

Test section – Listening Part 4

Keeping up with the speaker

Activities

1. Table Completion - Understanding the context and format of Part 4 Listening
2. Identifying the structure of an academic talk
3. Identifying signposting expressions
4. Listening Part 4 practice

Aims

- To provide students with strategies to approach Table Completion tasks
- To develop students' awareness of the style and format of Listening Part 4
- To develop students' awareness of the use of signposting expressions to keep up with the speaker

Learning outcomes

- Students will have practised strategies for Table Completion questions.
- Students will have identified signposting expressions.
- Students will have applied strategy and awareness of signposting expressions in Part 4 practice.

Information about this section of IELTS

In the Listening test Part 4 test takers will hear a monologue set in an educational or training context, for example, a lecture on a specific area of study. There are 10 questions and they are in the same order as the audio recording. The recordings are heard only once with no break between question sets. They include a range of accents, including British, Australian, New Zealand, American and Canadian.

A variety of question types are used, chosen from the following: Multiple Choice, Matching, Plan/Map/Diagram Labelling, Form/Note/Table/Flow Chart/Summary Completion, Sentence Completion, Short Answer questions.

Time	50-65 minutes
Level	B1+
Class	Suitable for groups / large classes, F2F / Online
Interaction	Pair or group work Individual work
Materials	Worksheets x 2 and audio script attached

Activity 1: What is Listening Part 4?

Material: Worksheet 1

Time: 20-25 minutes

Procedure:

- introduce the focus of the lesson – Listening Part 4, and elicit what students find challenging in this part of the test to arrive at the importance of keeping up with the speaker.
- draw attention to Worksheet 1 and Exercise 1, elicit what type of question this is, i.e. table completion, and allow time for students to work through the strategy questions in pairs.
- draw attention to the **word limit** of the instruction.
- elicit missing **parts of speech** for each of the gaps.
- elicit possible **predictions** based on students' own understanding of the test, be careful not to confirm/reject any answers at this stage unless they do not fit the word limit of the instruction.
- read the following script aloud while students complete the table.

*Welcome to today's talk about Part 4 of the Listening section of IELTS. We'll look at its style, format as well as share some key tips for preparing to listen. First, let's look at the **style** of the listening. You will listen to a monologue, one speaker, delivering a **lecture** on an academic topic. Don't worry, you do not need to know anything about the topic itself. Remember, this is not a test of your **subject knowledge** but of your ability to listen carefully to spoken English.*

*Moving on to the format of Part 4 now, you'll see that, as with all parts of the Listening test, you have **10** questions to answer. These questions could be all of the same type, for example 10 note completion questions, or you could get a combination of question types. This mix of question types includes, but is not limited to, multiple-choice, short answer or **other completion** questions. Please note that **all** of your preparation must be done in advance of hearing the audio. The main difference in the format of Part 4, compared to Parts 1 to 3 of the test, is that there is **no break** in the middle of the audio. Test takers will not get time in the middle of the recording to read through the next set of questions.*

*Finally, the key advice in dealing with Part 4 is to use the **preparation time** to identify the keywords to listen out for, to know when the speaker is moving on from question to question. It's important that you keep up with the speaker, so that you do not miss any questions.*

- give students time to check their own completed tables. Encourage students to check that their completed tables are logical and grammatically sound.
- get students to work in pairs to check their completed tables.
- get class feedback.

Answers

1 lecture, 2 subject knowledge, 3 ten/10, 4 (other) completion, 5 no break, 6 preparation time

- work through the discussion questions, either in pairs or small groups before eliciting class feedback to arrive at the importance of listening to signposting expressions which refer to the structure and sequence of a talk.
- spend time discussing the purpose of these i.e. they are used to signal the different stages of the talk to the listener.
- elicit from learners some examples of signposting expressions to begin or close a talk and write up any answers on the board.

