

# *Listening Checklist*

*By Daniel Sansoni*

## **The Basics**

- *Write answers on the question paper* – there is no point writing your answers directly onto the answer sheet because you are given 10 minutes at the end of the test to transfer your answers. Directly writing them in will only cause you to miss many.
- *Answer all of the questions* – never leave any blank. If you miss some in one section then make a quick guess before you move on to the next section. If you still can't guess, then leave it and try again in the 10-minute transfer time at the end. *Always* write something, no matter how crazy or stupid you might feel it is.
- *Listen to what the announcer has to say* – this speaker imparts valuable knowledge. The announcer tells you the *who, what, where* and sometimes even *why* of the upcoming recording and these things enable you to *anticipate* answers. This speaker also informs you of how many questions to read ahead. *Always* preview at least this many questions – if that means turning over the page then *always* turn over the page and have a look.
- *Use the “look at the questions time” wisely* – do not spend this time looking round the room at attractive members of the opposite sex. Read ahead and make predictions about what you will hear and what the answers are likely to be.
- *Read all instructions* – though you may have seen similar instructions on many practice tests, you should still read them just in case they are different. Also, in your nervousness you may mis-recognise the question type and answer it in the wrong way or get confused and fall behind the recording.
- *Listen actively* – do not wait for the answers to fall into your ear. *Anticipate*; try to *predict* what is required so that you know what to listen for. Use your knowledge of grammar, logic and common sense.
- *Keep up with the recording* – if you get stuck on the spelling or another small detail make a quick note that you will recognise later and come back to it during the 10-minute transfer time. You may have to use some kind of shorthand or you may even have to write the answer down in Chinese and translate it later.
- *Check your answers* –at the end of each section and then again after the recording has finished, when you are transferring them to the answer sheet. If what you

have written is illogical, far-fetched, crazy or just does not make sense, then it is probably wrong. If it is ungrammatical, then it is definitely wrong.

## The Specifics

### *Diagrams and Maps*

- When you see a picture you need to translate it into words. Try to name the distinguishing features of the things in the picture.

*Eg → BUILDING → house/flat/town house → single/ multi storey → 0/1/2 windows.*

*Eg → PERSON → woman/man/boy/girl → tall/short/thin/fat → dark/light/long/short/curly hair → ? clothes → ? accessories*

- When presented with sets of pictures take note of the ones that are similar and ones that are opposite. Anticipate the writers of the test. Which listening skills are they trying to test?

*Eg → the woman in the light skirt and dark top/ the woman in the dark skirt and light top*

- There are two main types of maps. Ones where you choose answers from a description of the environment and ones where you follow directions:

*Type 1 → establish where the speaker is; relating him/her to already labelled locations of the map and relate these labelled parts to unlabelled locations using prepositions of place...[eg → X is in front of, opposite, behind...etc...(Labelled Part)]*

*Type 2 → follow directions with a pencil. Know your RIGHT from your LEFT. The answer is often in this form: "...turn left at the second intersection and then it is the third building on your right."*

### *Multiple Choice*

- *Before listening to the recording* – look at the alternatives and use your knowledge of the topic and situation, as well as grammatical and general knowledge to eliminate impossible or absurd choices. Also take note of alternatives which seem strange or unusual. Remember that not every question contains alternatives that may be eliminated.
- *When listening to the recording* – eliminate any answers that contradict what is said. Be prepared to hear keywords from all of the alternatives mentioned, especially in sections 2,3 and 4.

## **Tables**

- *Before listening* – take note of:
  1. **Column headings** – both horizontal and vertical. Know what sort of words belong in each column.
  2. **Examples** – these show you how to fill out the table and give you clues to other answers.
  3. **Questions** – know where the questions are.
- *When listening* – remember where the questions are and be prepared for them to come out of order...**eg...** 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 6, 5...

## **Forms**

- *Before listening* – try to predict the form answers will take...**eg...** *telephone numbers, money, I.D., numbers, credit card type...*
- *When listening* – be prepared for speakers to make mistakes and be corrected by other speakers and for speakers to change their minds. Listen carefully to the spelling of names – after you have written down the letters, check to see if your word resembles an English word, *ie* it does not have impossible combinations of vowels or consonants.

## **Filling out Notes**

- *When listening* – keep up with the recording by counting off the notes already written on the question paper. Pay special attention to bullet sequences and be prepared for synonyms – especially in section 4.

**Eg** → *you read:*

### **Advantages of earthen houses**

- inexpensive to build
- passive solar capacity
- ...**33**...
- conserve space

→ *you hear:*

“The main reason for the recent surge of interest in earthen houses is their great value for money. Since dirt is practically everywhere it is much cheaper to acquire than other building materials, reducing construction costs by as much as 15%. Another cost effective aspect of earthen houses is their ability to retain heat in winter, yet stay cool in summer, which saves on electricity. This is due to the passive solar capacity of earth walls. Sound does not travel through earth walls either and most people appreciate these acoustic properties in a home. Lastly, because they are usually partly submerged in the ground, earthen houses save space – more and more important in these crowded times.”

→ *note*: As soon as you hear the words passive solar capacity, you should get ready for the answer. Also note the synonyms – cheaper/inexpensive, construction/build, save/conserve.