

Practising the Listening phase – GESE Grade 12

Grade: GESE Grade 12 (CEFR C2)

Focus: The Listening phase

Time: 75 minutes

Aims:

- ▶ To review the format and grading of the phase
- ▶ To practise the phase

Materials needed:

- ▶ Worksheet 1 – Type 1 listen & check
- ▶ Worksheet 2 – Type 1 read out / answer
- ▶ Worksheet 3 – Type 2 listen & check
- ▶ Worksheet 4 – Type 2 read out / answer
- ▶ GESE Interview Performance Descriptors

Preparation

1. Make copies of Worksheet 1 and 3 (one for each student). Make copies of Worksheet 2 and 4 (to cut up into As and Bs).
2. Practising reading out the prompts to ensure natural delivery.

In class

Type 1 practice – listen & check (20 minutes)

3. Review the format and grading of the Listening phase (see 'GESE Interview Performance Descriptors' for the grading).
4. Tell the students you're going to read them four Type 1 tasks. They should listen to each and write down the expected response.
5. Give out Worksheet 1 and ask them to read the prompts carefully then check/change their response as they see fit.
6. Go through the answers as a class.

Type 1 practice – read out / answer (20 minutes)

1. Divide the class into two halves, As and Bs, with the As sitting together and the Bs sitting together. Give them three prompts each (Worksheet 2). Give them five minutes to read their prompts, discuss anything they don't understand and then to practise reading them out quietly. Make sure the groups can't hear each other.
2. When the students are ready, pair up each A with a B. They take it in turns to be the examiner and the candidate.

Type 2 practice (35 minutes)

1. Repeat the activities above with the Task 2 prompts.

Worksheet – Type 1 listen & check

Grade 12

The examiner will introduce the Listening phase by saying:

I'm going to read you three short passages and after I've finished each one, I'd like you to either suggest a suitable ending or answer a question. I'll then move on to the next passage. Are you ready? These two passages are incomplete. When I stop, I'd like you to tell me in just a few words how you think the passage finishes.

Grade 12 Type 1 listening tasks

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...
Expected response:
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...
Expected response:
3. I'm concerned that we're placing too much trust in experts. In a world where there is a deluge of information, we believe that experts are more up to the task of assessing it than we are. We rely on them unthinkingly, forgetting our own sense of responsibility. When we have to weigh up different courses of action, we should abandon our over-reliance on expert advice and start making our own decisions. The consequences of not doing this are alarming. A recent experiment showed that people would accept the advice of experts whether or not...
Expected response:
4. I'd never done it before and was shaking like a leaf. I had to do this if I wanted to prove myself in my new job. I stayed up till late making copious notes and I practiced it in front of the mirror countless times. Despite an initial wobble in my voice, it seemed to go down pretty well. I got my points across and managed to crack a joke at the end! There were a few laughs and applause. So I breathed again and realised that in future, I won't mind...
Expected response:

Worksheet – Type 1 read out / answer

A

5. The press has had a field day reporting recent experiments with drugs that appear to be unravelling the mechanisms of sleep. According to scientists, these drugs would make sleep unnecessary. Imagine a 24-hour society, one in which people would never need to sleep. They could work all day and party all night. Sound like a nightmare? But then nightmares would be a thing of the past. However, a doctor from a sleep research centre argues that sleep enables the brain to store memories and recuperate from work. He therefore believes these drugs...
Expected response: are dangerous/should be banned/are a bad idea (or equivalent).
6. A news study indicates that people who think they excel at multi-tasking usually don't. It shows that the majority of the participants who rated themselves as above average were, in fact, worse than average. According to researchers and psychologists, these people multi-task excessively in all areas of their lives. This is because they are impulsive, easily distracted, and even have an inflated sense of their own ability. In fact the participants who understand their abilities turned out of be the ones who...
Expected response: were better/the best at multi-tasking (or equivalent).
7. Many of the most remarkable advances in food production in recent years have been vilified by both press and public. It comes as no surprise then, that the spectre of meat being artificially manufactured in a laboratory setting, has been greeted with revulsion and cries of outrage. But this research isn't going to go away. And successfully lab-produced meat might be able to address two threatening issues simultaneously. I'm referring to environmentally damaging gas emissions, and the looming concern of overpopulation. Consequently, such research deserves...
Expected response: praise/backing/support/funding/serious consideration (or equivalent).

B

8. Fiction fulfils many roles, sparking our imagination or providing a welcome burst of escapism. On another level, though, it acts rather like a personal guide, leading us on a dance through a succession of scenarios and locations we may have already visited. Whether such dances are joyful or macabre depends on the genre concerned. In a similar vein, it can put us in touch with feelings we once had, but perhaps scarcely remembered, until the words on the page miraculously bring them rushing vividly back to life. Either way it serves to reconnect us with...
Expected response: our past/previous experiences/memories (or equivalent).
9. We know from history books that actors and spectators ate fruit, bread or even potatoes during a performance. Archaeologists have been engaged in some serious detective work here on site, and they've identified half a dozen fruit and a variety of shellfish, including oysters, which were plentiful and cheap then. We were amused to find that the debris after a live performance was not unlike the abundance of plastic cups and popcorn buckets left after a modern screening of a blockbuster. But what surprised us most about the early 17th century was the variety of foodstuffs that people consumed while...
Expected response: watching a play (or equivalent).
10. Why don't people speak out at work when they see something isn't working? There are several common reasons for people's hesitation. They could be unsure of the facts or worried about the repercussions. Perhaps we should ask why people do act or speak out. For a start, it empowers the whistle-blower, and also everybody in the organisation, the conspiracy of silence of broken. Instead of creating mistrust, it builds an atmosphere of honesty and openness. When I spoke out, I didn't feel I was behaving disloyally. Quite the contrary. In fact, if faced with a similar situation, I...
Expected response: would do it again/act similarly/speak out again (or equivalent).

