* anticipate grammatical form** as well as vocabulary.
- if the sentences are part of a table, check whether they are horizontal or vertical.
- **Listen** to the **introduction** given carefully.

• **Answer** the **questions as you listen**. The information will be given in the same order as the questions, although it may be expressed differently. You may use your own words.

- Make sure your sentences are **grammatically correct**.
- Make notes beside the question if you are not sure of the answer.

#### Remember

the answer could be one word, two words or three words but not four or more.if you think you need more than three words your answer is probably incorrect.

#### Practice Books in the SAC

Do the following sentence completion questions:

Focus on IELTS: p.66, p.98, p.171 IELTS Foundation: p.9, p.14, p.17, p.18 IELTS Academic Practice Tests: p.19, p.23 Test Builder: p.10, p.39, p.78, p.102, p.106 IELTS to Success: p.49, p.55 Action Plan for IELTS: p.93 Academic Practice Tests: p.12, p.19, p.22 Cambridge IELTS 2: p.36, p.76 Cambridge IELTS 4: p.12, p.35, p.58 Cambridge IELTS 5: p.11, p.15, p.60, p.79 Cambridge IELTS 6: p.11, p.35, p.39, p.58 p.59, p.62, p.84 Cambridge IELTS 7: p.15, p.17, p.85 \*Hints p.110 \* recommended

# 4. Notes/table/form/summary/flow chart/diagram completion questions

The Questions

These questions ask for specific information.

There are **two types** of these completion questions in the IELTS exam. Type 1. With a **selection of possible answers**.

#### Type 2. Without a choice of possible answers.

These questions require you to:

- ➢ insert a word or phrase in the middle of a sentence.
- insert a word in the middle and another word at the end of a sentence.
- ➤ write words or phrases that are not in sentences.
- > write a letter that represents a word or phrase.

Type 2 questions are similar to the short answer questions in that they will tell you to write your answers in **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS**. So you can answer with one word, two words or three words but no more.

As with short answer questions also note that the answers **should not require a hyphenated word** (e.g. non-smoker) **or** a **contraction** (e.g. *They've*). If the answer requires a **number**, you can write it as a **numeral** (e.g. 6) or a **word** (e.g. six) or a **combination** (e.g. 6 million).

Look at the examples below.

#### Type 1

#### Questions 1 -5

*Complete the table below using the words from the box. Write the appropriate letters A-G against Questions 1-5.* 

Breed	Facts
Pug	(1)
Scottish Terrier	(2)
Shih Tzu	(3)
Great Dane	(4)
Greyhound	(5)
<ul> <li>A watchdog in C</li> <li>B bred to chase for</li> <li>C status symbol</li> <li>D police dog</li> <li>E bred to guard s</li> <li>F appealed to Vio</li> <li>G came from the second seco</li></ul>	heep ctorians

#### Type 2

Questions 6 -8

Complete the notes below. Write **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS or A NUMBER** for each answer.

SOUTH DOWNS DOG SHOW

Date: (6) .....

Time: (7) ..... to .....

Place: (8) .....

#### How to do these completion questions

- Read the instructions carefully.
- Look at the table or form etc carefully before the recording starts and during the 30 seconds given. As you do this,
  - **\* examine** any **headings or subheadings**.
  - try to work out what you are going to hear.

- decide what you need to listen out for.
- **\*** anticipate grammatical form as well as vocabulary.
- if a box of answers is given, see if you can guess any of the matches & eliminate unlikely answers.
- Listen to the introduction given carefully.
- Answer the questions as you listen.
- Make notes beside the question if you are not sure of the answer.

#### Remember

- □ if there is a box of answers, there will be at least two you don't need.
- □ if there is no box, the answer could be one word, two words or three words but not four or more.
- □ if you think you need more than three words your answer is probably incorrect.
- there may be alternative rubrics for these completion questions e.g. 'complete the notice' or 'complete the explanation' or 'complete the news report'.

#### Practice

#### **Books in the SAC**

Do the following completion questions, examining the differences between them as you do them:

Focus on IELTS: p.66, p.98 notes: p.20, p.50, p52, p.82, p97, p.98, p.130, p.169, p.172 table: p.36, p.38, p.133, p.146, p.161, p.163, p.172 form: p.65, p.114 flow chart: p.146, p.163 diagram: p.170

Cambridge IELTS 2: form: p.7, p.31, notes: p.9, p.36, p.58, table: p.11, p.12, p.13, p.30, p.34, p.37, p.58

Cambridge IELTS 3: form: p.57, p.76 notes: p.8, p.11, p.33, p.35, 36, p.37, p.54, p.80 table: p.9, p.30, p.32, p.55, p.58, p.78 map: p.31, p.56, p.76 diagram: p.36

