IELTS Listening

How long is the Listening paper?

The Listening paper is the same in both the Academic and the General Training modules of the IELTS test. It lasts approximately 30 minutes and you are given an extra 10 minutes to write your answers onto a separate answer sheet.

What type of information will I hear?

The Listening paper has four separate sections. Each section is a little more difficult than the one before. They feature speakers from a variety of English-speaking countries. Each section has a different focus.

- In **Section 1**, you will hear a conversation between two people (e.g. finding out information about travel).
- In Section 2, you will hear a monologue on a general topic (e.g. a radio broadcast).
- In **Section 3**, you will hear a conversation between two or three people in an academic context (e.g. discussing an assignment).
- In Section 4, you will hear a monologue in an academic context (e.g. a lecture).

Will I hear the recording more than once?

It is important to remember that you will hear the recording **only once**. To help you prepare, you will be given some extra time at the start of each section. During this time, you should read the questions carefully.

How is the Listening paper assessed?

You will be asked a total of 40 questions. In order to assess how much of the recording you understand, the questions will usually paraphrase (use different words with a similar meaning) the words that are in the text.

What types of question will I need to answer?

There are 10 questions in each section, and there is a variety of question types. For some types, you need to write words or numbers that you hear.

- forms/notes/table/flow-chart/summary completion
- · short-answer questions
- · sentence completion

For other tasks, you need to choose an option from a list and write a letter on your answer sheet.

- · labelling a diagram/plan/map
- · matching
- · multiple choice

How do I answer the questions?

The instructions and the questions will tell you what type of information you need to listen for, and the type of answer you need to give. Listen carefully to any instructions you hear on the recording. Follow the instructions on the question paper carefully. In this unit, you will be able to practise all of these question types.

How can I improve my Listening paper score?

You can improve your score by following the instructions carefully, and remembering the Test Tips in this unit. This unit will also tell you the skills you need in order to achieve your highest score. Before the test, try to listen to accents from a variety of English-speaking countries. Studying all aspects of English (including vocabulary and grammar) will also help improve your IELTS score. If you make any mistakes in the practice exercises, make sure that you listen to the recording again and check your answers carefully in the Answer Key.

1 Getting ready to listen

In this unit you will practise:

- understanding the context
- · listening for specific details
- using correct spelling
- understanding numbers

1 Understanding the context

In the introduction to the Listening section, you will be told who the people are, what they are talking about and why. This information is called the context. It helps you understand the topic. It is not written on the question paper.

After the introduction, you will be given a short time to look at the questions. Studying the questions before you listen can help you predict what the speakers will talk about.

Test Tip Before you do each section, you will be given 30–45 seconds to look at the questions. Use this time to study the questions and try to predict what you might hear.

1.1 You are going to hear the introductions of four IELTS Listening sections. Before you listen, try to predict the context by reading the questions in the table below. Choose FOUR answers from the box and write the correct letter, A–F, in the table.

Section	Listening test questions	context
1	Total number of guests:Susie will organise invitations and	С
2	What type of gift does the speaker recommend for a child's birthday?	
3	The students chose this topic because A they have a lot of information about it. B they would like to learn more about it. C they think they will get a higher mark.	
4	Aim: To assess the impact of loss of habitat on native animals Methods: Calculate the current numbers of native animal species Study their movements by attaching	

Cc	ontexts		
Α	shopping for food	D	describing a research project
В	discussing an assignment	E	buying presents
C	organising a party	F	explaining how something works

1.2 Listen again. Decide how many speakers you will hear in each of these sections. Try to write down who the speakers will be.

2 Using the correct spelling

In Listening Section 1, you may need to listen for the name of a person or a place. Often, the names will be spelt out for you. You need to recognise the letters of the English alphabet well, so that you can write the letters you hear quickly. You will only hear the spelling once.

Any spellings that you hear will be in the context of a normal conversation, so you need to be able to hear the difference between letters and words.

2.1		3 Listen and write the lett	ers you hear.	
	1		4	
	2		5	
	3			
2.2	fiv	There are several ways to short conversations and conversations and conversations and conversations are several ways to short conversations.	omplete notes 1–5 with	
	1	Name: Mr Andrew		
	2	Address: 63	Road, Birming	ham
	3	Website address: www.	.com	L
	4	Meet at the	Hotel	
	5	Registration number:		
2.3	Li	sten again and complete ext	racts a-f from the conv	ersations.
	C	onversation 1		
	a	Is that	colour?	
	b	Yes, but	•	
	C	onversation 2		
	C	Sorry,	N or M?	
	C	onversation 3		
	d	That's right,	lower	case.
	C	onversation 4		
	e	Oh, it's the Rose Hotel,		
	C	onversation 5		
	\mathbf{f}	It's just		
		It's HLP 528.		

