

Preparing for the Listening task – ISE IV

Aims:

- ▶ To review the format of the task
- ▶ To raise awareness of task types
- ▶ To note key elements for comprehension in the tasks

Activity 1: Knowing the Listening task

What do you know about the Listening task?

Look at the following statements and circle True or False:

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. The task lasts for 5 minutes. | True / False |
| 2. The examiner reads three short texts. | True / False |
| 3. Candidates are asked to supply a suitable ending or answer a question. | True / False |
| 4. Candidates should take notes while listening. | True / False |
| 5. Candidates can ask the examiner to repeat the text. | True / False |
| 6. Answers should consist of only a few words. | True / False |

Look at the paragraph in the answers sheet to confirm your responses.

Activity 2: Practising the task

Below are three sample texts – as with the real exam, for the first two of these you are required to provide a suitable ending, while for the third text you will need to answer a question on context, participants or settings.

Before you read them, try to find a friend/colleague who can read the text aloud, possibly recording it, so that you can answer the questions in an authentic listening context.

Answers can be found in the key below.

1. I made up my mind I wanted to be an astronomer when I was very young. I found the night sky and the idea of space fascinating. I read as much as I could about it – I thought ‘This is it!’ It was mind-blowing. But when I went to university this was turned upside-down. I couldn’t bear listening to the lecturers droning on and on. And above all, I hated having to memorise all those facts for exams. It put paid to my enthusiasm. Before long, all the wonder I’d felt in astronomy was...
2. Some fascinating research was carried out about the effects that birth order among brothers and sisters has on our lives. According to statistics, the oldest child is the most conscientious, has a higher IQ and even higher earnings than his or her siblings. Whereas the youngest child supposedly ends up having greater wit, charm and the ability to get on with people. This seems to hold true for a number of people I know, but I suppose these sorts of statistics should always be taken with a pinch of salt. For example, in my family it’s the youngest whose salary is...

3. I keep hearing new theories which support the idea that music can help you to study more efficiently. For example, some research claims that listening to the right kind of music when you study can help relax your mind, cut down on other distractions and enable you to concentrate better. Some people even say that listening to music with 60 beats per minute puts you in an alert state of mind, which can help you focus easily. I suppose this is possible, but surely anything that competes for your attention when you're trying to concentrate is a distraction.

Q. What is the speaker's attitude to the idea that listening to music helps you study?

Activity 3: Identifying the key words

Go back to the three texts above and this time read them, underlining the key words that indicate the answer.

Preparing for the Listening task – ISE IV Answers

Activity 1

The purpose of the Listening task is for the candidate to demonstrate high level listening skills such as prediction, deduction and inference. The candidate needs to show recognition of the context, participants and register. There are two types of listening tasks which require difference responses from the candidate.

- ▶ Type 1 – Require the candidate to provide a suitable ending.
- ▶ Type 2 – Require the candidate to identify participants, contexts or settings.

The examiner will read three listening texts: two of type 1 and one of type 2. The Listening task lasts up to three minutes.

The examiner can only read the text once.

The intensive nature of the concise texts mean that candidates should not attempt to make notes while listening.

Responses should be brief and consist of only a few words.

Activity 2

1. Expected response: gone / lost / dead (or equivalent)
2. Expected response: higher / the best / largest (or equivalent)
3. Sceptical / questioning / dubious (or equivalent)

Activity 3

1. I made up my mind I wanted to be an astronomer **when I was very young**. I **found** the night sky and the idea of **space fascinating**. I read as much as I could about it – I thought 'This is it!' It was mind-blowing. **But** when I went to university **this was turned upside-down**. I **couldn't bear** listening to the lecturers **droning on and on**. And above all, I hated having to memorise all those facts for exams. **It put paid to my enthusiasm**. Before long, all the wonder I'd felt in astronomy was...
2. Some **fascinating research** was carried out about the **effects that birth order** among brothers and sisters has on our lives. According to statistics, the **oldest child** is the **most conscientious, has a higher IQ and even higher earnings** than his or her siblings. Whereas the **youngest child** supposedly ends up having **greater wit, charm** and the ability to get on with people. This seems to hold true for a number of people I know, but I suppose these sorts of statistics should **always be taken with a pinch of salt**. For example, in my family it's the **youngest whose salary is...**
3. I **keep hearing** new theories which support the idea that music can help you to **study more efficiently**. For example, some research claims that **listening to the right kind of music** when you study can help relax your mind, cut down on other distractions and enable **you to concentrate better**. Some people even say that listening to music with 60 beats per minute puts you in an alert state of mind, which can help you focus easily. **I suppose** this is possible, **but surely** anything that competes for your attention when you're trying to concentrate is a **distraction**.