

ISE II

Sample Independent listening task – Artificial grass

Examiner rubric

You're going to hear a talk about sport. You will hear the talk twice. The first time, just listen. Then I'll ask you to tell me generally what the speaker is talking about. Are you ready?

The task will play once.

Can you tell me in one or two sentences what the speaker was talking about?

Give the candidate some blank notepaper.

Now listen to the task again. This time make some notes as you listen, if you want to. Then I'll ask you to tell me what the speaker says are the advantages and disadvantages of artificial sports pitches. Are you ready?

The task will play once.

Now tell me what the speaker says are the advantages and disadvantages of artificial sports pitches. I'll stop you after one minute.

Audio script

In today's programme we want to talk about something many of our listeners are interested in. Many people play various sports on grass, but there's an argument for an alternative to natural grass, which is a type of plastic grass. Indeed, many grass fields have been converted to fields made with plastic grass, especially in schools all over the country. So, let's have a look at the advantages and disadvantages of artificial grass.

The first thing is that for schools, sports centres and clubs the cost of maintaining plastic pitches is lower than real grass. Artificial pitches don't need chemical fertilisers either.

In addition, artificial grass is more durable than natural grass, which means these pitches don't damage easily. Because of this, it's possible to play on these pitches all year, no matter what the weather's like. This results in fewer cancellations due to bad weather than you would have with natural grass pitches. And, having an even playing surface means fewer injuries. That's because, unlike normal grass, there won't be any holes in the ground, or large slippery areas.

Plastic pitches save water too. An average, normal playing field uses up to two hundred thousand litres of water during the growing season. So, using less water by having a plastic pitch is obviously good news for the environment!

However, replacing natural grass with artificial grass does have certain disadvantages.

Of course, the main thing to consider is the high initial costs of laying an artificial pitch. Another difficulty is that plastic pitches present a heat danger. When the weather is extremely hot, these pitches absorb the heat, and the temperature on the turf can rise to over forty degrees Celsius. This is very uncomfortable for anyone playing on it.

Also, some plastic pitches are made from nylon. These are known to contain harmful chemicals, which could pollute the community's drinking water after heavy rain.

Finally, once an artificial pitch has been laid, it isn't possible to return to the old natural grass beneath. This is because living creatures can't live below the plastic pitch and that makes it impossible to grow grass there again for years. So, you'll need to think carefully before making a decision about laying a plastic pitch.

Now we'd like to know what you think. You can join our online discussion on our website after the end of this programme...

Answers

Main point/gist: The speaker is talking about the advantages and disadvantages of artificial sports pitches (any broadly similar formulation is acceptable).

Possible responses to task

Advantages of artificial sports pitches

- ▶ Cheaper to maintain – no need for chemical fertilisers/chemicals
- ▶ More durable/don't damage easily: can play throughout the year (don't have to cancel for bad weather)
- ▶ Even surface so fewer injuries
- ▶ Saves water so good for environment

Disadvantages of artificial sports pitches

- ▶ High initial costs
- ▶ Can get very hot so uncomfortable (40 degrees)
- ▶ (Nylon) can contain harmful chemicals which can pollute drinking water (after heavy rain)
- ▶ Can't go back to grass after an artificial pitch has been laid