

Exploring Skills for English Tests

Listening Part 2: B2 Level

Format of the task

There are three parts to the B2 Listening test. In **Part 2**, candidates will listen to a conversation between two speakers (one male and one female) of approximately 650-800 words. Topics will be on everyday issues, which can be resolved through negotiation and discussion. This can be set in the context of work but will be general in nature and will be appropriate to B2 level.

The type of questions found in this part consist of 3 sentence completions, focusing on main message followed by seven 3-option multiple choice questions (MCQs). Candidates will be required to type their responses and responses to sentence completion questions will be limited to one or two words and/or a number only. All answers should be spelt correctly. Candidates will need to answer the questions as they listen.

There will be time for candidates to read and check their answers. All audio recordings and questions are at B2 level. Candidates will hear this part played twice.

Skills/functions being assessed

- Comprehension of the main message in monologues and in simple conversations for a given purpose
- Understanding of specific concrete information of everyday personal nature
- Understanding of language relating to numbers, times, directions, locations, likes, needs, agreements and disagreements

Tips for teachers

Provide candidates with:

- Practice in listening to a variety of recording types and topics
- Skills to understand how informal and formal dialogues are organised and follow the flow of arguments
- Strategies to exploit different audio and question types such as filling in gaps
- Practice in listening and identifying key message, key information and factual information, tone and opinions

Tips for learners

- In preparation, listen to as many different types of English recordings as you can, that cover a variety of topics, feelings and opinions
- Read the questions carefully before listening, remember key words to help recognise them in the dialogue

- Use the second listening to check your answers
- Practise using cues in the text to help you identify meanings of words, phrases you don't know.
- Practice exercises where you fill in the missing words from a dialogue
- Prepare by using the online Skills for English (SfE) practice tests

Sample B2 Listening Part 2 Task

This is a short example extract from the type of recording and questions a candidate may encounter in Part 2.

Listen to 2 friends talking about reading habits.

John	Have you noticed recently that few people these days read "actual" books. Gone are the days when people on trains have their nose in a novel when they commute! And if they do read, it'll probably be on a device rather than book.	Q1
Jane	I disagree, I think people still love reading, especially books, and if you are like me, then nothing can compare to a physical copy , although in terms of cost I must agree that an e-book is a little cheaper to buy and saves cutting down all those trees.	Q2
John	I'm not convinced Jane, I think that these days people are watching more tv than anything else.	
Jane	Well John, if the Best Seller lists are to be believed then books are still very much an important part of our national culture, more so than tv . For me, the issue is not that we don't read enough, it's that we read too much. It's information overload and we don't know how to focus on one thing.	Q3
John	You may have a point there, my newspaper has so much content in the weekend editions that it takes me a week to read them.	

For questions 1, 2 and 3, write **ONE WORD** or **TWO WORDS** from the recording to fill each gap.

The words highlighted in yellow show how incorrect answers are also mentioned within the text – candidates therefore need to consider each option carefully.

The questions always rephrase the audio statements, so it is important to listen to the overall recording rather than look for exact phrases.

1. According to John most people read books on their _____ these days.
2. When it comes to books, Jane much prefers a _____ to anything else.
3. Jane says that it is difficult to focus our attention due to _____.

All questions are written to ensure that candidates have enough time to answer the next question.

Answers:

1. device
2. physical copy
3. information overload

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/>