**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.

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| **INTRODUCTION** |

**Ben: IELTS Listening: multiple choice and short answer questions. In this tutorial, you will be able to tackle multiple choice and short answer questions more effectively, you're going to find out some common errors with these types of questions, and finally, you're going to become more familiar with the different parts of the listening test.**

Now, my name is Ben Worthington as you most likely know from [ieltspodcast.com](http://ieltspodcast.com/) and by the way, if you are struggling with IELTS, then I'd recommend go over-- I recommend going over to that site, [signing up](https://www.ieltspodcast.com/sign/), and dropping us an email and just tell us what the situation is.

I once got an email that said as the subject line: Aha! IELTS task 2 is seriously killing me. And I thought wow! That is a good subject line, so I now use it in some of my emails, but anyway, I just thought it captured like this whole-- the whole situation of this student perfectly and I thought wow! I bet a lot of other students are there.

Well, in this tutorial, as you know, we're not going to be focusing on task 2. We are going to be **focusing on** [**IELTS listening**](https://www.ieltspodcast.com/category/listening/)and specifically, we're **going to look at the completion questions**, which usually involve filling in the gaps to complete a form or a table. Also, there are **multiple-choice questions** and usually, the recording is divided into two parts with sort of like the second part continuing on from the previous conversation. Now, with multiple-choice questions, you'll usually have to choose between a), b) or c), right?

Now, in this audio that you will hear in a minute, it's going to be a very famous person you probably recognize their voice and another person. It's basically a woman who recently-- she recently moved into the area and she's asking about local restaurants, okay? The question is how did the woman's neighbor find out about The Green Papaya?

There are three options here: a) He won a free meal in a competition at work.   
b) A colleague at work recommended it to him and   
c) He read about it in a local newspaper. Before we listen, I want to give you some guidance and really just break it down. So, as with all parts of the listening test, it's very important that you take the time to look through the task carefully before the recording starts.

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| **FOCUS IN IELTS LISTENING** |

Another point: **to score high, having the ability to focus is essential.** This will help you hold your attention and increase your focus when you are getting towards the keywords in the question. How do you improve your focus? Excellent question. I find, personally, **meditation** improves my focus considerably.

Without meditation, I have this wretched monkey mind that just bounces around and especially before going to sleep, it just never stops. However, since starting meditating, this is a bit odd maybe for some people, it's just quietened down that voice and this really, really helped my focus. Also, just daily and regularly practicing the ability to focus will also just strengthen that focus muscle.

Next one: in your head, you need to paraphrase some of the keywords and not just the keywords sort of like on the paper, but brainstorm for alternatives. Brainstorm for phrases that mean the same, but are obviously different words; basically paraphrasing. So, you're looking at different ways of saying the same information.

For example, answer a) mentions a free meal. How else can we say a free meal? Well, we could say a voucher which entitles you to dinner for two. Maybe we could say buy one get one free, something like that. We don't want to get confused with the expression though. There is no such thing as a free lunch. There's no such thing as a free lunch means that nothing is for free. So, even though you might get it for free there's truly going to be a price to be paid later on. There's no such thing as a free lunch.

Now, answer b) states a colleague recommended it. So, you could hear a friend from the office suggested trying it, you see? It's basically saying the same, but using different words. So, paraphrasing is a very useful skill to develop.

Answer c) says he read about the restaurant in a local newspaper. So, you could expect something about reading restaurant reviews or browsing online or flicking through the local paper. It could be an online newspaper, for example.

Now, how do you develop the ability to **paraphrase**? Well, one is you can start doing the listening tests, which is what I've recommended before and speaking with successful students. This is exactly what they have done. **Practice tests after practice tests**. This is going to boost your ability not only with the tests but if you're doing it attentively, then you're also going to be improving your paraphrasing skills. You're going to be able to listen to how the examiners are writing the papers and what paraphrasing they are using.

Another good way is to boost your IELTS vocabulary. We've got a big tutorial about this at [ieltspodcast.com](http://ieltspodcast.com/) and there we go into details with flashcards and phrase books and all these techniques and we are starting a new technique soon. I'm actually using it to improve-- well, to learn German funnily enough and shortly, I will finish. I've got to give it at least two weeks, but then I'll be able to report whether it is effective or not.

If it is, we're going to jump into this and we're going to start making an [IELTS vocabulary](https://www.ieltspodcast.com/ielts-vocabulary/lexical-resource/) group and everything like that. Trust me; it's going to be really exciting. First of all though, I just want to test it out and see if it holds up to all its promises.

