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**Female Voice:** You are now listening to the IELTS podcast. Learn from tutors and ex-examiners who are masters of IELTS preparation. Your host, Ben Worthington.

## INTRODUCTION

**Ben:** IELTS listening. In this tutorial, we're going to focus on how the scoring in the IELTS test converts to your band score and we're going to look at some differences between the paper-based and the computer-based test.

My name is Ben Worthington and you'll probably know me from all the other IELTS tutorials or the videos on YouTube or the guest appearances on other podcasts such as Luke's podcast and so on and so forth.

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[Overview of the Listening Test, How the Scoring Converts to IELTS Band Scores, & Differences Between the Paper-Based and Computer-Based Test](#)

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## ABOUT THE IELTS LISTENING TEST

This tutorial is all about the [IELTS listening test](#). As you probably know, the listening test is the same for IELTS academic as it is for IELTS general training. It lasts around 30 minutes. It's divided into the four sections and as with most of the tests, it gradually gets more difficult. In each section, you're going to hear a recording of native English speakers and in each section is about 10 questions. Fortunately, the questions are in the right order in that you're going to--they're placed in the same order in that-- as the delivery of the information.

Now, it's important to bear in mind that across the English-speaking world there is a multitude of different accents. You've got my lovely northern accent, for example. It's not as northern as it used to be, but what I'm saying is that you're going to hear American accents, Australian



accents, British accents, English accents, Canadian, New Zealand, and so on. All these different types of English.

So, this is why it's good to vary the input material you are using to train your ears. As I've said before, practice tests are a good way forward. Another way is to, as I just mentioned, is to vary your radio stations and it's never been so good as it is today. Like in no point in time could you within about literally thirty seconds or even less, ten seconds of just clicking around you can tune into a Texas radio station, you can tune into an Australian internet radio station.

It's just never been like this. There's never been a better time to practice or to [prepare for your IELTS listening test](#). Anyway, your goal when you're listening to all these different internet radio stations or documentaries is to improve your ability to cope with less familiar accents.

For example, David Attenborough, he's the one who does the BBC Earth documentaries, he's got an amazing accent and for me personally, anything that he says I find really interesting. He could just be describing a table, but the way he enunciates, the way he shapes the language,



the way he-- his intonation, he stresses on certain words. It really does captivate me and yes, you could say he's like the granddad I never had. I'm sure his eyes or his eyebrows would rise when he hears such an explanation, such a compliment.

Anyway, what I'm getting at is train your ears. Get used to listening to different accents. I know personally like the first time I hear a Glaswegian, for example, or someone from Dundee I don't understand much. It takes me a good 30 seconds to tune in to how they pronounce the words, the speed that they talk at and after those 30 seconds, I can understand pretty much most of it and what usually happens, which is rather irritating, is I'll probably start copying their accent which can get a little bit annoying.

Anyway, let's get back to the IELTS test. So, it's important to be aware that you've only got one chance when it comes to the listening. They're not going to play it again. So really, you need to be like preparing your ears. You need to be almost predicting the answers, which we're going to go into in another tutorial and it's also very wise to be aware of the format.



## IELTS LISTENING SECTIONS

Now, **in the first two recordings, you're going to listen to two people talking about everyday-- well, talking in everyday social context.** So, in the first one, you're going to hear a conversation between two people; perhaps a customer, a shop assistant, I don't know, a student and a librarian or a tourist in a tourist information center. There are lots of different scenarios.

**In the second section, you're going to listen to one person. It's going to be a monologue.** So, you may hear a radio broadcast or you might hear the details of the public event. It just varies and this is why it's a good idea to get hold of the practice tests.

**Next one: in sections 3 and 4, it's going to be-- you're going to listen to recordings from an academic context and it's going to involve two or more people; maybe a university student discussing the course with this tutor, maybe it's a couple of students discussing their final**



**assignment.** It really does vary from test to test. Then in section 4, it's going to be another monologue. Obviously, as I mentioned before, it gets progressively more difficult and it's important to be aware of this.