Cambridge IELTS 4: notes: p.10, p.17, p.38, p.40, p.57, p.60, p.63, p.81, p.86 table: p.p.11, p.39, p.63, p.84 Cambridge IELTS 5: notes: p.10, p.12, p.32, pp.55-56 table: p.12, p.35, pp.36-37, p.59, p.61, p.79, p.80 summary: p.p.14, p.15 Cambridge IELTS 6: notes: p.10, p.33, pp.55-56, p.60, p.78 table: p.11, p.13, p.14, p.16, p.34, p.35, p.37, p.80 Cambridge IELTS 7: notes: p.10, p.14, p.16, p.56, p.60, p.64, p.88 table: p.35, p.37, p.39, p.86 form: p.11, 33, p.57, p.59, p.81 diagram: p.61 plan: p.84 map: p.34 Insight into IELTS: table: p.11, p.27 form: p.12 notes: p.18, p.24, p.26 **IELTS** Preparation & Practice (L&S): summary: p.16, p.25, p.44, p.50 table: p17, p.22, p.42, p.46, p.48 form: p.37, p.41 notes: p.40, p.51 **IELTS Academic Practice Tests:** summary: p.18, p.19, p.25 table: p.6, p.25 notes: p.5, p.13, p.15, p.17, p.21, p.25 flow chart:p.11 diagram: p.10 **IELTS Foundation:** summary: p.8, p.11, p.12

table: p.10, p.13, p.15 diagram: p.16 notes: p.8, p.10, p.12 flowchart: p.17, p.18 test Builder: table: p.40, p.41, p.44, p.77, p.109 notes: p.12, p.13 **IELTS to Success:** table: p.12, p.45, p.49, p.50, p.53, p.54, p.55, p.59, p.61 form: p.11, p.46, p.47 notes: p.48, p.54, p.61 Action Plan for IELTS: diagram: p.94 graph: p.94 form: p.92 notes: p.95 flowchart: p.95

Helpful Hints for IELTS: \*summary: p.89, p.110 table: p.90 \* recommended

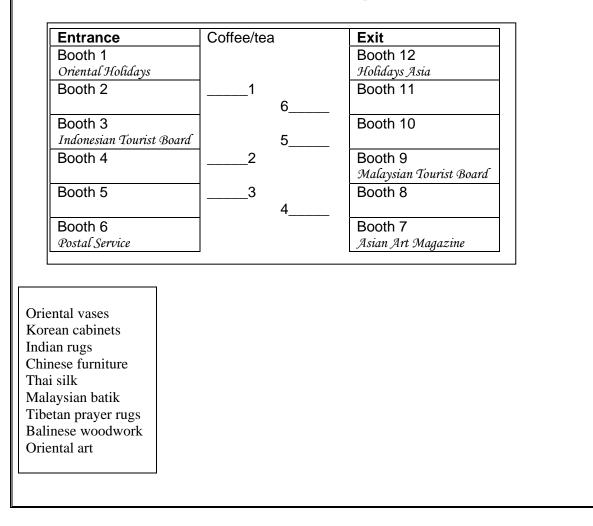
#### 5. Labelling a diagram which has numbered parts The questions

You will be given a diagram and asked to **label it with labels given** in the listening text. You will **usually** be **given** a **box of words** or phrases from which to select the labels.

Look at the example on the next page.

#### Questions 1 - 6

Label the booths at the exhibition. Choose your answers from the box and write them next to questions 1-6.



#### How to do labelling the diagram questions

• **Read** the **instructions carefully**. They will state how many words you should use if there is not a box of labels provided. You could be asked to write one word only.

• **Study** the **diagram**. You may be able to **predict** one or two **answers** or associated vocabulary that you may hear connected to a particular label.

• Check whether the **labels** are numbered in a **clockwise or anticlockwise** direction. The information will be given in the same order as the numbers on the diagram.

• Write down or **select** the **labels as you listen**. Use the words you hear, not your own.

• Remember to **listen carefully** when **words** are **spelt out**. Write them down even if you don't know where they go.

• Use the **information** given **on** the **diagram** to help you if you get lost.

#### Practice Books in the SAC

Do the following labeling the diagram questions:

Cambridge IELTS 1: p.59 Cambridge IELTS 3: p.31, p.56 Cambridge IELTS 4: p.13 Cambridge IELTS 6: p.58 IELTS Preparation and Practice (L&S) p.12, p.13, p.39,p.47 Test Builder: p.104 Academic Practice tests: p.10 Insight into IELTS: p.24 Focus on IELTS: p.36, p.66, p.81\*, p.82, p.149

#### 6. Classification questions The Questions

These questions ask you to **classify information** given in the listening text. Classifications are often according to the speaker's opinion or according to a period of time or place.

You will either be asked to **write a letter** which represents one of the classifications beside each item in a list of statements. Or you could be asked to **circle a letter in a table or tick a column in a table**.