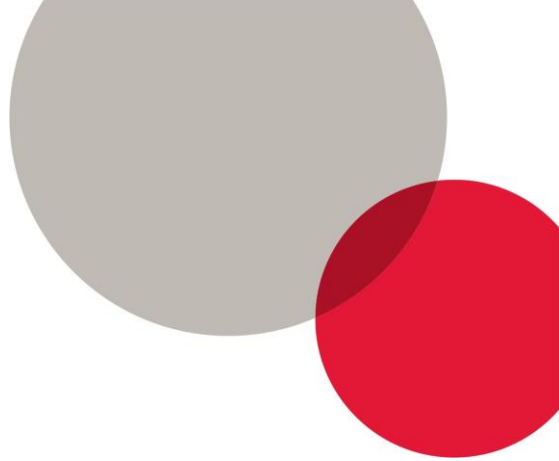
Activity 2: Signposting expressions

Material: Worksheet 1 (Exercise 3)

Time: 10-15 minutes

Procedure:

- draw attention to Exercise 3 on the worksheet.
- give students time to work alone, to recall any of the signposting expressions they remember from the previous activity to complete the table.
- read the script aloud again for students to complete with the appropriate expressions. Alternatively, you could provide a projected version of the script.
- get students to work in pairs to check their completed table.
- get class feedback and elicit any further signposting expressions they might expect to hear, add these to the table.
- elicit the general structure of an academic talk i.e. it mirrors the structure of an academic essay, with an introduction, main body and conclusion. There is also an overlap here, not only with Writing Task 2 but also how students might structure their long-turn in Speaking Part 2 i.e. a beginning, middle and end. Additionally, this awareness of overall text structure can help when dealing with longer texts in the IELTS Reading Section.



- clarify for students that in IELTS, they may hear the entire talk or an excerpt of the talk, the recording may fade out before reaching the conclusion.
- round this activity off by referring back to the problems discussed at the start of the lesson – keeping up with the speaker – and how knowledge of structure and awareness of these types of expressions can help.

Answers (including suggestions)

Signposting expression	Function
Welcome to today's talk about / thank you for coming to ... / My name is... and today I am going to talk about...	Introduction to the talk
First, let's look at / Moving on to / let's now look at... / another thing... / If I can draw your attention to... / another aspect ... / the next issue... / now let's turn to...	Transitioning from one area of focus to the other, usually in the middle sections of the talk
Finally, / to sum up, / in conclusion, / to conclude, / to summarise, / it is clear from what we talked about today... / overall, / in summary, / in this lecture we talked about...]	Closing the talk

Activity 3: Getting ready to listen

Material: Worksheet 2

Time: 10-15 minutes

Procedure:

- draw attention to Exercise 1. Students survey the test questions to identify the topic of the lecture, the number of question sets, and the question types. Allow only 5 seconds for this.
- elicit student responses, be careful not to confirm any correct responses, this task is designed to help develop how quickly test takers are able to survey to get an awareness of the content for themselves.

- draw attention to Exercise 2. Students have a little longer to skim the questions and underline/circle keywords to listen out for to know when to move on from question set to question set. i.e. *past; present; future; present hedonists*.
- get students to quickly check their ideas in pairs.
- draw attention to Exercise 3 where signposting expressions have been taken from the audio script.
- complete the first one in open class, matching expression b) to the very start of the talk, mark b) in the margin of the question paper.
- elicit which of the expressions the speaker might use to indicate the transition from the table task to the MCQs, c), and mark this in the margin of question 36.
- students complete alone, check in pairs then check open class.
- in open class, elicit how students made their matches. This is an opportunity to discuss how an awareness of the overall structure of an academic talk can help them keep up with the speaker.
- for MCQs, elicit how listening for keywords from the stems, or synonyms of these, are the indicators of when to move on from question to question.