Study Tip Practise saying the letters of the English alphabet. For example, spell words out for a friend to write down.

Test Tip Always check your spelling. If you make a spelling mistake in the IELTS Listening paper, your answer will be marked wrong.

Test Tip Listen
carefully, as there are
several ways of helping
people to spell a word
without simply spelling
it out. If you need to
write something that
is not a name (e.g. the
registration number
of a car), you may
hear a combination of
numbers and letters.

3 Writing numbers

In Section 1 of the Listening paper, you need to listen for specific details.

3.1	> 5	Listen and	circle the number	you	hear	in	each	pair	(a-j)	•
-----	-----	------------	-------------------	-----	------	----	------	------	-------	---

1st / 3rd

f 15/50

\$10.50 / \$10.15

g 52 / 62

6th / 5th

h £110 / £810

d 17 / 70

i 31st / 33rd

19 / 90

22nd / 27th

3.2 Listen again and practise saying the numbers.

- **3.3** Listen and complete the information below.
 - 1 How much does the woman pay for her room? £
 - 2 New students need to bring \$
 - **3** Garage width:
- height: m
- 4 How much does the woman pay for the bus tickets?
 - A \$25
- B \$55
- C \$75
- 5 Party date:
- **3.4** Listen again and write the other numbers you hear and the reason they are incorrect.
 - this is the amount she paid last time 1 £80
- 3.5 [> 7] Listen to extracts from four different talks and choose the correct answer (A, B or C).
 - 1 The survey found that the majority of students drink
 - A water.
- B coffee.
- 2 What point does the speaker make about skiing?
 - **A** A small percentage of the US is suitable for skiing.
 - **B** A surprisingly large number of Americans like skiing.
 - **C** A relatively small proportion of Americans have tried skiing.
- 3 The number of wild elephants in Africa is estimated to be at least
 - A 53,000.
- **B** 470,000.
- C 690,000.
- 4 According to the speaker, which two can weigh the same?
 - A the tongue of a blue whale and an elephant
 - B an elephant and a blue whale
 - C a bus and an elephant

2 Following a conversation

In this unit you will practise:

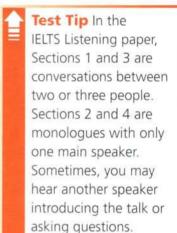
- · identifying the speakers
- matching items
- · identifying function
- completing notes
- · understanding categories
- completing a table

1 Identifying the speakers

For Sections 1 and 3, each speaker will have a different voice to help you tell them apart (e.g. male/female; younger/older). Both speakers will talk equally, and you will hear answers from **both** speakers.

For Section 1, there is normally one person who has to find out information from the other.

1.1 Solution 1.1 Vou will hear three short extracts from Listening Section 1. Listen and identify what makes each speaker different, and what information they want to find out.



	people	description	information wanted	
1	travel agent	older female	The customer would like information about	
	customer			
2	hotel receptionist		The receptionist needs to find out the guest's	
	guest			
3	interviewer		The applicant would like to know about	
	job applicant		TO MINOR GOOD III	

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Study Tip You will hear native speaker accents from several English-speaking countries in the test. These may include British, American, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand accents. Search online for **non-commercial national radio stations** in these countries, and try to listen to a variety of them. National stations often have talk or current affairs programmes that can help you practise for IELTS.

1.2 You need to listen to both speakers carefully. Listen to the rest of the conversations from 1.1 and answer the questions below. Ignore the final column for now.

1	NOTES: • No need to book the 1 from the airport	travel agent customer
	the customer wants me to organise 2	travel agent customer
2	 1 How many nights will the man stay? A one night B two nights C three nights 	hotel receptionist guest
	 Which of the following is on the 10th floor? A the gym B the business centre C the restaurant 	hotel receptionist guest
3	Which country has the applicant worked in most?	interviewer job applicant
	2 What department would the applicant like to work in?	interviewer job applicant

1.3 Listen again and look at the final column in the table. Circle the person who provided the answer. Sometimes both are possible.

2 Identifying function

Each speaker has a specific purpose in mind when they talk. We say their language has a **function**. We use different language for different functions.

2.1 Listen to seven short extracts from different conversations. Complete extracts 1–7.

	getting her a new bike?		
	. We arrive on 22nd July.		
Γhat sounds great.			
	I'd enjoy that one		
'ou said you'd pref	er to have the party outside,		
	?		
, it's jus	st gone up to \$250.		
	accommodation?		
Where would you l	ike to stay?		

2.2 What is the function of the phrases you wrote in 2.1? Match extracts 1–7 to the correct function (A–H). There is one extra letter that you do not need to use.

Functions

- A agreeing E confirming
- B correctingC rejecting an ideaF moving to a new topicG checking information
- **D** suggesting **H** showing anger
- 2.3 Listen to extracts from two conversations: one from Section 1 and one from Section 3. Choose the correct answers (A, B or C).