Next: now, when you are listening to the recording, you need to be aware of distractors. A distractor might sort of like move your attention away from the correct answer. So, you might hear sort of like two wrong answers first where they say-- maybe there's a question about what day is the lunch. Thursday, Friday, Saturday and in the recording, you'll hear a speaker going Thursday is excellent for the lunch and then the next person will say actually, that's not too good for me. Is it possible we can do the day after? And they'll say actually, that day I've got an engagement. Let's try the day before or let's try a week after.

What I'm saying is that they’ll just sort of like dance around the original answer, but they'll catch the lower level student out who just hears that phrase which is possibly an exact match of what's necessary and like okay that's it when really what happens is usually afterwards, they’ll say actually, no. That's not a good idea. So, it kind of like just throws out that little present that you thought that they had given to you. Just throws it out and then you have to keep on focusing. Keep on listening.

Now then, related to distractors is to be aware of the fact that you shouldn't really make your decision early. While you're listening, you can mark the paper just like tick it, make a cross, make a note, something like that or even better make a mental note, but keep listening until the end of the recording before you come to your final decision or at least keep going until you sort of like spot that oh, we've moved on to the next question. In that case, then put down the strongest point that you've thought about.

Now then, let's listen to a recording about the earlier question. So, I'll just refresh for you the earlier question. So, it's section 1 question 7-10. Choose the correct letter: a), b) or c). How did the woman's neighbor find out about The Green Papaya? a) He won a free meal in a competition at work, a colleague at work recommended it to him or c) He read about it in a local newspaper. Now, let's have a listen.

**Recording Speaker 1:** So, how did you discover that The Green Papaya was the place to go?

**Recording Speaker 2:** Well, I love eating out and trying new places and I often read restaurant reviews.

**Recording Speaker 1:** Right

**Recording Speaker 2:** But finding The Green Papaya was a bit of an accident.

**Recording Speaker 1:** Really? What do you mean?

**Recording Speaker 2:** Well, we have this system at work. Every month, the person who comes up with the best idea for increasing sales is rewarded with dinner for two at a local restaurant.

**Recording Speaker 1:** And you won?

**Recording Speaker 2:** Well, actually I came second. It was pretty close, but Richard ended up winning. Anyway, he told me about his fantastic experience at The Green Papaya and I decided I had to give it a try.

**Ben:** So, even though you can hear me mentioning reading restaurant reviews, eventually, I switch and we discover that the correct answer is b) a colleague at work. So, that's a good example of the distraction.

**Now, multiple-choice questions often appear in sections 2 and 3 of the test as well as in section** 1. They are sometimes challenging as they require you to demonstrate a wide variety of skills. For example, you might need to listen for the gist. The gist is a lovely word. It basically means the general idea and the general idea could be expressed more by maybe the tone, maybe the intonation. This is why it's quite useful to study intonation and practice intonation and start listening for it.

So, what I'm saying is that you might have to-- you've got to listen-- you've got to develop a range of skills: listening for the gist, listening for specific information, listening for specific details. What you need to do is practice all of these sort of like sub-skills. Oh, my word! The city is always like this. It's incredible. I can't wait till I move to the countryside.

Anyway, so it's important to be able to develop these skills: understanding the gist, the ability to follow the test situation, the test conversation, thedistractions, the ability to listen for specific information, specific details and the best way to practice this is to get hold of some practice tests and really just focus on developing this skill and I honestly think maybe just allocate a week to develop your listening skills.

Of course, if this is an area that you're struggling from, then spend a week developing it and then maybe just to maintain it, do a listening test every couple of days. It depends. Different students have different challenges. Some might be struggling with the reading, some might be struggling with the writing, but as a general rule, getting feedback is the best way be it feedback from the answer sheet in the test book that you have or getting feedback from the speaking by a tutor or by trained ex-IELTS examiner, for example, or getting feedback on your writing. This is undeniably the fastest way to improve.

Let's move on to section 2 of the listening test, all right? I'll just give you the standard text. Answer the questions below. Write no more than one word and/or a number for each answer. What two things do participants need to bring with them? Let's have a listen. The first part of the recording, you'll hear something like this-- like an introduction.

You will hear one of the organizers of a local outdoor event talking to a group of people who are going to participate in the event the following day. Now, it's not clear what kind of event it is, but it's going to be outdoors. So, you can be pretty certain it's not going to be bowling, but it could be something like golf, outdoor Frisbee, football. It’s organizers of a local outdoor event. So, it could be orienteering, it could be hunting.

So, this is what I mean. You need to start brainstorming possible ideas about the vocabulary, about the context, about what we're going to hear. Also, maybe if it's in England, it's probably going to be raining as well. So, they might be talking about what kind of equipment they’ll need or what kind of material-- umbrellas, wellies, whatever. Let's listen to the first part of the recording.

**Recording Speaker 3:** Hello, everybody, and thanks very much for coming to the briefing today. The purpose of this session is to try and make sure that things run as smoothly as possible. We will have 200 people attending the event tomorrow, so I'm sure that you can appreciate that this all takes quite a lot of organization.