Answers

In text order

- b) Today, I'm going to be talking about time – *placed at the very beginning*.
- d) The first two are based in the past– *placed next to row heading Past*.
- a) Then, we have people who live in the present – *placed next to row heading Present*.
- f) Looking at the future time zone - *placed next to row heading Future*.
- c) Okay, let's move on. - *indicates a change of topic or direction in the talk. It may also indicate a move on to the next set of questions. – placed at the start of MCQs*.
- e) So, it's really important to be aware of how other people think about time. – *clearly the final question, match with Question 40*

Activity 4: Listening practice

Material: Worksheet 2

Time: 10-15 minutes

Procedure:

- remind students of the strategy for table completion covered in the first task of the lesson.
- set up the listening, remind students that they will have preparation time once the recording starts and elicit what they could use that time for. i.e. identifying missing parts of speech in the table completion task and identifying key words and thinking about synonyms in the multiple-choice task, underlining keywords, predicting possible answers.
- access the listening [here](#).
- get students to work in pairs to check their answers.
- go through the answers open class.

Answers

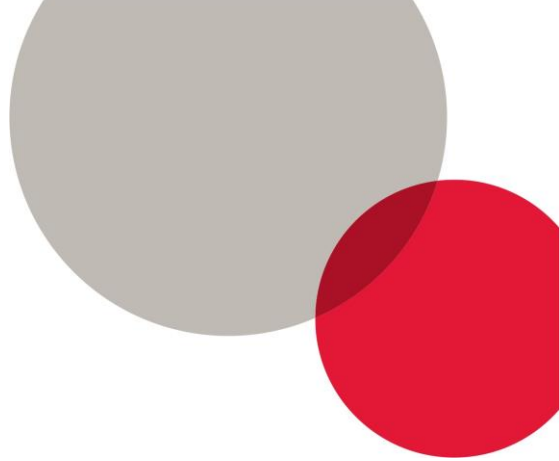
31. negative, 32. pleasure. 33. poverty, 34. active, 35. success
36. B
37. A
38. C
39. A
40. B

Follow-up activity

Make copies of the audio script for students to

- locate answers.
- identify signposting language throughout.
- note the use of synonyms or rephrasing of the words in the questions.

You may also wish to encourage students to prepare and deliver their own presentations on a topic they know well. This can help consolidate the use of signposting and the structure of an academic talk.



Listening Part 4

Worksheet 1

What is Listening Part 4?

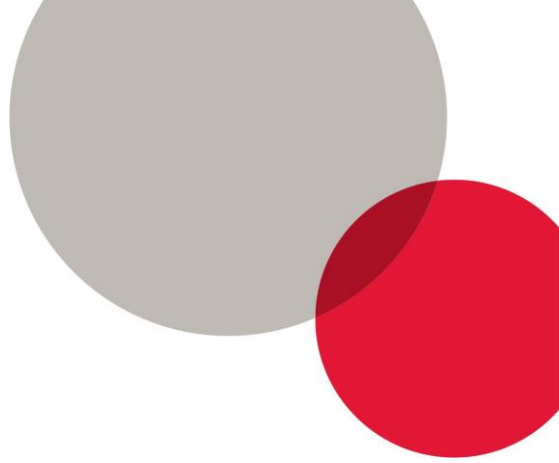
- 1 *You are going to hear your tutor give a short talk on IELTS Listening Part 4. Before you listen, answer the following questions about the task below.*
- a) *What question type is this?*
 - b) *Looking at the instructions, what can you write in the gaps?*
 - c) *Looking before and after each gap, which parts of speech are missing? How do you know?*
 - d) *Can you predict any possible answers based on what you already know?*

Complete the table below with **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER**

IELTS Listening Part 4	
WHAT TO EXPECT	TIPS AND ADVICE
A university-style 1 on a specific subject.	You don't need any 2 on the topic.
There will be 3 questions in this part.	These questions could be all of the same type, and you could also get a mix of question types.
Multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions or 4 questions.	All of your preparation must be done before hearing the audio.
There is 5 once the speaker starts.	Use the 6 to fully prepare to answer all of the questions.

- 2 *Working with a partner, discuss the questions below.*

What did you find easy/difficult about the task above?
 How did you know when to move onto the next question?
 How might this help you in Listening part 4?



