

ISE II

Sample Independent listening task – New Year's resolutions

Examiner rubric

You're going to hear a talk about New Year's resolutions. 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 talk again. This time make some notes as you listen, if you want to. Then I'll ask you to tell me about the kinds of resolutions that people make and what advice the speaker gives to help people to achieve their aims. Are you ready?

The task will play once

Now tell me about the kinds of resolutions that people make and what advice the speaker gives to help people to achieve their aims. I'll stop you after one minute.

Audio script

We all do it, every year on the 31st of December we promise ourselves that next year we will get fit, lose weight or give up something unhealthy. At this time of year, a lot of your friends will be making New Year resolutions. You may be making one yourself. Perhaps you've decided to join a gym and get fitter, or go on a diet to lose weight – decisions related to health like this are the most popular resolutions. Other common self-improvement ones are being more organized, saving money and spending less time looking at computer screens. Actually, at any time of year, people often have the feeling that their lives could be improved if they ate more healthily, took up a hobby, read more books and so on. Whatever the goal, though, one study has shown that only 8% of people are successful in sticking to their decision. Luckily, there are some tips that will greatly improve your chances. Firstly, when choosing your goal, it's important to be specific. So, just saying you aim to save money isn't enough. How much are you going to save? By when? How will you do it? When answering questions like this, you shouldn't make things too easy, or you won't feel that you've really changed anything. On that other hand, your aims need to be achievable – setting yourself an impossible goal is a definite recipe for failure. Once you've decided what you want to do, tell people about it. Research shows that the more people you tell about your decision, the more likely you are to keep the resolution. Taking this sharing idea a step further, there's also evidence that doing things in a group greatly increases everyone's chances of success. One reason is that an element of competition comes into play, and also individuals feel that if they fail, they'll be disappointing others. Doing things in a group is also more fun, and this is another important aspect. Once you've got started, focus on the pleasurable part of what you're doing, rather than constantly worrying about the goal. In other words, try to think of the activity as enjoyable for its own sake, not just as a means to an end. Finally – and this might seem to contradict the last point – think about what might go wrong. Of course all the self-improvement books emphasise the power of positive thinking, but if you've anticipated potential problems and worked out how you might overcome them, you're much less likely to give up at the first sign of trouble.

Answers

Main point/gist: The speaker is talking about resolutions and the fact that many people fail to stick to them. He then offers several tips or pieces of advice to help people succeed (any broadly similar formulation is acceptable).

- ▶ Most resolutions are health-related or other forms of self-improvement
- ▶ Common examples are getting fit, losing weight, saving money, cutting down on screen time, being more organised
- ▶ Research shows 8% of people successfully stick to resolutions
- ▶ Advice/tips:
 - be specific, not general
 - choose something not too easy but still achievable
 - tell other people what you are doing
 - do something in a group
 - enjoy what you are doing (for its own sake)
 - consider/anticipate problems