Listening Section 1

- 1 What food do the speakers decide to prepare for the party?
 - A pizza
 - **B** sandwiches
 - C hot dogs
- 2 What will they do next?
 - A go shopping
 - B decide on the music
 - **C** sort out the invitations

Listening Section 3

- 3 What aspect of pollution do the students decide to concentrate on?
 - A water pollution
 - B air pollution
 - C industrial pollution
- 4 What do the students decide to do next?
 - A contact their tutor for more help
 - **B** visit the library to find more resources
 - C check which topic other students have chosen
- **2.4** Look at the phrases below. Listen again and decide whether the phrases are in Extract 1 or Extract 2.
 - a That's a good idea.
 - **b** Actually, I think we're better off looking online.
 - c Why don't we ...?
 - d We could look at ...
 - e What about a ...?
 - f Let's ask them.
 - **g** Pizzas it is, then!
 - h Shall we go to ...?

- i You're right ...
- j That's right.
- k So we could just do that?
- 1 We'd better not.
- m We'd better start ...
- n Now, we also need to ...
- o So, what else do we need to do?
- p But we always do that.

3 Understanding categories

In the Listening paper, you may be asked to complete a table. The headings in the table tell you the type of information you will hear and need to listen for. They can also help you to follow a talk or conversation.

3.1 Complete the table below with the correct words from the box.

juice	picnic	tent	barbecue	tram
coffee	cabin	flat	theatre	lemonade
coach	cinema	buffet	concert	ferry

accommodation	transport	entertainment	food	drink

To complete a table or a set of notes or a sentence, you need to write words that you hear in the recording. You will be told how many words to write.

3.2 Listen to an extract from a conversation and answer the question below.

Complete the sentence below with NO MORE THAN ONE WORD AND/OR A NUMBER.

The expo will be useful because there will be more than experts there.

- **3.3** Now look at the answers that different candidates wrote. Tick the correct answers. Why are the other answers incorrect?
 - · two hundred and fivety computer
 - 250 computer
 - . two hundred and fifty computers
 - · over 250 computer
 - · 250 computer experts
 - over 250 experts
 - · two hundred and fifty computer
 - . 250

Test Tip Pay attention to the number of words you need to write. NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS means that you may need to write one word or two words. NO MORE THAN ONE WORD AND/OR A **NUMBER** means that if you write two words or more, then your answer will be wrong. Each of the following is an example of **ONE** WORD AND/OR A NUMBER: 16th June / three books / 6.11.12 / twenty-four cats / \$450.50.

3 Recognising paraphrase

In this unit, you will practise:

- · identifying distractors
- matching items
- · recognising paraphrase
- sentence completion
- selecting from a list

1 Identifying distractors

Distractors are the incorrect answers to a question. Identifying distractors helps you to choose the correct answer and shows you have understood the Listening text.

1.1 Listen to extracts from each Section of the Listening paper. Answer the questions in the table below. Write ONE WORD AND/OR A NUMBER.

Test Tip For most questions in the Listening paper, you will hear two or more potential answers to each question, but only one will be correct. The incorrect answers are called distractors.

	questions	distractors
1	What date will they leave?	
2	What day will the tour visit a farm?	
3	The students decide to do a project about	
4	Problems: • poor weather • a lack of	

Study Tip To improve your concentration, when you are doing the Practice Tests in this book, try to write down each possible answer. Cross out the incorrect answers as you listen, based on what the speakers say. (Note that you may not have time to do this in the exam, however.)

1.2 Listen to the extracts again. Write down each possible answer and cross out the incorrect ones. Write the distractors in the table.

2 Recognising paraphrase

The speakers you will hear in the Listening paper often use different words to those in the questions. For example, you may hear a **synonym** (a word with a similar meaning).

2.1 Match words/phrases 1–8 with their synonyms a–h.

1	a price	a	money
2	a location	b	to carry
3	funding	C	a drawback
4	dangerous	d	a fee
5	a solution	e	a place
6	to transport	f	risky
7	disadvantage	g	an impact
8	an effect	h	an answer

The questions may **paraphrase** an idea that you will hear (express the same idea in a different way).

2.2 Listen to more extracts from each Listening Section. Complete the first column by choosing the correct answer.

		synonyms/paraphrase	reasons the other options are incorrect
1	What do they decide to organise first? A a place to stay B their airfares C car hire		
2	What change will they make in the garden? A improve the shade B remove plants C add a water feature		
3	What do the students agree they need to do with their project? A do more research B make some cuts C add some visual effects		
4	The scientists are studying A how snow forms in different conditions. B the effect that snow has on our climate. C the effect different clouds have on snow.		

