

LanguageCert
Academic



Tips for candidates

Language
Cert

Listening

General Listening Tips

- You will hear every listening task twice. Use the first listening to answer as many questions as you can and the second to complete your answers. If you manage to answer all questions on the first listening, use the second listening to check these.
- You will be given some time to read through the questions set. Familiarise yourself with what you are required to do and make predictions (e.g. about the content). This will help you perform better.
- The answers to the questions will always appear in the listening text in the same order as the questions are asked. So that will guide you as to which section the answers appear in.
- Pay attention to the speaker's tone of voice as this may be helpful in answering the questions (for example, do they sound happy, frustrated, curious etc.?)
- Remember you are not required to understand every single word you will hear. If you don't know the answer to a question, make your best guess.

Part 1

In Part 1 you will be asked to listen to seven short unfinished conversations and choose the best continuation or completion of the dialogue. The conversations are set in various contexts (e.g. between students, student and lecturer, student and admin official) and there is one multiple-choice question for each.

Tips

- There will be two speakers in these conversations so listen carefully for the two different voices so you know which speaker is speaking at which point.
- If there are any words you don't understand, during the first listening try to guess these from the context or wait for the second listening.

Part 2

In Part 2 you will be asked to listen to five conversations and identify specific aspects (e.g. the speakers' main ideas, opinions, feelings, attitudes). There are two multiple-choice questions for each.

Tips

- There are always two speakers in these conversations so listen carefully for the two different voices so you know which speaker is speaking at which point.
- You might want to use the first listening to answer the first question and the second listening to focus on the second question. Even if you answer both questions during the first listening, always listen carefully again to check your answers.

Listening

Part 3

In Part 3 you will be asked to listen to a monologue (one speaker only) and extract key information to complete a set of notes. There are seven gaps to complete with between one and three words.

Tips

- You will be given 30 seconds to look at the notes before the listening begins so skim read the notes and think about what kind of information might go into each gap.
- The exact words for each gap will appear in the listening so there is no need to paraphrase- just write what you hear.
- Don't waste any time writing more than three words as you won't receive any additional marks for this.

Part 4

In Part 4 you will be asked to listen to a conversation between two speakers and answer six multiple choice questions.

Tips

- You will be given one minute to look at the questions before the listening begins so skim read the questions and possible answers so you know what to listen out for.
- As you will hear a conversation dense with information, you may need to disregard some of it.
- Note that the conversation will revolve around a topical issue.

General Reading Tips

- Read any given text once through first to get the main idea and only then attempt answering the questions.
- Try not to get stuck on individual words that you don't understand if they don't interfere with the key points of the text.
- Remember that the answers to the questions in the text are always in the same order as the questions are asked. Use this as a guide as to which section of the text the answer will be found in.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, make your best guess.

Part 1a

In Part 1a you will be asked to read six sentences and replace one word (in bold) from that sentence with another word without changing the meaning of the sentence. You will have four words to choose from for each sentence.

Tips

- Some of the words in the option list will have a very similar meaning to the word in the sentence but will not be exactly right in the given context. Say the sentence in your head replacing the word with your chosen answer to see if it sounds correct.
- Provide an answer even if you are not sure it is the correct one.

Part 1b

In Part 1b you will be asked to read a short gapped text and choose the correct word to fill each gap. There are five gaps with a multiple choice answer for each.

Tips

- Read the whole text first, including the title, before you attempt to fill any gaps and get a feel for what kind of text it is.
- If there are any words you don't understand, try to guess these from the context, using the words before and after as clues.
- The options will be the same parts of speech (e.g. nouns, verbs, adverbs) so you won't be able to rely on grammatical clues - you'll need to think more about meaning and common collocations.
- Read the whole text through again once you have filled all the gaps as a final check.

Reading

Part 2

In Part 2 you will be asked to read a longer gapped text and choose the correct sentence to fill each gap. There are seven sentences to choose from.

Tips

- Read the whole text first including the title before you attempt to fill any gaps and get a feel for what kind of text it is.
- If there are any words you don't understand, try to guess these from the context, using the words before and after as clues.
- Pay attention to the subject of the sentence to be inserted as this will often link back to the sentence before in the text. Where this is a pronoun, ensure this matches to the subject it is referring to.
- Read the whole text through again once you have filled all the gaps as a final check.

Part 3

In Part 3 you will be asked to read four short texts on a common theme and decide which text gives you the answer to the seven questions that follow.

Tips

- Skim read the texts first, paying attention to the key points that are made in each. Then read the questions and scan the text looking for the specific information that addresses each question.
- After responding to all questions, check your answers once again.

Part 4

In Part 4 you will be asked to read a longer, more complex text and answer six multiple-choice questions about it.