## IELTS LISTENING QUESTIONS FORMAT

Now, there are a wide variety of questions that you will see in front of you on your paper or on the screen if you're doing the computer-based. This is why it's a very wise idea to [get familiar with the format by doing practice tests.](#)

**Let's have a look at the format of the questions. You're going to have multiple-choice questions, matching questions, labeling diagrams, and completing summaries. And there are different question types in the different sections.** Some sections will contain more multiple-choice, other questions will have sentence completion, for example. So, it's a good idea to get accustomed to the different variations.



Now then, not only is it important that you get familiar with these different types of questions it's also important that you become aware of following the instructions. Now, this may seem a little bit silly, but it's really too easy just to go in there and lose points because you might simply misinterpret the instructions.

Let me give you an example. Some questions specify the number of words you should write. So, **if the question states: write no more than two words for each answer, you will need to write either one word or two words for each answer.** If you're writing three words then it's going to be marked as incorrect. So, it's quite cut and dried, as we say in the UK. It's very simple. It's very straightforward. It's like this or it's nothing. It's cut and dried. It's straightforward. So, really pay attention.

Now then, not only are you going to be losing points if you write down the wrong amount of words but also if the word is misspelled. This is why it's important to really **[boost your IELTS vocabulary, to expand your IELTS vocabulary](#)** before the exam, just to be aware of more words



so you can use more words and you can obviously spell more words. Also, grammatical errors are also going to be marked as incorrect.

## IELTS LISTENING SCORES

Now then, each question is worth one point, **so the maximum score in the listening exam is 40 points**. These scores are then converted into your IELTS of band score, all right? Now, the exact conversion depends on each test, but on average, you'll need to score around 23 out of 40 to get a band 6, 30 out of 40 for a band 7, and 35 out of 40 if you're aiming for a band 8.





## WHEN AND HOW TO PREPARE

As a side note, I'm going to emphasize again for the third time already the practice tests are the best way to do is the best way to [train for this part](#). Now, I'm saying that if you've got your exam in less than 30 days you want to be doing lots of practice tests.

If your exam is in three months, six months or whatever then you can probably focus more on just listening in general and find some material that you enjoy; maybe the Premier League football podcast or the cricketing podcast in English whatever-- whatever floats your boat, as we say, whatever interests you and listen to that because you're more likely to listen to it and develop the habit of listening to it, okay?

However, if you don't have a problem and if you find yourself that you can listen at length to these [IELTS listening tests](#) then that's also fine. Do one of those. If you can, do one every day.



When you're doing these tests, don't just mindlessly work through them. You need to complete the test and then, as I said before, identify the area which is costing you points.

After you've identified that area, find more practice tests and do more listening tests, but only focus on those areas. So, it's possible-- it's very likely that you might only want to start doing parts 3 & 4 of the listening test. If you're getting full points for parts 1 & 2, then if you just start focusing on the areas where you're losing points, which might be 3 & 4, then you can get twice as much done because you can listen to you know twice as many harder sections this way rather than listening to a complete test every single time.

This is an important point that will help you improve faster and this goes back to what we say here at IELTS podcast that [getting feedback is the fastest way to improve](#). This is why we are offering feedback on the writing courses because from experience, we know that just giving you a course and telling you good luck is not enough. It's not sufficient. You're only going to be passively learning.



You need to be actively learning. You need to be writing out essays, getting feedback, writing out sentences, finding your errors. This is the fastest way to improve. We are working on offering feedback in the speaking course, the [Speaking Confidence Course](#). We are still fine-tuning this, but for the writing, we've got it down to a system and it's working well and we are getting a lot of success as you've probably heard from the students on the success interviews we do.

### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PAPER-BASED AND COMPUTER-BASED LISTENING

Right, let's go into the next section. Now, in a lot of the test centers, **it's possible to do the test on the computer and one of the best or one of the key advantages for test-takers doing the test on the computer is that you get to receive your results faster.** There are a few other advantages which I'm going to talk about now.



