

ISE II

Sample Independent listening task – The Challenges of Tourism in Antarctica – Educational Podcast

Examiner rubric

You're going to hear a talk about a problem in Antarctica. 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 about the problems caused by tourism in Antarctica and what is being done about the problems. Are you ready?

The task will play once.

Now tell me what the speaker says about the problems caused by tourism in Antarctica and what is being done about the problems. I'll stop you after one minute.

Audio script

For many years, the magnificent scenery, the fabulous icebergs and incredible wildlife of Antarctica have attracted increasing numbers of tourists. These visitors have also created a range of problems for the people who are responsible for looking after Antarctica's delicate environment. Our programme today will consider some of the problems and we'll also learn more about who is taking care of them.

The first problem is the method of travel that tourists use. Most people arrive by ship, but these cruises can only take place in the Antarctic summer that is between November and March; outside these months, the weather makes travelling impossible. In the summer, there may be as many as ten ships cruising the Antarctic coast at the same time. This includes luxury liners that carry upwards of one thousand passengers. They inevitably cause damage to the environment while they are on land.

A second problem is that boats bringing tourists to the area can (and do) leak gasoline or oil into the normally crystal clear waters. Even a small spill in such a delicate area can have deadly consequences. Experts believe the creatures most affected by the leaks are a form of sea life called 'krill'. These tiny animals are food for fish, birds, penguins, and other animals.

A third problem is caused by the smaller groups who choose to visit on their own. They arrive in small boats or planes, and can be badly prepared. They can disturb the wild animals by walking, fishing or doing other sporting activities. Members of small groups can often get into difficulty because they're not ready for such harsh weather conditions.

So what's being done? Travel companies do their best to ensure that passengers are only allowed on land for short visits. They ask passengers to take care not to leave rubbish behind and to be respectful of wildlife. A group of travel and transport companies has formed an organisation to promote responsible tourism in Antarctica. Representatives from these companies meet once a year to review ongoing problems and work towards solutions. Together, they decide the best ways to protect the environment of Antarctica, but also find ways to help travel companies and visitors behave more responsibly. If you want to find out more about their work, visit their website.

Answers

Main point/gist: The speaker is talking about the problems caused by tourism in Antarctica and what is being done about the problems (any broadly similar formulation is acceptable).

Possible responses to task

Problems of tourism

- ▶ Too many (cruise) ships in the area in the summer
- ▶ Tourists cause damage to the environment (while on land)
- ▶ Boats leak oil, which affects the sea creatures (krill) that are food for other animals
- ▶ Small groups (who are badly prepared) disturb wild animals or have problems because of the weather

What is being done

- ▶ Travel companies only allow tourists on land for short visits
- ▶ Travel companies ask tourists not to leave rubbish/respect wildlife
- ▶ Companies have formed an organisation for responsible tourism
- ▶ Representatives meet every year to discuss problems and work towards solutions
- ▶ Representatives help travel companies to behave responsibly