

LISTENING SKILLS

Skill 1 - Making Assumptions

In order to understand a conversation, you should focus on two things: the *speakers* and the *topic*. To comprehend the spoken language well, you should determine what you know and what you need to know.

As you listen to a conversation, you must make some assumptions about the speakers and the topic. You want to know *who, what, when, where, and why*.

Assumptions About the Speaker

Assumptions About the Topic

Assumptions about the Speaker	Assumptions about the Topic
<i>Who</i> are they?	<i>What</i> are they talking about?
<i>What</i> is their relationship?	<i>What</i> happened?
<i>Where</i> are they?	<i>What</i> might happen?
<i>What</i> do they plan to do?	
<i>What</i> did they do?	
<i>What</i> are their feelings?	
<i>Why</i> are they talking?	

To help you make these assumptions, you should scan the questions, if provided, quickly or simply ask yourself: *Who? What? When? Where? And Why?*

By looking for the answers to these general questions, you will discover what you know and what you need to know.

Skill 2 - Understanding Numbers

Many of the questions in Listening task ask you to remember, identify, and/or write numbers that you hear. This is an easy skill to practice, but a difficult one to perfect.

You will hear: Flight 33 leaves from Gate 13 Concourse C3.

You will see: Write the number you hear.
What is the flight number? 33

Many numbers sound alike. Here are a few easily confused numbers. Say them out loud.

3	13	30	33		4	14	40	44		6	16	60	66
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Try to use the context to make a guess about what you are hearing. When you look over the questions to make assumptions about the topic, pay attention to those questions that ask for specific numbers. Listen carefully for those numbers.

Skill 3 - Understanding the Alphabet

Many of the questions in the Listening activity ask you to remember, identify, and/or write letters of the alphabet that you hear. This is a good skill to practice for the test and for real life.

You will hear: Speaker 1: Is your name spelled L-L-N or L-Y-N-N?

Speaker 2: Actually, it's Lynne with an e.

You will see: Write the name you hear.

What is the person's name? Lynne

Skill 4 - Distinguishing Similar Sounds

Some words sound similar to each other, but they are different. For speakers of certain languages, some sounds are more difficult to distinguish than others.

Native Language	Difficult Sounds	Examples
Arabic	p and b	pan/ ban
Russian	d and t	door/ tore
Spanish	sh and ch	wish/ which
Japanese	I and r	lot/ rot
Thai	v and w	vet/ wet
Korean	th and s	thin/ sin
Bangla		

English vowels can be difficult to distinguish for speakers of almost any language. Here are some commonly confused English vowel sounds:

i and ee	ship/ sheep
a and e	pat/ pet
e and ay	debt/ date
o and aw	boat / bought
a and u	bat/ but

It is always a good idea to practice distinguishing similar sounds in English. This will help you choose the correct spelling of a word. Determine which sounds give you the most difficulty and look for minimal pairs- two similar words but different sounds.

Skill 5 - Listening for Descriptions

When you listen to a conversation or a lecture, you see in your mind what the speaker is discussing. If the speaker talks about a garden, you will see in your mind some plants, trees, and walkways. As the speaker continues and talks about a fountain in the garden, you will add a fountain in your mind's eye. You might think the fountain is made of cement, but the speaker describes one made of marble. You can change the image easily in your mind.

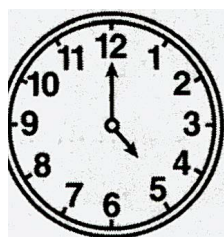
In the exam, you will have to listen to descriptions and match them to a drawing on your question paper.

Skill 6 - Listening for Time

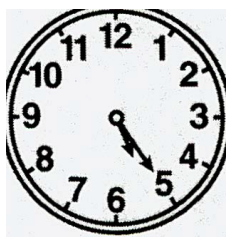
Listening for time is a very important skill. You must know when something happened. You must listen for a date, a day, a month, a year, or a time.

You will hear: The train was almost thirty minutes late. It didn't arrive until five o'clock.

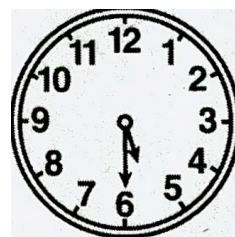
You will see: Choose the correct letter, A, B, or C. A



A



B



C

Useful Words and Phrases for Time		
10:00 A.M. noon 5:00 P.M. midnight	in January in February May 3 November 14	1912 1925 2005 2007
at 4:00 before 6:30 after 7:00 half-past two quarter-past three quarter to four	March 5 of this year April 12 of next year Last December 10	in the Spring in the Summer in the Autumn in the Winter
Sunday Monday Tuesday	on June 10 th on the 5 th of July on August 3 rd	yesterday tomorrow day after tomorrow
this week this month next week next month next year	on weekday mornings any afternoon from 1:00 during the week every other weekend	two years ago a year from now

Skill 7 - Listening for Frequency

There are certain adverbs that tell you when something might happen. The following two groups of adverbs will help you determine the time.

