

The Listening phase - ISE IV

The purpose of the Listening phase is for candidates 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 different 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.

- Candidates are presented with three listening tasks – two of Type 1 and one of Type 2.
- Candidates are expected to respond with very short, precise responses and should not give lengthy replies.
- The listening tasks provide an unknown element to the examination which candidates at this level are expected to be able to handle.
- Candidates are not required to read or write anything in this phase, and the taking of notes is unnecessary given the nature of the task.
- Please note **the listening tasks will not be repeated** by the examiner even if they are requested to do so.

Below are some **SAMPLE** listening tasks for ISE IV. Please note these are samples and will **NOT** be used in an actual examination.

At ISE IV, the examiner will introduce this 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 onto the next passage. Are you ready?'

The examiner will introduce the Type 1 tasks by saying:

'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.'

The examiner will introduce the Type 2 task by saying:

'After I've read this passage, I'll ask you about such things as the context and the people involved.'

ISE IV – Sample listening tasks - Type 1

1. As they approached the long tunnel through the mountains, Bill felt a tiny flicker of foreboding. He'd always loathed this particular stretch of the line – it brought on a feeling of breathlessness, almost of panic. A few seconds into the tunnel and the carriage was suddenly plunged into pitch darkness without the slightest warning. Bill heard heavy footsteps coming along the aisle towards him and then, as they stopped beside him, a clearing of the throat and the click of a small machine. As they emerged from the tunnel, it was with relief that Bill realised that...

Expected response: ...it was the ticket collector/inspector.

2. My uncle Charlie used to be a famous magician, you know, though he's getting on a bit now. Even so, he looked incredibly smart at my sister's wedding. He was wearing a morning suit with tails and even sporting a top hat. When I asked him where it was from he laughed and said it was one of the props from his old show, pensioned off now, like him. So I'm not sure who was the most surprised later on when we got to the reception and he took it off and out jumped...

Expected response: ...a rabbit (or another suitable live creature which can jump).

3. I was fed up with what they sell in supermarkets nowadays. None of it seems to have any taste. So I decided to do something about it. Today, I've been out digging in the garden all day. I've turned over all the earth, taken out the big stones and dug in the compost; and tomorrow I'll be able to start planting. I have to hope I'll be able to keep the slugs and snails off. As far as I'm concerned though, all the hard work will definitely be worth it when in a few months time I'll be able to sit down and enjoy...

Expected response: ...my own home-grown produce/salad/vegetables.

4. The inhabitants of our village have become increasingly distressed by the growing volume of traffic passing through it. A proposal to build a ring-road was thrown out by environmentalists some years ago. Other measures such as humps in the road have been tried over the past few years but, of course, although they slow down the traffic, they don't reduce the volume. So last week a public meeting was held in the village hall and it was decided that, in spite of previous objections, we should...

Expected response: ...build the ring road.

5. When I was about 14, I was an enthusiastic correspondent with pen-friends in many countries of the world. My Australian pen-friend, Anna, told me about her life on an isolated sheep farm in the outback and how, because of the distance from the nearest town, she had to board at a school far away from her home. Some years later my family offered hospitality to some Australian students. The Australian girl, Kate, who came to our house described her school life to us and then talked about her room mate. I couldn't believe my ears when it turned out that ...

Expected response: ...my pen-friend had been Kate's old room mate.

6. Oh, it was really funny. The agency was run by a bunch of fuddy-duddies who were afraid of any idea that hadn't been used a thousand times before. And here was I here coming along, doing my tough young, creative, genius act, being outrageous, insisting on selling my ideas directly to the client, never budging from doing only the best possible work. I tell you, they'd never seen anyone like me. Most of them wanted to fire me; there was always a conspiracy to throw me out, but they couldn't because the clients thought ...
Expected response: ...I was very good at my job.

7. Anna was to have been in Bermuda on this glorious, sunny spring day, having the holiday of a lifetime with her husband in order to celebrate their silver wedding anniversary in grand style. Instead, she found herself in rain-soaked London, dressed all in deepest black and following the cortege as it moved slowly towards the graveyard. She had never liked her grandfather - he'd been so cruel to her and her mother - and could feel nothing but fury that his departure had prevented her from...
Expected response: ...going on holiday.

8. Mary's always had two great interests in life - literature and paintings. At school she'd always been hopeless at maths and science, but had excelled in English and Art. Sadly, her parents couldn't afford to send her to university, so when she was sixteen she left school and found a job. In her spare time, she was a self-confessed book worm and a regular visitor to art galleries. On one of these visits, she was amazed to be offered a post as curator's assistant, which naturally she...
Expected response: ...accepted/took.

9. People always think of James Bond with lots of glamour and fast cars but in reality it's nothing like that. In fact they tend to recruit people who blend in. I go to the office every day, just like anyone else, and spend ages on the computer tinkering with search engines. Sometimes I have to listen to bad-quality recordings and that's pretty tedious too. Of course, there is some risk working in high security. I had to sign the Official Secrets Act and I'm not supposed to discuss the job, but to be honest there's nothing exciting about being...
Expected response: ...a secret agent/spy/spook/a government agent/an MI5 or MI6 agent.