Okay. Now, as you are all aware, things get on the way at 11:00 a.m. tomorrow morning. Please make sure that you arrive at 10:45 a.m. at the latest. All the food will be provided, so you don't need to worry about that side of things. However, the forecast is for hot sunny weather. So, please don't forget to bring plenty of water so that you don't get dehydrated and sunscreen, of course.

**Ben:** So, as you've probably guessed, I hope you've guessed anyway the answers to the questions are water and sunscreen in either order. Now, just be sure to follow the instructions and check. If you had written plenty of water, then it would have been incorrect because it clearly says in the instructions no more than one word and/or a number. So, it's clearly water, sunscreen.

By the way, if you can identify that man's accent in the last recording, then send us an email and we've got a surprise for the first student who guesses correctly. Second point: if you know anybody who's struggling, tell them to get in contact or share them the IELTS podcast. We'd love to hear from them. If you've passed using our materials, using our online course, get in contact as well. We'd love to hear from you.

If you're struggling with the writing, then go to [ieltspodcast.com](http://ieltspodcast.com/). There you'll find the [Jump to Band 7 or It's Free online course](https://www.ieltspodcast.com/online-ielts-course/). This is also getting students up to band 8, sometimes up to band 9, so it's not just for the students who are at 6.5. It's for students who want to pass first time. It's for self-study students who are studying by themselves.

It's also for students who might just not have enough confidence with their local academy and this is very common because local academies-- local IELTS prep centers or so-called prep centers, these teachers they don't live by results. I put a guarantee on the cost and if you don't get the score, you get a refund. I live by the results.

These other teachers they just pick up a paycheck at the end of the month and they put big adverts on 56 hours of IELTS tuition and what happens? You get in the classroom; two Saudis, three Brazilians, and a German. It almost sounds like a joke already. It's like okay and the teacher doesn't give a tested proven framework to help you pass the writing.

They say oh, you've got to write in an academic fashion. Oh, you've got to clearly express your opinion. Oh, you’ve got to think of ideas. That's fair enough, but how do we do this? Come on and this is what kind of frustrates me as you can hear.

So anyway, sorry we went off on one there, but anyway what I want to say is that if you're struggling with the writing or if you just want [feedback](https://www.ieltspodcast.com/essay-correction-service), then have a look at the [course](https://www.ieltspodcast.com/online-ielts-course/). It's designed for those-- as I said for students who are aiming for a 7 or above. If you're aiming for an 8, if you want to pass first-time and just get it over and done with, there's lots of feedback in the course with helping you every step of the way and if you're in a rush, it can take about 10 days to do the course.

If you've got plenty of time, you're taking it easy, you can do the course usually in about 20-30 days. You get your essay back the next day. You review the essay. You look at some more tutorials then you send in another essay. You get feedback on that and so on and so forth.

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| **FINAL TIP** |

The final thing that I wanted to say is just keep moving. Keep working. Try and get into the routine. This is really important especially for language learning in the long term. If you can get into the routine of doing it every single day, then you're much more likely to succeed than a student who just blitzes it for two sessions of six hours and then doesn't touch it again for the rest of the week.

By the way, when I mean a routine, you could also say a ritual and I've been reading a lot about routines and habits and rituals and the easiest way to get into this habit is to just say look, I'm going to start the smallest thing possible. So, for example, if your goal is to improve your writing, what you want to do is write out one whole essay every single day. If you find that you've been struggling with this, then just make it small and make it easy.

Just say look, I'm going to write out one sentence every day. That's it. One sentence from this IELTS essay and then once you've got it in place, once you've got the routine, now you start building up. So, first, you write one essay-- sorry one sentence. You can even break it down to one word if you’re having real issues, but first write down one sentence: the introduction. The next day, write down another sentence.

After a week, you might think this isn't too bad. I'm turning up now. Like half of the competition or half of the effort to do this is just turning up. So, you just turn up, you do your sentence. Within a week, once you've got this habit established, now you can start writing maybe a paragraph. Now, you can maybe start copying out two paragraphs, but the first thing is to get that habit established. Once you get that habit established, boom! You're away. So, start off small.

Wow! I really did go off on a tangent there. Anyway, I hope that was useful. I'm going to be talking more about this in the future. I’m going to be talking about habits for success with IELTS, so there's a lot more material coming out about that.

Now, my name is Ben Worthington. Thank you very much. Remember to go to [ieltspodcast.com](http://ieltspodcast.com/) and [sign up](https://www.ieltspodcast.com/sign/). Remember to get in contact if you've got any challenges and remember to share this episode if it was useful. Take care. Keep moving. Keep improving. You will get there.

[Music]

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