

Independent Listening Task: Big City

At a glance

Level: ISE II

Focus: Independent listening task

Aims: To develop listening strategies when listening to someone describing their experience of the differences between living in a city and a village

Objectives: To listen and report main points and supporting detail and to infer the speaker's opinion

Topic: Village and city life and society and living standards

Language functions: Expressing and expanding ideas and opinions and highlighting advantages and disadvantages

Lexis: Village and city life and living standards

Materials needed: Whiteboard, audio script or audio recording and equipment, one student worksheet per student, pens, and dictionaries

Timing: Approximately one hour

Procedure

Preparation

1. Print one student worksheet per student.
2. Pre-record the audio. If no equipment is available to record and/or play the audio, print out the transcript and read it to the class at a normal pace.

In class

1. Explain to the class that they will be doing a listening activity in class today and that this will help them to prepare for the Independent listening task in the ISE II Speaking & Listening exam.
2. Give each student a worksheet and ask the students to carry out Task A. Ask students to read '*What to expect in the exam*'. Then, in pairs, ask one of the students to summarise '*What to expect in the exam*' for their partner.

3. Write the words *village* and *city* on the board and ask students, in pairs, to discuss the differences between living in a village and living in a city. Carry out feedback as a class.
4. Ask the students to discuss in pairs if they prefer living in a city or village. Once the students have discussed for approximately 3-5 minutes, feedback in open-class.
5. Tell the students that in today's lesson, they are going to listen to someone talking about the differences between living in a village and a city. Ask the students to carry out Task B on their student worksheet whilst they are listening. Tell the students to write three pros and four cons of living in a city (before carrying out this task, you may need to re-cap on the words 'pro' and 'con'). Clearly announce when you are about to play the audio. **If you were unable to pre-record the audio, read the audio script out loud at a normal pace and with appropriate pausing.**
6. Now ask the students to compare their answers in pairs. Do group feedback and go over the answers as a class.

Answer key:

Pros: higher salary, less predictable, being judged on your achievements

Cons: loneliness, difficult to talk to strangers, expensive, no support network

7. Now, tell the students that they are going to listen to the audio again and this time they need to carry out Task C. Tell the students that they need to replace the underlined words with a different word or phrase from the audio that has the same meaning. After you have played the audio, ask students to compare answers in pairs. Carry out feedback as a group.

Answer key:

1. It (really) dawned on me

2. Live life to the fullest.

3. was very refreshing

4. achieve

5. going through

8. Tell the students they are going to listen to the audio again and ask them to carry out Task D. Ask the students if they think the speaker prefers living in the city or his hometown. Ask the students to discuss their opinion with a partner. Carry out feedback as a group and elicit what the speaker's opinion is.

Answer key:

Although the speaker highlights a number of disadvantages of living in a city, it can be inferred that his experience of being judged on his achievements overrules the disadvantages.

9. Ask the students what they remember about Task 1 of the listening test. Elicit that they will listen to the recording twice and that they are encouraged to take notes. They can prepare for it by watching talks on websites such as *ted.com*. Tell them that the first time they listen they should listen for gist or general understanding and the second time they should listen for detail.

Extension activity

1. Ask the students to discuss with their partner whether they agree with the speaker or not. Carry out feedback as a group.
2. Give students the audio script and ask them to underline three words they can explain to their partner and three words they want their partner to explain to them.

Further support activity

1. Play the audio twice for each task.
2. Give out the audio script and ask students to listen again and follow the audio script.

After class

Ask the students to research in a book or on the internet the biggest city in their country and the smallest village. Ask students to report back on the differences in the next class.

Audio Script

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So, you want to know what it was like moving from a tiny village in the middle of nowhere to a mega city? Big question. Where shall I start? I realised that when I moved that I had never really been alone before. I was incredibly lonely those first few weeks. I know this may sound like a contradiction but it really dawned on me how lonely you can be in a city of five million people. In my hometown everybody knows everybody. Life is lived outside. On the streets, you know. People sit outside in the evening and chat with the neighbours and passers-by. In the city, if you start talking to a stranger they look at you as if you are crazy.

My salary is a lot higher but life of course is also much more expensive. Ironically, I had a higher standard of life when living in my hometown even with a salary that was three times lower than what I am making now. I have to admit that my hometown is near the beach so that may have to do with it. My rent now is more than what I was making back then. Life in the village is the same every day. The same routines. Your life is already planned out for you. You are going to get a job and do this same job for the rest of your life. You marry the girl from around the corner, have kids. I wanted something different. Live life to the fullest.

You know what bothered me most about living in a small town? That you are never judged on your own merits. My father was at one point mayor so everybody knew him. So I was always the son of a locally very well-known person. I was never judged as a person who existed in his own right. Moving to the city was very refreshing in that perspective. I quickly had a promotion and that felt so good. Finally, I had been rewarded for what I really could achieve. I had made it out of my father's shadow.

Life in the city is more anonymous. This has its pros and cons. I must say a while ago when I was going through a difficult time there was no support network and I had to go home to be with family and friends for a few weeks to recover.

Student Worksheet

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- A. **Read 'What to expect in the exam' and summarise it for your partner.**

What to expect in the exam...

- In the listening phase you will listen to a monologue of approximately 400 words. You will listen to the recording twice.
- You will be given a worksheet to take notes.
- The first time you should listen for gist or general understanding.
- The second time you should listen for detail.
- The total time of the test is 8 minutes.

- B. **Listen to the audio and write three pros and four cons of living in the city.**

Pros?	Cons?

C. Listen to the audio again and replace the underlined words with a word or phrase from the audio.

1. I realised how lonely you can be in a big city.
2. Enjoy life.
3. Moving to the city felt as something new in that perspective.
4. I had been rewarded for what I really could do.
5. I was experiencing a difficult time.

D. Talk to your partner. Do you think the speaker prefers living in the city or in his hometown? Why?

Answer Key

B. Pros: higher salary, less predictable, being judged on your achievements

Cons: loneliness, difficult to talk to strangers, expensive, no support network

- C. 1. It (really) dawned on me
2. Live life to the fullest
3. was very refreshing
4. achieve
5. going through

Although the speaker highlights a number of disadvantages of living in a city, it can be inferred that his experience of being judged on his achievements overrules the disadvantages.