Tips

- Read the whole text first, including the title, before you attempt to answer the questions and try to understand the main points.
- Don't worry if you don't understand every word – some words will not be crucial to understanding the overall meaning and answering the questions.
- If a word you don't understand seems to be important, try to guess its meaning from the context.
- Remember that answers to the questions set do not always 'lift' words from the text. Look for paraphrases, synonyms etc.

General Writing Tips

- In the Writing test, Part 1 carries 40% of the total marks and Part 2 carries 60% of the total marks. So divide the 50 minutes you have accordingly.
- Read the instructions carefully and identify the key points to be covered.
- Ahead of the test, practise writing texts of the same number of words so you get an idea of the length of text that is required.
- Keep an eye of the word count throughout so that you write the minimum required. Don't write too much over the amount as you won't receive any additional marks for this.
- Emphasise key points as well as expand and support relevant ideas.
- Avoid generic words (e.g. 'good', 'bad', 'nice', etc.) and use more descriptive words (e.g. 'amazing', 'horrendous', 'outstanding').
- Make sure you use a variety of cohesive devices (e.g. 'and', 'as well', 'then', 'however') so as to clearly mark the relationship between ideas and produce clear and coherent text.
- Always read through your text again once you've finished and spend some time improving it.

Part 1

In Part 1 you will be asked to produce a short text (150-200 words) such as a report, argument or article with an intended reader specified, and covering the content points provided.

Tips

- Make sure you refer to all content points provided or you will lose marks. Address them one by one and in order to ensure they are all covered.
- Plan your answer in a few minutes: putting down some key points, examples etc. will help you better structure your text.
- Pay attention to the style of writing and who you are writing to. Adjust the tone accordingly.

Writing

Part 2

In Part 2 you will be asked to produce an essay (approx. 250 words) which will be a formal piece of discursive writing on an academic subject.

Tips

- Address the topic in a balanced and yet persuasive manner.
- Plan your answer in a few minutes: putting down some key words etc. will help you better structure your text.
- Pay attention to the style of writing required and who you are writing to. Adjust the tone accordingly.

Speaking

General Speaking Tips

- In case you do not hear a question well, you can ask the Interlocutor to repeat the question. You will not be penalised for it. However, you may not ask the Interlocutor to paraphrase or translate the question.
- Know that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' responses and what matters on your test day is your 'English', not your opinions.
- So that you can even more effectively interact with the Interlocutor, know a few 'turn taking' techniques ('how to give personal information', 'how to express views', 'how to open /close a conversation' etc).
- Prior to your test day, make sure you watch our mock test videos so that you exactly know what to expect.

Part 1

In Part 1, you will initially be asked to spell your name and give your country of origin. Then you will be asked to answer a few questions on contemporary issues. Emphasis will be on a personal response.

Tips

- Try to avoid rehearsed speech when asked 'expected questions' (e.g. about yourself, your family) so that your responses sound natural.
- Also try to avoid 'dry' or 'one-word answers' to the questions the Interlocutor will ask.

Part 2

In Part 2 you will be asked to participate in 2 or 3 situations which replicate real-life scenarios (e.g. giving advice, apologising, giving instructions).

Tips

- Don't forget that it is the Interlocutor who initiates the first interaction and the candidate (i.e. you) who initiates the second one.
- Make sure you reply appropriately in terms of language or tone (as the Interlocutor may, for example, pretend to be one of your classmates or a university accommodation officer): depending on the situation, you will need to speak in a more or less formal manner.
- Note that there may be a third situation if time allows. In that case, following the instructions given, it will be initiated by the Interlocutor or by you).

Speaking

Part 3

In Part 3 you will be asked to read a short passage out loud and answer a few follow-up questions. You will be given 20 seconds of preparation time to look at the passage before you read it out loud. Your text will remain on the screen while you answer the questions set.

Tips

- Use the 20 seconds of preparation time to skim read the text and get a sense of the topic and tone.
- Pay attention to the text punctuation and use it to guide you.
- Don't worry if you've never heard a word before and don't know how to pronounce it. Make an educated guess and move on – it's more important to keep the flow going.

Part 4

In Part 4 you will be asked to 'make a presentation' (give your opinion) on a topic chosen by the Interlocutor. You will be given one minute of preparation time and will be allowed to make some notes (you are allowed to use a blank piece of paper). You will be required to talk about the topic for two minutes.

Tips

- Written notes may prove as helpful as mental notes during the one minute of preparation time: feel free to decide what helps you more.
- You may imagine a situation or a story if you like: there is no need for it to be true.
- Before your test, practise talking for about two minutes on a topic, so you get a feel for how long this is. Keep an eye on the clock as you talk and be ready to add another point if you are not quite at the two minute mark.
- If you need a little time to think about a question you are asked, don't just sit in silence. Use phrases like: 'That's an interesting question...!', 'Let me think...!', 'Give me a second to think about that...!', 'Let me see...!'.

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