2.3 Listen again and complete the table on the previous page. First, write the synonyms or paraphrases you hear for the underlined words and phrases. Then explain why the other possible answers are incorrect.

3 Selecting from a list

Sometimes, you need to choose an answer from a longer list. All of the ideas in the list will be mentioned, but only two or three options are correct. To help you concentrate, it can help to underline key words before you listen. **Key words** are important words in the question (or the words or phrases in an option that make it different to the others).

3.1 Look at the question and list of possible answers. Before you listen, underline the key ideas you need to listen for.

What TWO disadvantages of the new mobile phone does the speaker mention?

- A it isn't very user-friendly
- B it is very expensive
- **C** it can't take photographs
- D it has a short battery life
- E it is quite big
- **3.2** To help practise scanning a list, listen and put options A–E in the order they are mentioned. Don't answer the question yet. Remember, the ideas will be paraphrased, so you may not hear the same words you see in the options.
 - A it isn't very user-friendly
 - **B** it is very expensive
 - **C** it can't take photographs
 - D it has a short battery life
 - **E** it is quite big 1
- **3.3** Listen again and put a ✓ or a ✗ next to each option A–E, depending on whether or not it matches the information in the recording. Which TWO options are correct?

Test Tip The questions in the Listening paper are in the same order as the information you hear. This means that you will hear the information you need for Ouestion 1 before you hear the information for Ouestion 2, etc. However, in questions where you have to choose an **option** from a list, (e.g. multiple choice or matching items) the list of possible options will be

in random order.

Test Tip Make sure that you pay close attention to any negatives in the options, as well as any adjectives. With matching or multiple choice tasks, pay careful attention to the question, as well as the options. The question will tell you how many answers you have to choose, as well as what you need to listen for (e.g. problems, solutions, advantages,

etc.).

4 Places and directions

In this unit, you will practise:

- understanding a description of a place
- following directions
- labelling a map
- multiple choice

1 Describing a place

For some questions in the Listening paper, you need to look at a map of a place, or a plan of a building.

1.1 Look at drawings A–F and decide what the images are.

D



_

A



E



C



F



Test Tip You should study the map or plan carefully **before** you listen. Having a clear image in your mind will help you understand what you hear.

Test Tip For labelling a map or plan in IELTS, you may need to follow directions, or you may hear a description of a location.

- **1.2** Study the map in section 3.3 for 30 seconds.
- **1.3** Try to answer questions 1–4 without looking back at the map.
 - 1 What is it a map of?
 - 2 Name three landmarks on the map.
 - **3** Where is the entrance?
 - **4** What is in the centre of the map?

Features already on the map are often used as landmarks to help you find your way.

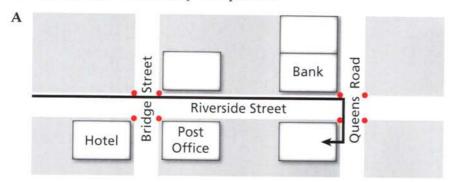
1.4 Listen to extracts from the four sections of the Listening test. Complete the first column in the table by choosing the correct letter (A, B or C).

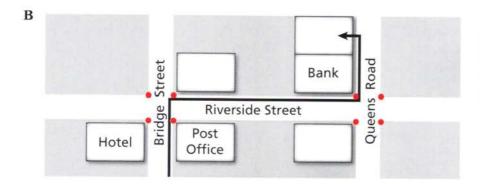
		landmark(s)	locating words/phrases
1	Where is the gift shop? toilets A B lifts entrance	lifts	 The entrance is Then go The shop you want is lifts
2	Where can you buy stamps? A B pond c		In resort, you'll see a courtyard, you'll find a It's just tree
3	What is the proposed location of the new bridge? A B C S E E E E E E E E E E E E E E E E E E		 I was thinking of putting it I think it would be better if it's motorway
4	Where is the ideal habitat for the Traviston Frog?		 it is unable to live in of a pond it does need to live in to water in a tiny burrow bushes

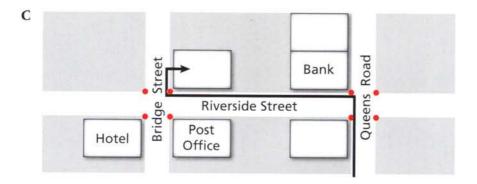
1.5 Listen again and complete the table on the previous page. Write down the landmarks mentioned and fill in the gaps in the phrases that help you to locate the correct answer.

2 Following directions

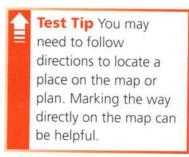
2.1 Listen and decide which diagram (A, B or C) shows the directions described by the speaker.







2.2 Listen again and make a note of any words or phrases that are used to give directions.



Test Tip The distractors for this type of task might be extra buildings marked on the map, or they might be extra options in a list of possible answers.