Worksheet 3 – listen & check

The examiner will introduce the Listening phase by saying:

After I've read this passage, I'll ask you a question about what you've heard.

Grade 12 Type 2 listening tasks

1. 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?
A: Sceptical/questioning/dubious (or equivalent).
2. One of the mysteries that perplexed zoologists for a long time is why zebras have stripes. The most common theory up to now has been that the stripes make it more difficult for predators to single out an individual zebra from the herd. But it turns out that's not it. And they're not for decoration either. Like all members of the horse family, zebras are plagued by flies, which can make their lives a misery. So experiments were devised to see whether the stripes had any effect. Results have shown that plain black and plain white horses attract far more insects than two-tone zebras.
Q: According to the passage, why do zebras have stripes?
A: To repel/keep away flies (or equivalent).
3. The hardest part of my job is at international conferences or diplomatic events when I have to do it simultaneously. I need to make sure I represent what the speaker's just said in the same tone and register, so that their exact intention and meaning is conveyed to the audience quickly and accurately. It's not just a case of communicating their message word for word as that could result in confusion. The mental acuity required in this profession is very challenging, but I take pride in the fact that others are dependent on my skills.
Q: Who is the speaker?
A: An interpreter/a translator.
4. Many governments strive to eradicate all risk from the lives of the people they serve. But this desire is counter-productive. If we never encounter danger, surely we'll never learn to cope with it. Some safety warnings are laughable. On the packaging of one brand of an electric iron appeared the caveat, 'Do not iron clothes on body'; on a child's Superman costume it stated, 'Wearing of this garment does not enable you to fly'. It's simply not possible to prevent all accidents. By definition, an accident is something unpredictable and out of our control.
Q: What is the speaker's attitude to government attempts to prevent accidents?
A: Critical/that they are ridiculous or pointless (or equivalent).

Worksheet 4 – Type 1 read out / answer

A

5. Our planet has always been in a state of continuous change, causing the habitats of various animal species to be altered and modified. Such natural change to animal habitats tends to occur at a gradual pace, usually having only a slight impact on individual species, which isn't a major concern. However, a greater problem is when changes occur in such a way that there is little or no time for individual species to react and adjust to new circumstances. This can have a disastrous effect and lead to habitat destruction, which in turn can result in some species becoming endangered.

Q: What kind of change to animal habitats is the speaker worried about?

A: Fast/rapid change (or equivalent).

6. Art galleries are not just a venue for showing paintings or sculptures, they have a much more important role. You can learn so much, not just from the subject of a work of art, but also from the materials used and the way the gallery chooses to present the work. A chronological exhibition, for example, helps us to understand how external factors influenced a particular artist. Or, an exhibition of a number of contemporary artists from a given period can give you a real insight into the social history of the times. It's not just about aesthetics.

Q: According to the speaker, what is the purpose of art galleries?

A: Educational

7. When my film came out I had no idea what the reaction would be. It was quite revolutionary at the time. As often happens with original work, the reviews were very mixed. Although the characters were familiar, the setting and the plot were so unusual that most audiences were completely taken aback. I think it was because the world I had created was a far cry from the world they inhabited. It wasn't sci-fi exactly, but it looked ahead to a very challenging future society and people couldn't work it out. I'm thankful they eventually overcame this barrier and, as you know, the film went on to become a classic

Q: How did the audiences react to the film at first?

A: They didn't understand it, they were surprised (or equivalent)

B

8. A group of behavioral psychologists has recently been optimistically employed by the government. This group aims to use psychology to nudge us, that is, to gently push us, towards a healthier life. An example is fruit positioned at eye level in supermarkets to catch our attention. To me, this nudge approach seems rather too subtle to be effective. The small amount of money being spent by advertisers who are trying to push us in the opposite direction.

Q: What effect does the speaker think the nudge approach will have on people's health?

A: It will have a minimal effect/it is unlikely to make them healthier (or equivalent)

9. The stage set was effective and there were also one or two sparks of irony in the play that the audience were quick to pick up on. The two protagonists were charming and gave brilliant comic timing. Although some parts of the dialogue were fast-paced and witty, in other places the writing let the actors down. However, the performers had a wonderfully sensitive approach to their roles, which compensated for the shortcomings of the play. But for this, it would be a box-office disaster because of the predictable and over-sentimental plot – not to mention the irritating sound effects.

Q: According to the speaker, what is the main strength of the play?

A: The acting/the two performers/actors (or equivalent).

Worksheet 4 – Type 1 read out / answer

B (contd.)

10. The trade in fake designer goods has become big business in recent years and is a problem of major proportions for the customs authorities and manufacturers alike. The government's response so far has been somewhat mediocre. Instead of nipping it in the bud, they are yet again paying lip service to this very serious issue by setting up another body to investigate and report. By the time the report is available the trade will have become so entrenched in our society that it will be almost impossible to disband. Meanwhile, the fashion industry faces more financial hardship at a particularly volatile time.

Q: What does the speaker think the government should do about this issue?

A: Stop the trade in fake designer goods (immediately)/take a firmer stance (or equivalent).