

5 Tips to Master the TOEIC Listening Section

1. Do Practice Tests Under Test Conditions

While you are preparing for the TOEIC it is important that you **do constant practice under test conditions**. That means taking practice tests with the same time limits and surroundings as if it were the real exam. So you need to take all parts of the test to get used to the quick transitions, fast pace and the tricks that can appear in the test.

This will also teach you how to manage your time, which is especially important for the listening section since you have no control over the speed of the questions.

But **that doesn't mean you have to start doing full tests on your first day** of study! If you haven't done tests like this before, it's good to build some confidence first, and also get a good idea of the structure of the test.

Try the following:

- Using a sample listening test, start by stopping the recording after each question.
- Choose the answer that you think is correct and then check if it is right.
- Make sure you know why an answer is correct or incorrect.
- Gradually build up the speed by doing each section without pausing the recording.
- Then, work your way up to doing the whole test.

There's [a free sample listening test on the TOEIC website](#), and you'll find links to the various parts of the practice exam throughout this post.

Starting the test like this, you will also be able to see which areas you need to focus your studies on. But don't forget that it is important to start doing tests in actual test conditions as soon as possible.

2. Create as Many True English Sentences About a Photo as Possible

In order to do well on the true/false section, practice quickly coming up with as many true English sentences in your head about a given photograph as you can. Why?

In [the first part of the TOEIC listening section](#), you will see a series of photographs and then listen to four sentences. You have to choose the sentence that best and most truthfully describes the picture.

The three incorrect answers may have:

- words that sounds similar but are different
- the right words used the wrong way or in a confusing manner
- answers that are only partially true
- words related to, but not actually in the picture

To study for this part of the test, you can **also try making sentences that describe what you are doing during your day**. Another helpful exercise is to make a list of all the things around you that you see. This helps you learn the vocabulary and connect it to a place.

If you don't share your house or office with anyone, you could even label everything you can see in English. Or do it anyway and scare your co-workers, roommates or family members!

There can sometimes be trick questions on the exam, based on pronunciation. So it's a good idea to work on your pronunciation of vowel sounds in English. Learn words that have the same pronunciation but different meanings.

The best way to answer the questions for this part is to **look at the picture completely and find out what's happening**.

- Think to yourself: who, what, where, why?
- Before the recording starts, look at the photo and make as many sentences as you can in your head about what is happening in the photo.
- When the recording starts, decide if each sentence you hear is false, maybe true or true. You might find that writing an X, question mark and check mark on the page with your finger helps you remember each one.
- Even if you are sure that one answer is the correct, listen to the other answers to make sure and check your answer.

If you are not sure and still have two or three options, just decide using feels right, and then move on to the next question. Often the choice that you feel is right the first time (a "gut instinct") will be the correct answer, and it won't help to think about the question any longer.

Try some of these: how much can you say about the following images?





3. Use Prediction Skills to Answer Part Two

Our tip for [the second part of the exam](#) is to **take what you already know and use prediction skills to imagine the correct answer** before hearing the different options. This makes it easier to answer the question correctly.

This part of the TOEIC listening section is made up of 30 different questions. You will be asked a question about almost anything, and you'll need to choose the best answer from three options. The TOEIC Listening is only heard once, and it can be rather fast in some places. So be sure to watch out for:

- words that sound similar but have different meanings
- wh- questions: who, what, when, where, why, what
- tag (tail) questions
- yes/no questions that may not have yes/no answers

Keep in mind the question as you listen to the possible answers. Choose the answer that makes the most sense. If in doubt, guess. You don't lose any points for a wrong answer.

When studying for this section it's a good idea to play the recording and listen to the question. After you've heard it, pause the recording and brainstorm a few answers to the question. This will help activate your knowledge and prepare you for the three different answers. After you've come up with a few ideas, continue to play the rest of the recording so you can identify the correct answer easier.

4. Focus and Actively Listen to Detail in Part Three

[The third part of the test](#) is a little longer and you might feel a little tired when you get to this part of the exam. But here **you will need to focus and pay attention because you will want to actively listen for the answers to the questions** as the recording is playing.

You will hear a short dialogue and then answer three multiple choice questions about what you have heard. For this part, the questions and answers are in your test booklet. You will need to use your short-term memory to succeed.

Here you need to watch out for:

- similar-sounding words
- inaccurate words
- word order
- words that change the meaning
- negative words (hardly, not, etc.)
- words associated with frequency (always, never, sometimes, etc.)

When you are studying for this section, it's best to **look at the questions before you listen to the dialogue**. Listen to the dialogue and then write down your answers for the question based on what you have heard. Next, see if your answers match any of the multiple choice options. This will help you focus and learn to actively listen for details in the talks.

During the actual test, try and read the questions before you listen to the recording. If you still have time, also try and read the multiple choice answers.

5. Find Keywords in Part Four's Questions Before Listening

In [the fourth and final part of the listening section](#), you will hear three short talks about different scenarios. You will then have to answer questions about them. You will need to concentrate more carefully in this part to remember the details. Our tip is to find the keywords in the questions before you listen to the recording.

When you study for this part, you should look at the questions and try to underline all the keywords in the questions and in the answer choices. Take some time to begin with and make sure you underline the correct words. **After you get the hang of it, try to do it within seven seconds.** This will be the same amount of time that you will have in the actual exam.

Part four is the hardest section to do well in when it comes to the TOEIC Listening. It's very easy to fall behind because there are no breaks between the questions, and the recording is quite fast. This exercise will encourage you to skim through the questions and the answers as quickly as possible. When you get faster, you will have a better chance of keeping up with the speed of the recording.

When you are taking the actual exam, **pay attention to the context.** Try to read the question beforehand and find the keywords if you have time. Listen to the entire talk before choosing an answer. If you find yourself running out of time, just guess an answer. Don't miss out on information for the next question while you are trying to figure out the previous one.

Don't be fooled into thinking that the TOEIC listening section is easy just because it consists of answering multiple-choice questions—it's not. You need a lot of practice and good time management skills to ensure that you will achieve a high score.

These tips will help you master the TOEIC Listening and let you get the score that you want! **Good luck!**