3 Labelling a map

Sometimes, a map completion task asks you to identify an area on a map then choose an answer from a list. For this type of question, you need to familiarise yourself with both the list of options and the features on the map before you start.

- **3.1** Look at this map completion task. Which landmarks might be used to help you to find your way around?
- **3.2** Listen and label the map with the correct letter (A–F).
- **3.3** Check your answers, then listen again.

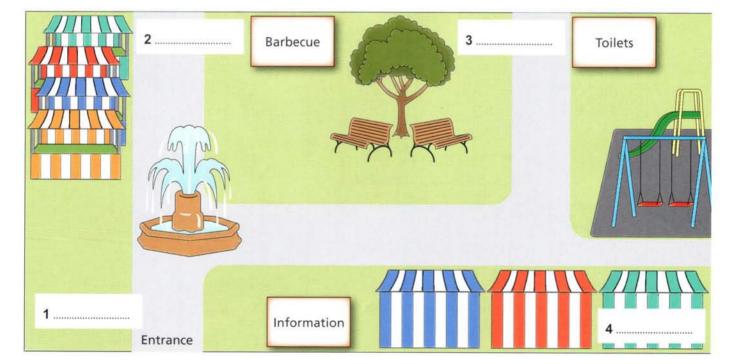
Questions 1-4

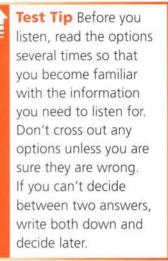
Label the map below.

Choose the correct letter **A-F** and write the answers next to questions 1–4.

Α	farm animals	D	picnic area
В	fresh bread	E	second-hand book stall
C	ticket booth	F	cookery shows

Brookside Market





5 Listening for actions and processes

In this unit you will practise:

- understanding mechanical parts
- describing actions

- describing a process
- · labelling a diagram

1 Understanding mechanical parts

For diagram completion tasks, you may need to listen and label the parts of a machine or device.

1.1 Look at the images below. What machine parts can you see?













- **1.2** Listen to extracts A–F from different talks. Match them to pictures 1–6 and check your answers to 1.1.
 - At the bottom of the system there is a storage tank ...
 - A small spring in the centre causes the toy ...
 - C The water passes through the pipe and ...

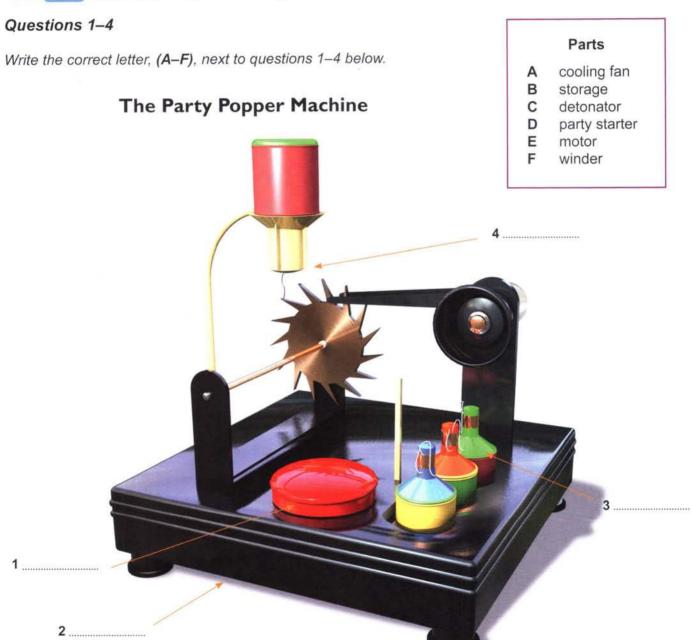
- The water in the pool was becoming quite polluted so a pump ...
- E There is a very fine grille at different points ...
- F There is a wheel on the side, which is attached to ...

1.3 Look at the diagram completion task below.

- 1 Look at options A–F. How many extra answers are there?
- 2 Look carefully at the device. Think about how it might work.
- 3 Decide which verbs in the box you might hear.

spin	turn	pop	hold	wind	generate	wrap	pull
explode	push	rotate	e hit	drag	activate	force	

1.4 > 20 Listen and complete the diagram.



- **1.5** Which were the distractors? Listen again and decide why these answers were wrong.
- **1.6** Which verbs from the box in 1.3 did you hear?

2 Describing an action or process

When we describe how something works, we often use prepositions or adverbs to explain movement.

2.1 Draw an arrow on the following images to represent the words that have been underlined. The first one has been done for you.



