

Exploring Skills for English Tests

Listening Part 1: B2

Format of the task

There are three parts to the B2 Listening test. In **Part 1**, candidates will listen to 10 short recordings which may be a dialogue or a monologue (approximately 60-90 words). Topics will be on everyday life contexts and appropriate to B2 level.

The type of questions found in this part consist of single 3-option multiple choice questions (MCQ) for each recording. The focus of these questions will be on identifying key information. Candidates will need to answer the questions as they listen.

Candidates will have time to read and check their answers. All audio recordings and questions are at B2 level and each recording will be played twice.

Skills/functions being assessed

- Focus on identifying key information and overall message
- Understanding complex messages and recordings appropriate to B2 level delivered in standard speech, including general messages about everyday life, work or study for example recorded messages and public announcements, short broadcasts and radio bulletins, news reports and current affairs programmes
- Identifying speakers' mood, tone and point of view

Tips for teachers

Provide candidates with:

- Skills in time management: candidates need to be aware of the pace of the test
- Practice in listening and identifying key message, key information, factual information, thoughts and feelings.
- Practice listening out for inferred meaning, mood and tone from a variety of recordings
- Skills to be able to understand unfamiliar words/phrases through context
- Opportunities to do tests without taking notes (as the online test does not permit using pen and paper)

Tips for learners

- In preparation, listen to a wide range of recording in English and identify the main ideas, feelings, opinions and gist
- Read the questions carefully before listening. Pay attention to tone and inferred meanings. Listen out for opinions
- Use the second listening to check your answers
- Prepare by using the online Skills for English (SfE) practice tests

Sample B2 Listening Part 1 Task

The extract below is an example of the type of recording and questions a candidate may encounter in Part 1.

Gill	I hear that you have a pet bird!	<p>When there are 2 speakers these are usually male and female voices to make it clear to the candidates who is speaking.</p>	
Andrew	That's right! It's a cockatiel, they come from Australia and are a type of parrot although they don't actually talk. But our bird likes to whistle, especially when he is happy or needs attention - so he can be pretty noisy. Most of the time though he just eats and pecks things. Mind you, if he wants feeding he will let you know with a loud scream and if someone interrupts him, well, he has quite a nasty bite...		Q1
Gill	Umm, he sounds quite demanding! Does he keep you awake?		Q2
Andrew	Not at all, we didn't realise until we brought him home that cockatiels rarely nap in the day but ideally need around 10-12 hours' sleep a night. So, it means that we don't get woken up too early with a morning chorus!		

1. What does the bird do when he is disturbed?

- a. He whistles.
- b. He screams.
- c. He bites.

Q1. Although "whistle" and "scream" are mentioned in the text, neither refer to the bird's reaction when he is disturbed.

It is important to be aware of synonyms for example "disturbed" and "interrupt".

2. What information does the man give about the cockatiel's sleeping habits?

- a. It wakes up early.
- b. It sleeps all night.
- c. It naps during the day.

All options are connected to parts of the text but only one is correct - the one highlighted in green.

Answers:

- 1. c
- 2. b

Note: this sample task is for guidance purposes only. For examples of level-specific listening tasks, please refer to the Skills for English Practice Tests available through the Skills for English website: <https://skillsforenglish.com/language-learning/>