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Test format in detail

Listening**Academic
Reading****General
Training
Reading****Academic
Writing****General
Training
Writing**

IELTS Listening description

Paper format	The first two sections deal with situations set in everyday social contexts. In Section 1, there is a conversation between two speakers (for example, a conversation about travel arrangements), and in Section 2, a monologue in (for example, a speech about local facilities). The final two sections deal with situations in educational and training contexts. In Section 3, there is a conversation between two main speakers (for example, two university students in discussion, perhaps guided by a tutor), and in Section 4, a monologue on an academic subject. The recordings are heard only once. They include a range of accents, including British, Australian, New Zealand, American and Canadian.
Timing	Approximately 30 minutes (plus 10 minutes transfer time).
No. of questions	40
Task types	A variety of question types are used, chosen from the following: multiple choice, matching, labelling, form/note/table/flow-chart/summary completion, sentence completion.
Answering	Test takers write their answers on the question paper as they listen and at the end of the listening section, have 10 minutes to transfer their answers to an answer sheet. Care should be taken when writing on the answer sheet as poor spelling and grammar are penalized.
Marks	Each question is worth 1 mark.

IELTS Listening in detail

A detailed look at the paper with links to related resources.

Task type 1 – Multiple choice

Task type and format	In multiple choice tasks, there is a question followed by three possible answers, or the test taker may be asked to choose one or more answers from a list of three or more. Test takers are required to choose the correct answer - A, B or C. Sometimes, test takers are given a longer list of possible answers and told that they have to choose more than one. In this case, they should read the question carefully to check how many answers are required.
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No. of questions	Variable
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Task type 2 – Matching

Task type and format	Test takers are required to match a numbered list of items from the listening text to a set of options on a question paper. The set of options may be criteria of some kind.
Task focus	Matching assesses the skill of listening for detail and whether a test taker can understand conversation on an everyday topic, such as the different types of hotel or guest house accommodation. It also assesses the ability to follow a conversation between two people. It may also be used to assess the ability to recognize relationships and connections between facts in the listening text.
No. of questions	Variable

Task type 3 – Plan, map, diagram labelling

Task type and format	Test takers are required to complete labels on a plan (eg of a building), map (eg of part of a town or area) or diagram (e.g. of a piece of equipment). The answers are usually selected from a list on the question paper.
Task focus	This type of task assesses the ability to understand, for example, a description of a place, its features and its layout, as shown in a visual representation. This may include being able to follow language expressing spatial relationships and directions (e.g. straight on/through the far door).
No. of questions	Variable

Task type 4 – Form, note, table, flow-chart, summary completion

Task type and format	Test takers are required to fill in the gaps in an outline of part or of all of the listening text. They may be asked to record their answers on the main ideas/facts in the text. It may be: 1. a form: often used to record factual details such as names 2. a set of notes: used to summarize any type of information using the layout to show how it is organized
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	<p>arrows.</p> <p>Test takers may have to select their answers from a list on the question paper or identify the recording, keeping to the word limit stated in the instructions. Test takers do not have to write from the recording in any way.</p> <p>Test takers should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers in the gaps will vary. A word limit is given, for example, 'NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER'. Test takers are penalized for writing more than the stated number of words, and test takers should follow the word limit carefully for each task. Contracted words will not be tested. Hyphenated words count as single words.</p>
Task focus	This focuses on the main points which a listener would naturally record in this type of situation.
No. of questions	Variable

Task type 5 – Sentence completion

Task type and format	<p>Test takers are required to read a set of sentences summarizing key information from all the parts of a recording. They then fill a gap in each sentence using information from the listening text, for example, 'NO MORE THAN ONE WORD AND/OR A NUMBER'.</p> <p>Test takers are penalized for writing more than the stated number of words. (Test takers should follow the word limit carefully for each task: the limit is either ONE, TWO or THREE words). Contracted words and hyphenated words count as single words.</p>
Task focus	Sentence completion focuses on the ability to identify the key information in a listening text and understand functional relationships such as cause and effect.
No. of questions	Variable

Task type 6 – Short-answer questions

Task type	Test takers are required to read a question and then write a short answer using information from the recording.
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	Sometimes test takers are given a question which asks them to list two or three points.
Task focus	Sentence completion focuses on the ability to listen for concrete facts, such as places, prior listening text.
No. of questions	Variable

IELTS Listening – how it's marked

The Listening test is marked by certificated markers, who are regularly monitored to ensure their reliability after being marked, are further analyzed by Cambridge Assessment English.

Band score conversion

A Band Score conversion table is produced for each version of the Listening test which translates scores from a 9-band scale. Scores are reported in whole bands and half bands.

One mark is awarded for each correct answer in the 40-item test. Care should be taken when writing answers on the answer sheet as poor spelling and grammar are penalized.

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