

Types of IELTS Listening Questions

The IELTS Listening test is made up of 40 questions based around 4 recordings. Before you jump into the IELTS preparation courses, first get familiar with the question types you might come across on test day.

Question Type 1 – Multiple-choice

This type of question may be a question with three possible answers or the first half of a sentence with three possible sentence endings. You have to choose one correct answer, A, B, or C, then write the correct letter on the answer sheet.

Sometimes you are given a longer list of possible answers and you have to choose more than one answer. You should read the question carefully to check how many answers you need to choose.

This type of question tests many listening skills, e.g. a detailed understanding of specific points, or a general understanding of the main points of the recording.

There is no specific number for these types of questions because their number varies.

Question Type 2 – Matching

In this type of question, you have to match a list of items from the recording to a list of options on the question paper, then write the correct letter on the answer sheet.

This type of question tests your ability to:

- listen for detailed information. For example, whether you can understand information about the type of hotel or guest house accommodation in an everyday conversation
- following a conversation between two people
- recognize how facts in the recording are connected to each other.

Question Type 3 – Plan/map/diagram labeling

In this type of question, you have to complete labels on a visual which may be:

- a diagram (e.g. a piece of equipment)
- a set of pictures
- a plan (e.g. of a building)
- a map (e.g. of part of a town).

You may have to:

- select your answers from a list on the question paper, then write the correct letter on the answer sheet
- select words from the recording that fit into gaps on the question paper. In this case, you

will need to keep to the word limit given in the instructions. You do not have to change the words in the recording in any way.

You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, 'NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER'. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as 'they're' will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as 'check-in' count as single words.

Write the words that fit into the gap on the answer sheet.

This type of question tests your ability to understand, for example, a description of a place, and how this description relates to the visual. It may also test your ability to understand explanations of where things are and follow directions (e.g. straight on/through the far door).

Question Type 4 – Form/note/table/flow chart/summary completion

In this type of question, you have to fill in gaps in an outline of part or all of the recording. The outline will focus on the main ideas/facts in the recording and may be:

- a form: often used for facts, such as names
- a set of notes: used to summarise information and show how different points relate to one another
- a table: used to summarise information that can be divided into clear categories, e.g. place/time/price
- a flow chart: used to summarise the stages in a process, with the direction of the process shown by arrows.

You may have to:

- select your answers from a list on the question paper, then write the correct letter on the answer sheet
- select words from the recording which fit into gaps on the question paper. In this case, you will need to keep to the word limit given in the instructions. You do not have to change the words in the recording in any way.

You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, 'NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER'. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as 'they're' will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as 'check-in' count as single words.

Write the words that fit into the gap on the answer sheet.

This type of question focuses on the main points the person listening would naturally write down

Question Type 5 – Sentence completion

In this type of question, you have to read sentences that summarise important information from

either all of the listening text or from one part of it. You have to fill in a gap in each sentence using information from the recording.

You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, 'NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER'. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as 'they're' will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as 'check-in' count as single words.

Write the words that fit into the gap on the answer sheet.

This type of question focuses on your ability to identify the important information in a recording. You may also need to understand relationships between ideas/facts/events, such as cause and effect.

Question Type 6 – Short-answer questions

In this type of question, you have to read a question and write a short answer using information from the recording.

You should read the instructions very carefully as the number of words or numbers you may use to fill the gaps can change. A word limit is given, for example, 'NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER'. You will lose the mark for writing more than the word limit. Contracted words such as 'they're' will not be tested. Hyphenated words such as 'check-in' count as single words.

Write your answer on the answer sheet.

Sometimes you are given a question that asks you to write two or three different answers.

This type of question focuses on your ability to listen for facts, such as places, prices or times, heard in the recording.