Signposting expressions



Coherent speakers use **signposting words and phrases** which indicate the structure, content, and progression of their talk.

3 Listen to the talk again for signposting expressions to complete the table below.

Signposting expression	Function
	Introducing the talk
	Transitioning from one area of focus to the other, usually in the middle sections of the talk
	Closing the talk

4 Add any further expressions you know to the table.



Listening Part 4

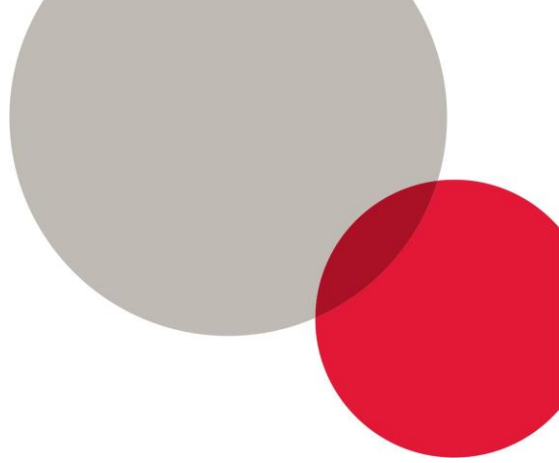
Worksheet 2

Getting ready to listen

- 1 *Work with a partner. Take 5 seconds to survey Part 4 questions 31-40. What can you tell from your first glance at the questions? Consider the following:*
 - Topic
 - Question sets
 - Question types
 - Any keywords

- 2 *Spend a little longer with the different question sets. Consider what keywords you should listen out for to identify when the speaker has moved on.*

- 3 *The signposting expressions below are taken from the audio for Part 4. Write on the margins of the question sheet where you'd expect to hear expressions a-i.*
 - a) **Then**, we have people who live in the present.
 - b) Today, **I'm going to be** talking about time.
 - c) Okay, **let's move on**.
 - d) **The first two** are based in the past.
 - e) **So**, it's really important to be aware of how other people think about time.
 - f) **Looking at** the future time zone ...



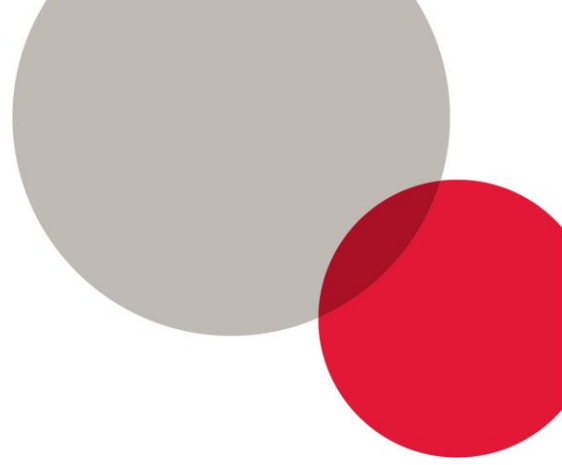
Part 4

Questions 31–35

Complete the table below.

Write **ONE WORD ONLY** for each answer.

Time Perspectives		
Time Zone	Outlook	Features & Consequences
Past	Positive	Remember good times, e.g. birthdays. Keep family records, photo albums, etc.
	31	Focus on disappointments, failures, bad decisions.
Present	Hedonistic	Live for 32 ; seek sensation; avoid pain.
	Fatalistic	Life is governed by 33 , religious beliefs, social conditions. Life's path can't be changed.
Future	34	Prefer work to play. Don't give in to temptation.
	Fatalistic	Have a strong belief in life after death and importance of 35 in life.



Questions 36–40

Choose the correct letter, **A**, **B** or **C**.