1 Put it <u>inside</u> the box ...



3 Turn the container <u>upside down</u>, then ...



5 The area beneath the table was ...



7 This then forces the air <u>upwards</u> ...



2 It then passes through a pipe ...



4 The trolley moves along the tracks and ...



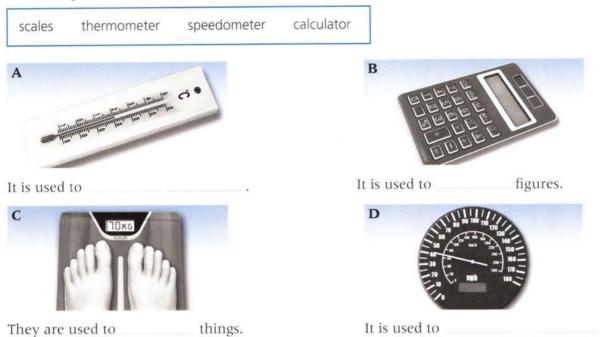
6 The paper was then wrapped around the ...



8 Cut the paper diagonally ...

Describing how a machine works often involves verbs that you do not commonly use.

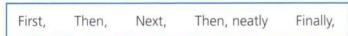
2.2 Match objects A–D with the words in the box. Then complete the description of each object.



2.3 Listen and check your answers to 2.2.

3 Describing a process

3.1 Think about the different stages involved in wrapping a present. How would you use the words in the box?



3.2 Listen to a description of the process and fill in the gaps. Then circle all the verbs used to describe the process.

Here's how to wrap a present. First, gather together all of the things you need: wrapping paper, sticky tape, scissors, some ribbon and, of course, a present. Then, your present on the opened wrapping paper and 2 a suitable amount using the scissors. Next, 3 the paper around the present and 4 it down with sticky tape. Then, neatly 5 up each of the ends of the paper and 6 them down. Finally, 7 the ribbon around your present. It's now ready to present!

6 Attitude and opinion

In this unit you will practise:

- identifying attitudes and opinions
 multiple choice
- persuading and suggesting
- reaching a decision

- matching items

1 Identifying attitudes and opinions

In Listening Sections 1 and 3, the speakers are often trying to make a decision or reach an agreement. Identifying the speakers' opinions can help you to answer the questions correctly.

- 1.1 Listen to eight extracts. What does each speaker show?
 - a strong agreement
 - b neither complete agreement nor complete disagreement
 - c complete disagreement
- **1.2** Listen again and complete the extracts.
 - 1 Well. I
 - 2 I think that's a
 - 3 Well, I'm about that.
 - 4 I think you're _____.
 - 5 Hmm, that's a bit
 - **6** I think that's
 - 7 That seems to me.
 - 8 I have to admit I don't like the
- **1.3** In Listening Sections 3 and 4, you may be asked to identify a speaker's attitude. Match words 1-7 with synonyms a-g.
 - 1 worried
 - 2 enthusiastic
 - 3 afraid
 - 4 confused
 - 5 irritated
 - 6 reluctant
 - 7 doubtful

- a dubious
- **b** hesitant
- c annoved
- d concerned
- e scared
- f puzzled
- g eager

- Listening skills
- **1.4** Listen to an extract from a Listening Section 3 task. What aspect of the research did the students find surprising? Choose the correct answer (A, B or C).
 - A The amount of time it took to achieve results.
 - **B** The reaction of the public to the research.
 - **C** The findings that the research produced.
- **1.5** Listen again and write down all the words/phrases the speakers use to mean 'surprising' or 'unsurprising'.

2 Persuading and suggesting

In Listening Sections 1 and 3, in order to reach a decision, you will hear the speakers make suggestions, agree, disagree or try to persuade each other.

- **2.1** Look at the Listening Section 3 task below. Before you listen, complete these tasks.
 - Try to think of a synonym or paraphrase for the underlined words/phrases.
 - **2** Read through decisions A–F in the box several times so that you are familiar with the different options to choose from.
 - 3 Decide whether you will hear the decisions or the presentation sections in order.
- **2.2** Listen and complete the task.

Questions 1-4

What do the students decide to do with the different sections of their project?

Write the correct letter, (A-F), next to questions 1-4 below.

Test Tip For matching tasks like this, the topics in the questions will be discussed in the same order as they are listed. But you will hear the different options in the box in a random order. As you listen, you need to keep looking at the list of options.

Presentation Sections

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Advantages
- 3 Disadvantages
- 4 Conclusion

Decisions

- A reduce the length
- B change the method of presentation
- C write some more
- D make it more interesting
- E check the sources are reliable
- F make sure they have current data

- **2.3** Check your answers and then listen again. Which synonyms of the underlined words/phrases are used?
- **2.4** Look at Recording script 25 and find phrases which are used to do the things below.
 - · make a suggestion
 - · agree with an idea
 - · disagree



Study Tip Search online for national radio stations from the UK, the US, Canada, Australia or New Zealand. These often have programmes that discuss topical issues and you will hear people suggesting ideas and discussing possible solutions. This is useful for Listening Section 3.