You will hear: Sam works out at the gym several days a week.

You will see: Choose the correct letter, *A*, *B*, or *C*. B

Sam goes to the gym...

A every day.

B often.

C occasionally.

Useful Adverbs of Frequency	Useful Adverbial Time Words or Phrases
always	every day, daily
usually	twice a week
often	every other week
sometimes	once a month
occasionally	every year, yearly
seldom	from time to time
hardly ever	on occasion
rarely	once in a while
never	now and then

Skill 8 - Listening for Similar Meanings

The words that you hear are not always the words that you see in your question.

You will have to listen for similar meanings. You could hear a synonym or you could hear a paraphrase.

You will hear: The survey participants who wrote answers to the questions are all college graduates.

You will see: *Write the answer.*

Who are the respondents? college graduates

Skill 9 - Listening for Emotions

Can you tell if someone is excited to do something or is not looking forward to something? While listening, try to determine a speaker's emotion. How is that emotion expressed?

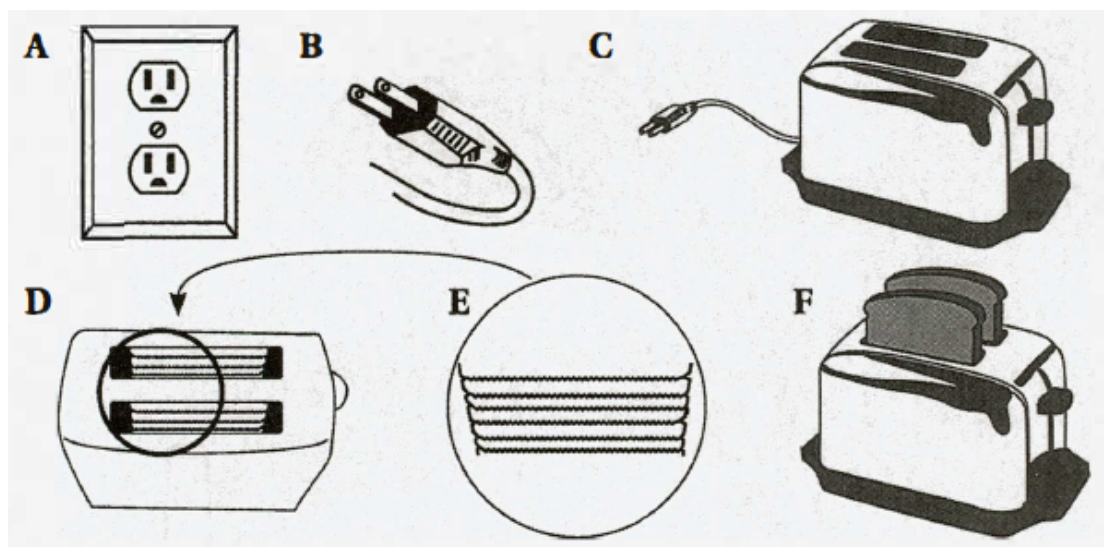
- You will hear: Jane: I can't wait to debate the team from Oxford.
Mark: I'm more apprehensive than excited. In fact, I'm not looking forward to it at all.
- You will see: Choose the correct letter; A, B, or C. A
What is Mark's attitude toward the debate?
A He's nervous.
B He's looking forward to it.
C He's more excited than Jane.

Useful Words for Expressing Emotion		
afraid angry annoyed ashamed bored confused disappointed disgusted	ecstatic embarrassed exhausted frustrated happy jealous mad miserable	nervous pleased proud sad shocked surprised unhappy upset

Skill 10 - Listening for an Explanation

In Listening task, a speaker may explain how something is done or made. You will have to listen and remember the steps of the process.

You will hear:	How does a toaster brown your toast every morning? Like all household appliances that heat up, a toaster works by converting electrical energy into heat energy. The electrical current runs from the electrical outlet in your kitchen wall, through the toaster plug, to the toaster cord. It travels down the cord to the appliance itself. Inside the toaster are wire loops. The wires are made of a special type of metal. Electricity passes slowly through this metal, creating friction. This friction causes the wires to heat up and glow orange. When the wires have sufficiently heated, your toast pops ready to eat.
You will see:	Match the letter in the diagram with one of these labels. 1AElectrical socket 2Metal loops of wires 3 Cord 4 Appliance 5 Your toast is ready to eat! 6 Plug



You will see: Complete these sentences describing the process to make toast.
Write NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS for each answer.

- 7 Electricity runs from
- 8 Electricity runs down
- 9 Electricity runs to
- 10 Electricity is slowed by
- 11 When resistance to metal is high, metal will get
- 12 The wires turn
- 13 The bread
- 14 You eat the

Skill 11 - Listening for Classifications

You will have to group similar objects or ideas in Listening task. You will have to determine how to classify objects or ideas.