- 36** We are all present hedonists
- A** at school.
 - B** at birth.
 - C** while eating and drinking.
- 37** American boys drop out of school at a higher rate than girls because
- A** they need to be in control of the way they learn.
 - B** they play video games instead of doing school work.
 - C** they are not as intelligent as girls.
- 38** Present-orientated children
- A** do not realise present actions can have negative future effects.
 - B** are unable to learn lessons from past mistakes.
 - C** know what could happen if they do something bad, but do it anyway.
- 39** If Americans had an extra day per week, they would spend it
- A** working harder.
 - B** building relationships.
 - C** sharing family meals.
- 40** Understanding how people think about time can help us
- A** become more virtuous.
 - B** work together better.
 - C** identify careless or ambitious people.

Listening Part 4

Audio script

You will hear a talk on the topic of time perspectives. First you have some time to look at questions 31 to 40. [20 seconds]

Listen carefully and answer questions 31 to 40.

Today, I'm going to be talking about time. Specifically I'll be looking at how people think about time, and how these time perspectives structure our lives. According to social psychologists, there are six ways of thinking about time, which are called personal time zones.

The first two are based in the past. Past positive thinkers spend most of their time in a state of nostalgia, fondly remembering moments such as birthdays, marriages and important achievements in their life. These are the kinds of people who keep family records, books and photo albums. People living in the past negative time zone are also absorbed by earlier times, but they focus on all the bad things – regrets, failures, poor decisions. They spend a lot of time thinking about how life could have been.

Then, we have people who live in the

present. Present hedonists are driven by pleasure and immediate sensation. Their life motto is to have a good time and avoid pain. Present fatalists live in the moment too, but they believe this moment is the product of circumstances entirely beyond their control; it's their fate. Whether it's poverty, religion or society itself, something stops these people from believing they can play a role in changing their outcomes in life. Life simply "is" and that's that.

Looking at the future time zone, we can see that people classified as future active are the planners and go-getters. They work rather than play and resist temptation. Decisions are made based on potential consequences, not on the experience itself. A second future-orientated perspective, future fatalistic, is driven by the certainty of life after death and some kind of a judgement day when they will be assessed on how

virtuously they have lived and what success they have had in their lives.

Okay, let's move on. You might ask "how do these time zones affect our lives?" Well, let's start at the beginning. Everyone is brought into this world as a present hedonist. No exceptions. Our initial needs and demands – to be warm, secure, fed and watered – all stem from the present moment. But things change when we enter formal education – we're taught to stop existing in the moment and to begin thinking about future outcomes.

But, did you know that every nine seconds a child in the USA drops out of school? For boys, the rate is much higher than for girls. We could easily say "Ah, well, boys just aren't as bright as girls" but the evidence doesn't support this. A recent study states that boys in America, by the age of twenty one, have spent 10,000 hours playing video games. The research suggests that they'll never fit in the traditional

classroom because these boys require a situation where they have the ability to manage their own learning environment.

Now, let's look at the way we do prevention education. All prevention education is aimed at a future time zone. We say "don't smoke or you'll get cancer", "get good grades or you won't get a good job". But with present-orientated kids that just doesn't work. Although they understand the potentially negative consequences of their actions, they persist with the behaviour because they're not living for the future; they're in the moment right now. We can't use logic and it's no use reminding them of potential fall-out from their decisions or previous errors of judgment – we've got to get in their minds just as they're about to make a choice.

Time perspectives make a big difference in how we value and use our time. When Americans are asked how busy they are, the vast majority report

being busier than ever before. They admit to sacrificing their relationships, personal time and a good night's sleep for their success. Twenty years ago, 60% of Americans had sit-down dinners with their families, and now only 20% do. But when they're asked what they would do with an eight-day week, they say "Oh that'd be great". They would spend that time labouring away to achieve more. They're constantly trying to get ahead, to get toward a future point of happiness.

So, it's really important to be aware of how other people think about time. We tend to think: "Oh, that person's really irresponsible" or "That guy's power hungry" but often what we're looking at is not fundamental differences of personality, but really just different ways of thinking about time. Seeing these conflicts as differences in time perspective, rather than distinctions of character, can facilitate more effective cooperation between people and get the most out of each person's individual strengths.

NARRATOR:

*That is the end of section 4. You now have half a minute to check your answers.
[30 seconds]*