3 Reaching a decision

In Listening Sections 1 and 3, you will often hear people discussing a problem, suggesting solutions and then reaching a decision. A discussion like this might focus on the advantages and disadvantages of each suggestion.

3.1 Look at these questions and try to think of possible advantages and disadvantages you might hear. Write them in the table.

	possible advantages/disadvantages
Section 1	
The speakers decide to travel to the airport by	
A taxi	
B bus	
C car	
Section 3	
What do the students decide to do next?	
A ask their tutor for help	
B do more research on the topic	
c produce a typed copy of their notes	

- **3.2** Listen and answer the questions in 3.1.
- **3.3** Listen again and make a note of any language that the speakers use to show they reach a decision or agreement.

Sometimes the speakers may need to decide on what action to take. A discussion like this might focus on the reasons why one course of action is necessary or important.

7 Following a lecture or talk

In this unit you will practise:

- · identifying main ideas
- understanding how ideas are connected
- understanding an explanation
- completing a summary
- short-answer questions

1 Identifying main ideas

The questions in the Listening paper will focus on the main points made by the speakers, so it is important to be able to identify the main points of a talk.

- 1.1 Listen to part of a talk by Paul, an Australian palaeontologist (a scientist who studies dinosaurs and fossils). To help practise keeping track of the talk, put the phrases below in the order you hear them.
 - The very first field trip I went on
 - · It's an ancestor of the modern Australian wombat
 - I found a funny-looking piece of rock
 - · an old professor studying dried-up dinosaur bones
 - · I immediately changed courses
 - I had to do a compulsory unit on extinction
- **1.2** Which of the following describes the main topic of the talk?
 - a Important lectures Paul has given
 - **b** Describing the process that led to Paul's current role
 - c Explaining how ancient Australian animals became extinct

The questions in the IELTS Listening paper focus on the **main points** of the talk. In between the points, the speaker may also mention things that are not directly related to the main purpose of the talk.

1.3 Think about your answer to 1.2 and listen again. Which three phrases in 1.1 are used to give information that is directly related to the main purpose of the talk?



Test Tip At the start of each talk, you will be told who the speaker is and why they are talking. You won't be tested on this, but you can use this information to get a clear idea of the situation. This can help you to concentrate and follow the information in the talk.

You may be asked to complete a summary in the Listening paper. This can look difficult, so it will help to break down the information.

1.4 Look at the summary below and write questions related to the information missing from each gap.

Summary
Paul was interested in the 1 so took an ecology course at university. The course included a section on 2 and an interesting lecture caused him to quickly change his degree.
Paul says working in palaeontology can be difficult and he describes the conditions as 3 from an ancient animal made him realise he had made the right choice.

- 1 What was Paul interested in? / Why did Paul take an ecology course?
- 1.5 Listen to the talk again and complete the summary with ONE WORD ONLY. Check your answers, paying attention to your spelling.
- **1.6** The information in the Listening summary can help you to keep track of a talk. Look at Recording script 27 and compare it to the summary.
 - 1 Is the information in the summary in the same order as the script?
 - **2** Complete the table below with the correct phrases from the script or the summary.

audio script	summary		
My main interest has been	1 Paul was interested in		
2	The course included a section on		
a lecturer I was fascinated	3		
4	change his degree		
I found a	5		
6	a tooth from an ancient animal		

2 Understanding how ideas are connected

The topics and language in Listening Sections 3 and 4 are more complex. Here are some examples of the information you may hear.

- A the methods used in a particular study
- B the effects of an action
- C the reason an action was carried out
- **D** the conclusions that can be drawn from research
- E the findings of an experiment
- **2.1** Listen to four extracts from Listening Sections 3 and 4. Decide what type of information above (A–E) you hear in each.

1

2

3

4

- 2.2 Listen to the second part of Paul's talk. Answer questions 1–4 with NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS.
 - 1 What information does Paul get from the machine he mentions?
 - 2 What did the government recently give Paul?
 - 3 What modern-day problem does he say ancient animals can help with?
 - 4 What two causes of mega-fauna extinction does Paul hope to study?

3 Understanding an explanation

To help you prepare for the listening, read the information in the questions carefully and try to predict what information you will hear.

3.1 Read the two multiple-choice questions below. Use the information in the questions to complete the notes on the right.

Test Tip Don't be worried if you see technical terms in the Listening questions. These will usually be explained to you.