Useful Classification Words and Phrases	
can be divided into	types
can be categorized as	kinds
can fit into this category	ways

You will hear: The school offers two types of courses. One during the day is designed for students who are pursuing their academic degree full time. The night courses are designed for students who work during the day and are taking specific courses for an advanced business certificate.

You will see: When would these courses most likely be offered? Write them under the appropriate program below.

Project Management	Literature of the 21st Century
History of Africa	Labor Negotiations
The Art of Negotiating	International Relations
Creativity in the Workplace	Introduction to Philosophy

Course Offerings	
Program 1 <u>Academic</u>	Program 2 <u>Business</u>
When?	When?
Introduction to Art	Organizational Behavior
Basic Chemistry	Commercial Law
Beginning Spanish	Compensation and Benefits
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.....
.....
.....

Skill 12 - Listening for Comparisons and Contrasts

Speakers often compare or contrast objects or ideas to help describe something. In Listening task, you will have to determine what is being compared and what is being contrasted.

You will hear:

- Speaker 1: I've been corresponding by letter with a French student.
 Speaker 2: In English? You don't speak French, do you?
 Speaker 1: No, unfortunately, but she writes English well. We have a lot in common.
 Speaker 2: Like what, your age?
 Speaker 1: Well, I'm actually about two years older than she is. But we do have the same first name.
 Speaker 2: And you're both students.
 Speaker 1: Yes, and we both are studying to be doctors, although she wants to be a pediatrician, and I want to be a neurosurgeon.
 Speaker 2: It seems the only similarities are your sex and your given name.
 Speaker 1: Well, we both like to swim. She likes to dance, too, but you know how little I like dancing.

You will see: Put a check (✓) to show if these items are alike or different.

	Alike	Different
A Nationality		✓
B Sex	✓	
C Age		✓
D Given name	✓	
E Present occupation	✓	
F Future occupation		✓
G Sports	✓	
H Love of dancing		✓

Useful Words for Comparison		Useful Words for Contrast	
almost the same as also as at the same time as correspondingly either/or in a like manner in the same way	in common just as like, alike neither/nor resemble similar to similarly than	although but differ from different from even though however in contrast to instead less than	more than nevertheless on the other hand otherwise still unlike while yet

Skill 13 - Listening for Negative Meaning

In Listening task, you may have to determine whether a statement is positive or negative. Listen to the statement carefully to determine whether the sense of the statement is positive or negative.

You will hear: It was a very dense book, but it wasn't impossible to read.
You will see: Choose the correct letter, *A*, *B*, or *C*.

What does the woman say about the book?B.....

A She couldn't read it.

B She was able to read it.

C She enjoyed reading it.

A negative prefix can contradict the word it joins. This usually results in a negative meaning. For example, *unfriendly* contradicts *friendly* and has the negative meaning *not friendly*. But when a negative meaning is added to a negative word, the resulting meaning can be positive. For example, *unselfish* contradicts *selfish* and has the positive meaning *not selfish*.

You can also put a negative word before a verb or clause to change the meaning of the sentence.

Useful Negative Markers			
Before verbs/clauses	Before nouns/phrases	Negative prefixes	Positive meanings from negative prefixes
not isn't/can't/won't/ shouldn't/couldn't/ hasn't/mustn't rarely/only rarely hardly scarcely seldom never barely not since not until and neither	no nowhere nothing at no time not at this time in no case by no means	un- im- il- in- non-	undone impossible illegal indefinite nonsense unlimited unparalleled invaluable nonrestrictive nonviolent

Skill 14 - Listening for Chronology

Listening for the order in which events occur is an important skill. You will need to listen to what happened first, second, and so on.

You will hear: Before you do your research, we'll have an orientation session in the library so you can become familiar with the various sources of information available there. Each student will give a presentation on his or her research topic after all the papers have been submitted. All of this will have to be completed prior to the date of the final exam.

You will see: Complete the Class Assignment Sheet, putting the assignments in the correct order. Write No MORE THAN THREE WORDS for each answer.

Class Assignment Sheet

- 1Orientation session.....
- 2Do research.....
- Papers submitted
- Student Presentations
- 3Final Exam.....

Useful Words and Phrases That Indicate Chronological Order

before after while during between _____ and _____ in (year) on (day) at (time) since _____ later earlier formerly and every (number) (years, months, days) at the turn of the century (decade) in the first half of the century in the 20s, 1980s,	at birth, in childhood, in infancy, as an adult, in adulthood, in old age simultaneously, at the same time as former, latter previous previously prior to first, second, third, etc. in the first place, second place to begin with next, then, subsequently in the next place at last in conclusion finally
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