Look at the examples on the next page.

Questions 1 -4	
Write the appropriate letters A-C against questions 1-4.	
Where are the following facilities?	
<ul> <li>A in Portsmede</li> <li>B in Smalltown</li> <li>C in Farmton</li> </ul>	
Example     hairdressers	
1 ice rink2 cinema3 French restaurant4 clinic	OP

#### Questions 1 -4

Choose the correct letters A-C.

	In	In	In Farnton
	Portsmede	Smalltown	С
	Α	В	
Example <i>hairdressers</i>	Α	В	С
1 ice rink	Α	В	С
2 cinema	Α	В	С
3 French restaurant	Α	В	С
4 clinic	Α	В	С

#### How to do these classification questions

• Read the instructions carefully.

• Make sure you know **how many classifications** there are and **what letters** you have **to use**.

• **Read the classifications carefully** and make sure you know which letter represents each one.

• **Read the statements/phrases or words** beside the question numbers and make yourself as familiar with them as possible. You will hear them all mentioned but they may be expressed differently in the text.

• **Underline the key words** in both the classifications and the question statements.

• Listen out for the words you have underlined.

• **Don't leave any** statements without a letter.

#### Practice Books in the SAC

Do the following classification questions.

Focus on IELTS: p.149 Cambridge IELTS 2: p.35, p.57, p.59, p.82 Cambridge IELTS 3: p.13, p.79, p.82 Cambridge IELTS 4: p.15 IELTS Preparation & Practice (L&S): p.20, p.38, p.52 IELTS Foundation: p.14 Test Builder: 75 \* Helpful Hints for IELTS: p.112

#### **Online Materials**

#### www.cambridgeesol.org

This is the official IELTS website. It offers tips & advice plus practice exercises.

<u>http://www.askynz.com/ielts/preparation.htm</u> From the homepage, go to listening. There are some very helpful videos to help you with language usage on the test.

<u>http://adw.hct.ac.ae/site\_ilc/frameset\_test\_prep.htm</u> This site has a few listening excerpts with sample questions.

<u>http://hkcityu.netlanguages.com/</u> This site provides an excellent introduction to the IELTS exam. There is also information, tips and practice exercises, plus a complete IELTS test can be completed online.

Road to IELTS. Access through the online resources page:

http://online-resources.lc.cityu.edu.hk/WebPages/OnlineResources/ Enter the site with your cityu login information. This page gives you hints and tips on the test based on 12 recurrent themes.

# General Tips for the listening test

#### Before the exam

- Make sure you are **familiar** with the **instructions** for the different **question types** so you can quickly glance at the questions and know what to do.
- **Think about** the type of **situations** you might come across living or studying **in an English speaking country**, such as someone asking for directions or talks on topics of general interest.
- Listen to as wide a range of material as possible English language **television** and **radio**, listening sites on the **Internet** and **films** and **music** are all great sources.
- **Do** as many **practice tests** as you can to get used to the speed of delivery and the task types.
- Focus on the strategies and skills you need for listening (see *Focusing on IELTS pp.8-37*). For example:
  - ✤ 'listening for specific information' (p.8-12);
  - ✤ 'guessing meaning of words', (p.23)
  - ✤ 'recognising signposts' (p.26)
  - ✤ 'understanding lectures & talks' (p.111-113.

Practise these strategies and skills with as much listening material as you can.

#### During the exam Before listening

- Make sure you use the 30 seconds given at the beginning of each section to **read the questions** before listening.
- Make sure you **look at all the questions** in each section.
- Make sure you **read the instructions** carefully.

- Make sure you know **what form your answer** should take e.g. a word, a letter, a tick, a phrase, a circle around the correct letter etc
- Make sure you use the time given to **analyse the questions**.
- Decide **what you are listening for**. Are you listening for specific information, for the main idea or for the speaker's attitude?
- Use the outline given of the topic, who is talking and the situation to **predict** possible answers.
- When you look at the questions, think about **synonyms**. You may not hear the exact words that are in the answer choices.

#### While listening

- Listen **carefully** to the **instructions**.
- Listen out for **key words** and common **signpost words** like 'on the other hand', 'in contrast' etc
- Remember the **questions** usually follow the same **sequence** as the **conversation or talk** but the information may be expressed differently from the questions.
- Write down something even if you haven't got the answer before moving on to the next question.
- Make sure you **continue to listen while** you are **writing** as you only hear the tape once.
- **Don't get stuck** on a question you can't answer. Just move on.
- Remember there may be **sections of irrelevant information**. Just keep listening for the information you need.
- **Write notes** in the question booklet as you listen. This may help you go back to a difficult question later.

#### After listening

- Make sure you **transfer your answers correctly**.
- Make sure you use the time given to **check your answers**.
- If you can't remember an answer, guess.