

IELTS Academic Practice Test

Work-Life Balance

Listening Scripts

Listening Task 1: Our New Flexible Working Policy

Audio Instructions:

- **Voice:** Female, standard British accent
 - **Speed:** Clear, professional, and friendly pace (approximately 150 words per minute)
 - **Tone:** Positive, encouraging, and informative
 - **Intonation:** Natural, with emphasis on key policy details
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Script:

Good morning, everyone. Thank you for coming. My name is Sarah, and I'm the HR manager. I'm delighted to be here today to announce a new initiative that we believe will make a significant positive impact on our workplace culture. After several months of planning and consultation, we are officially launching our new Flexible Working Policy.

We understand that the traditional 9-to-5 workday doesn't suit everyone's life. The goal of this new policy is to provide you with more control over your schedule, helping you to achieve a better balance between your professional responsibilities and your personal life. We believe that this will not only improve employee well-being but also boost productivity and creativity across the company.

So, what does this policy involve? It has two main components. The first is ‘flexi-time’. This means that you can choose your own start and finish times, as long as you are present during our core hours, which will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. This is to ensure that we are all available for team meetings and collaborative work. So, for example, you could choose to start at 8 a.m. and finish at 4 p.m., or start at 10 a.m. and finish at 6 p.m. The choice is yours.

The second component is our ‘remote work’ option. All employees will now have the opportunity to work from home for up to two days per week. The specific days can be agreed upon with your team manager to ensure there is always adequate cover in the office. We will provide the necessary technical support to make sure you have a secure and effective setup at home.

We are also introducing a new ‘no-meeting Friday’ rule. After 12 p.m. on Fridays, there will be no internal meetings scheduled. This is to give you protected time to focus on deep work, catch up on tasks, and finish your week without interruption.

This policy will be rolled out starting from the first of next month. There will be training sessions next week to answer any questions you may have and to provide guidance on how to make the most of these new options. We are truly excited about this change and believe it represents a major step forward in making this company a more modern and supportive place to work. Thank you.

Listening Task 2: The Home Office Challenge

Audio Instructions:

- **Voices:** Two speakers – one female (Chloe), one male (Tom), both with standard British accents
 - **Speed:** Natural, conversational pace (approximately 140-160 words per minute)
 - **Tone:** Chloe should sound enthusiastic and positive. Tom should sound more hesitant and slightly negative.
 - **Intonation:** Natural conversational flow, with appropriate pauses and reactions.
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Script:

Chloe: Tom, how are you finding the new remote work arrangement? I'm absolutely loving it. I feel like I have so much more freedom.

Tom: Honestly, Chloe, I'm not so sure. I thought I would love it, but I'm actually finding it quite difficult. I miss the office.

Chloe: Really? What do you miss about it? I definitely don't miss the commute!

Tom: That's true, the commute is one thing I don't miss. But I miss the social interaction. I feel quite isolated working from home all day. I miss the casual chats by the coffee machine and being able to quickly ask a colleague a question. Now, everything has to be a formal video call.

Chloe: I can see that. I'm quite an introvert, so I don't mind the quiet. For me, the biggest challenge is switching off. The line between work and home has become so blurry. My laptop is always there, so I find myself checking emails late at night, which is a terrible habit.

Tom: I have the opposite problem. I find it really hard to stay focused. At home, there are so many distractions—the laundry needs doing, the dog wants to be walked... It's hard to get into a productive mindset. At the office, when you're at your desk, you're there to work. The environment helps.

Chloe: That's interesting. I've created a dedicated workspace in my spare room, and that has helped me a lot. When I'm in that room, I'm in 'work mode'. And when I leave it, I try to leave work behind. I've also found that having a strict routine is essential. I start at the same time every day, take a proper lunch break, and finish at a set time.

Tom: Maybe that's what I'm missing. My 'office' is the kitchen table, so it doesn't really feel like a separate space. I think I need to be more disciplined. I do like the flexibility of being able to go for a run at lunchtime, though. That's a definite plus.

Chloe: Exactly! There are pros and cons to both. I think the ideal situation is a hybrid model, where you can work from home a few days a week and go into the office on the other days. That way, you get the best of both worlds—the focus of home and the social connection of the office.

Tom: I agree. That sounds like the perfect solution.

END OF LISTENING SCRIPTS