Well actually, let's look at the differences first. So, **with the paper-based listening test, you're going to write your answers on the test paper while you're listening. Then you'll be given ten minutes at the end to transfer your answers onto an answer sheet. If you do the [computer test](#) you do not-- you only get two minutes at the end to check your answers. There's no transference. There's no transfer and the test stops automatically at the end of this time period. So, as you're listening, you're putting in the answers directly into the answer sheet.**

Now, if you're struggling-- if you struggle in the listening section then you might want to check in your test center how they conduct the test. Some of them will do it with headphones rather than speakers and I think this is a much fairer way. For example, if somebody in the hall or in the classroom has the flu and the coughing and sneezing or maybe they just move the chair at a key point then it's going to not only distract you it's obviously going to pollute the listening experience.



You're listening for that key phrase and then all of a sudden ... I would honestly find that very irritating. So, this is why it's a good idea just to check if they are doing the listening test with headphones or not.

I remember a few-- a while back actually, I was speaking to a student and he said that he took the test in Italy. The windows were open in the test center because it was summer and it was really warm and outside there was a main road. So, their cars were beeping. You could hear the engines. You could hear the Vespas. All of this noise pollution just seeped in and he said-- oh yeah that was it and he said there was a baby crying on the street near the window at the same time as well.

For me, that's very unprofessional and of course, it's difficult to get full control of the environment from a test center's point of view. However, having headphones will help you get a fairer and a better quality listening experience.



Now, apart from that, apart from what I was just talking about the differences between the paper-based and the listening-- I'm sorry, and the computer-based one, the tests are identical. Also, just one last thing to consider. I think most of us nowadays feel more comfortable with typing on a laptop rather than pen and paper. So, this is probably another point or another vote in favor of going to do the computer-based test.

### ADVANTAGES OF A COMPUTER-BASED LISTENING EXAM

Personally, I think the **biggest reason why or the best reason you should take the computer-based one is because of the writing task. It just becomes so much better. You're not going to get-- it's just easier to mark. For the examiners, it's going to be faster. You can copy-paste. There are just so many more advantages and especially if writing using the**



Roman alphabet is not native for you then using the computer is just going to be infinitely better.

#### FINAL TIPS

Right. That is everything that I wanted to say in this tutorial. Let me just say a couple more things before we finish. **If you are struggling with the writing or the speaking, have a look at the [online courses](#).** We are getting some fantastic results. It really does bring a smile to my face when we get the students' email saying Ben, I passed. I'm going to Canada. I'm going to Australia. Yes, it just makes it worthwhile.

So, if you are passing, and **if you are getting success from using our materials, please send us an [email](#)** obviously, if you're on the course and you've passed-- well, usually we here about



that because we follow up and we ask because, as I've said before, we are intensely results orientated.

So yes, we're getting a lot of success with that. So, come and join us if you need to pass fast or if you're struggling or if you just feel completely frustrated, annoyed and infuriated and irritated by this whole IELTS saga.

Also, coming up very soon, **we'll be launching a second podcast**. I still haven't decided what to call it yet, but I'll probably start asking you guys very soon. I'm torn between something related to strivers. **Strivers** to me kind of signifies what we are, who we are. **Strife** means to put in a lot of effort and to aim for better and I think that captivates or encapsulates all of us. That's the one thing we've got in common.

We are-- more specifically you are taking the IELTS exam to get to a better place; to join that university abroad, to get that permanent residency in Canada, Australia, or to start working in





the UK or the US or wherever. Strivers-- striving is what we're doing to get there. Anyway, I will share more information about that soon.

The final thing, **if you are struggling you can [sign up and get more material](#) at [ieltspodcast.com](#)**. If you know a friend who's going through a hard time with the IELTS exam, then tell them to get in contact. Share a [link](#) with them. And if you found this [tutorial](#) useful, please share it with your friends. Don't be selfish. Spread the love so to speak.

That's everything from me keep your head up. Keep your chin up. Keep working. You will get there. Have a good day and I wish you all the best with your IELTS journey. Take care.

[Music]

**Female Voice:** Thanks for listening to [ieltspodcast.com](#).

**Ben:** I think that's everything. Oh, you don't have a copy of your IELTS certificate with you.

**Student:** Yes.



**Ben:** Oh superstar.

**Student:** I've got-- yes. So, which one do you want to see? I've got a collection here.