10. It's funny in those old films when you see people winding them up and talking to an operator. What a long way we've come since then. At one time, they all used to be heavy and black and then, gradually, they got more streamlined and that interminable dialling was replaced with press buttons. Now, at home, they're mostly cordless and you can have any style you like. Nearly everyone carries one around with them and they've got smaller and smaller, but more and more sophisticated. Really, a century ago, how did people exist without...
Expected response: ...telephones/phones.

ISE IV – Sample listening tasks - Type 2

1. Finally...third time lucky!! I was so nervous before we started, I had to take several deep breaths and wait until my hands stopped shaking. It didn't help any that I had to do the complex manoeuvres - not my favourite, - right at the beginning but once they were over and done with, I guess I did manage to relax a bit more. I stalled once and missed one road sign but they were my only mistakes. She was great - in her mid-fifties I'd guess. Lovely gentle voice and a nice smile - reminded me of my old aunt. That helped to put me at my ease too.

Question: What has the speaker just done?

Expected answer: Taken a driving test.

2. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon when we were instructed to retire to consider all that we'd heard over the past two months. We had been given strict instructions not to let our emotions influence our decision. The twelve of us had spent a lot of time together and knew how serious our responsibilities were. It was a particularly unpleasant case and the details revealed by both counsels had often been very difficult to listen to. Fortunately, we were able to reach a decision in a very short time and were able to return a unanimous verdict.

Question: Who is the speaker and what is the context?

Expected answer: A juror in a court of law.

3. Please leave your things at the back of the room and then sit at the desk which has the number as on your registration card. If at any time you wish for assistance, raise your hand and one of us will come and attend to you. Do not leave your seat until you are given permission. Should you need to go outside or feel unwell, one of us will accompany you. If you finish early, you may collect your things and leave the room but you will not be able to re-enter. It goes without saying, there is to be no talking. You may turn over your paper now.

Question: Who is the speaker?

Expected answer: An invigilator of a written examination.

4. It's so boring my job. All you do is sit and watch several screens in front of you. You can't read a newspaper, you can't go and make a cup of coffee but you daren't fall asleep. Nothing happens for hours and hours. Just rows and rows of cars from different angles. The greatest activity is first thing in the morning and when they leave at night. There was great excitement last week. I'd been watching the screens for three hours when I really thought I'd caught a thief, but it just turned out to be Mr Brown from finance.

Question: What is the man's job?

Expected answer: A security guard.

5. Learning to breathe properly is difficult at first but once you've got the hang of it, it becomes second nature. You must check your and your buddy's equipment meticulously before you go down. Tanks and regulators must all be working properly as any mistake could be fatal. Then, you have to clear out your mask and spit in it so it doesn't mist up. There are clear guidelines about how long you can stay under and how deep you can go but even more important is coming up slowly and in stages so you avoid getting the bends.

Question: What activity is the speaker describing?

Expected answer: Diving.

6. My dad used to bring them back for me when he went away on business. And when I was eight he gave me a special album with transparent pockets to keep them in. I've arranged them according to size, value and the country they came from. Some of them are round and some six or eight-sided. My favourites are a set of big, heavy, silver ones from Morocco and I've also got a set of beautiful bronze ones from South America, with the head of the President on one side. Every few months I take them all out and polish them.

Question: What is the speaker describing?

Expected answer: Coins/a coin collection.

7. That's the worst part of it for me. I love the creative bit even though I tear my hair out trying to get down exactly what it is I want to express. I spend weeks organising different chapters and rewording anything which just doesn't sound right. But sending it off for someone else to pull to pieces is awful. I'm so nervous, as I wait to get it back and when I do, it's inevitably got loads of squiggles in the margins and phrases underlined. But the very, very worst thing is reading the critique at the end. I'll keep trying though - one day I'll make it!

Question: Who is the speaker?

Expected answer: A (budding/would-be) writer.

8. I walked past the photographers and journalists towards the back straight where I tried some starts and then opened up my stride for a few metres. The television cameras were all on this event and I knew that back home everyone would be watching. Now I had a second chance after messing up last time. I turned and approached the starting line at the top end of the stadium with the left-hand curve just ahead and the finishing line in my sights. I set my blocks and practised another start. There were seven of us in the final heat. The pistol fired and we ran.

Question: Who is the speaker?

Expected answer: An (Olympic/competitive) runner/sprinter.

9. I've been to loads of different conflict zones around the world – most recently predominantly in Africa and the Middle East. I can't say that you ever become immune to these situations and it's particularly harrowing when children are involved. People ask you if you ever pause before taking the shot and whether you think about trying to step in to stop what's going on. But that wouldn't achieve very much though. Far more important is to get my pictures published and bring these issues to the public's attention.

Question: What exactly is the speaker's job?

Expected answer: A war photographer/photojournalist.

10. Many people just come and browse, especially if it's raining outside. I have nothing against that, as often they'll be tempted by some of the titles, especially if we have a 'three for the price of two' offer. There was speculation that places like this wouldn't survive, because of competition from the internet. But I actually think there's been a revival, with film adaptations and TV dramas, and more literary awards and festivals. I must say I'm pleasantly surprised at the number of bestsellers that have come out recently that everyone seems to want on their shelves.

Question: Where does the speaker work?

Expected answer: In a bookshop/book store.

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