- 1 What did the researchers find in their experiments The talk is most likely about research done on . The talk will probably mention on mice? **A** A lack of exercise made them appear older. and **B** Their cells remained the same as they aged. **C** Their cells were unaffected by changes in diet. 2 What new discovery have scientists made about During this talk, we will probably hear about pigeons? what we already know about 3 A They use the Earth's magnetic field to navigate. as well as some 4 information. 1 **B** Their beak plays an important role when flying. need to listen for whether pigeons use the C A part of their ear helps them find their way. , or their 6 to stop them getting lost.
- **3.2** Listen to the two extracts and answer the questions in 3.1 by choosing the correct answer, A, B or C.
- **3.3** Why were the other options incorrect?

8 Contrasting ideas

In this unit you will practise:

- signposting words
- comparing and contrasting ideas
- using notes to follow a talk
- table completion
- notes completion

1 Signposting words

For Listening Section 4, you will hear a talk by a student or an expert on an academic subject. Speakers often use signposting words to move from one topic to another, or to help connect their ideas.

- **1.1** Listen to six short extracts from different Listening Section 4 talks. Complete the extracts below.
 - 1 OK, the late 19th century, when a great deal of changes were taking place.
 - Now, _______, I wanted to give you some background information.
 - **3** So, some possible reasons for this.
 - 4 , I'd like to talk about some future projects.
 - 5 So, did we reach?
 - **6** I'll what this machine can do.
- **1.2** Match the extracts 1–6 in 1.1 to uses A–C below.
 - A to start off a topic
 - **B** to change to a new topic
 - C to finish off a topic
- **1.3** Here are some words you might hear in a talk. Match words 1–8 to their synonyms A–H.
 - 1 results
 - 2 definition
 - 3 challenges
 - 4 history
 - 5 advantages
 - 6 disadvantages
 - 7 answers
 - 8 summarise

- A background
- **B** benefits
- C solutions
- **D** findings
- E conclude
- F meaning
- G drawbacks
- H problems

1

Test Tip A shift in topic often indicates that you should move on to the next question. Use signposting words (as well as headings) in the notes to help guide you through the topics and the questions.

Test Tip Remember, you may hear synonyms of the words written on the question paper.

2 Comparing and contrasting ideas

Sometimes, the focus of a talk will be comparing or contrasting (saying what is the same or different about) several different things.

The information may be organised as a table that you need to complete.

- **2.1** You are going to do a table completion task. First, study the table and then answer questions 1–5 below.
 - 1 Which of the following do you think you will hear?
 - **A** the names of all the plants, then all of their origins, then finally, a discussion of all the positives and negatives
 - **B** a full description of one plant that also contains some references to the other plants listed
 - **C** a complete analysis of one plant at a time, describing its origins, then finally its positives and negatives
 - 2 What type of information will you need to write for Question 1?
 - 3 In which column will the questions focus on the benefits?
 - 4 In which column do the questions focus on the drawbacks?
 - 5 What information will you need to listen for in Question 8?

Test Tip The information in a table is always read from left to right. The different examples will be described in order. Notice that there is often a title or a heading at the top of the table to give you more information.

Plants that changed the world

Plant	Origins	Positives	Negatives
potatoes	Central and South America Brought to 1by the Spaniards in 16th century	It led to • changes in 2 • people moving to another country to find new 3	In Ireland, the In Ir
tobacco	The Americas	It played an important role in US history. Known as the first crop in the US.	Led to increases in slavery Became a cause for 7
8	China	Helped bring about independence in the US.	The 9 imposed on it became a key event in American Revolution.
White Mulberry	China	It started 10between East and West.	It led to increases in the spread of disease.

2.2 Listen and complete the table with ONE WORD ONLY.

3 Using notes to follow a talk

The headings in a set of notes can help you in the same way as the headings in a column.

- 3.1 Read the notes below and answer questions 1–4 below.
 - 1 How is the information organised differently, in comparison with the table in 2.1?
 - 2 How will this help you to follow the talk?
 - **3** What **new** topic will you hear about, which was not in the table in 2.1?
 - 4 For which question do you need to write a nationality?

Plants that changed the world
Prehistory: flowering plants
arrived about 130 million years ago
became an essential source of 1
2737 BC: tea
 discovered in China, played a key role in USA, China & UK
• led to financial problems in Britain – a Chinese ruler insisted all tea was paid for with
2, which had to be sourced from other countries
202 BC: White Mulberry
• in demand from 202 BC when it was essential in the production of 3
trade routes led to the spread of different 4 but also made more people ill
and encouraged the exchange of dangerous products (e.g. 5)
16th century: the potato
originated in Central and South America, brought to Europe by the 6
it was rapidly accepted because it was cheap and contained lots of 7
helped prevent one specific 8
• 1845–1849 – large-scale failure of potato crops led to a million deaths in Ireland and
the 9 of another million people

- **3.2** Listen and complete the notes with ONE WORD ONLY.
- **3.3** Check your answers, then listen again and notice how the notes help to guide you through the talk.