Test section – Listening Part 4

# Note-taking in lectures

## Activities

1. Academic note-taking
2. Summary Completion
3. Diagram and Table Completion
4. Listening Part 4 practice

## Aims

- To develop students' academic note-taking skills for IELTS Listening Part 4
- To provide students with strategies for Summary, Diagram and Table Completion question types
- To develop students' awareness of correlation between Part 4 and real-life skills

## Learning outcomes

- Students will have developed their awareness of the skills being assessed in Part 4.
- Students will have developed strategies for completion questions.
- Students will have applied strategies 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** | 45-60 minutes |
| **Level** | B1+ |
| **Class** | Suitable for groups / large classes, F2F / Online |
| **Interaction** | Individual / pair work |
| **Materials** | Worksheets x 2 Question Sheet and audio scripts attached |

**Activity 1:** Academic note-taking
**Material:** Worksheet 1
**Time:** 5-10 minutes
**Procedure:**

- introduce the focus of the lesson – Listening Part 4 and completion questions, Summary, Diagram and Table Completion.
- draw attention to Worksheet 1, Exercise 1 and the space for taking notes. Offer no information about the content of the lecture but play the audio and encourage students to take any relevant notes. Play the first half of the recording, stopping at 1:10
- https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening/b1-listening/an-introduction-to-a-lecture
- in pairs or small groups, have students compare notes and discuss the prompts a-c in Exercise 2.
- elicit class feedback and use this opportunity to clarify the following points which draw a correlation between real-life academic note-taking skills and IELTS.

  *a) Did you know what the lecture was going to be about ?*
  *No.*
  *In a real lecture, you'd likely have an idea of the topics discussed as this will be in your course handout or will have been mentioned in the previous lecture. It's unlikely that you would know nothing in advance.*
  *In IELTS, you see the questions in advance of the audio being played. These questions give you insight into what the topic is, and what you have to listen for.*

  *b) Was it possible to write down everything the lecturer said? How would you describe the words that you did take down?*
  *No, it's not possible to write down every single word in the audio or in a lecture. It's important that you listen to the keywords, content words that carry the message of the lecture.*
  *In IELTS completion tasks, you'll need key, content words to complete gaps.*

  *c) In this lecture, what else might the lecturer use to clarify his points?*
  *Handouts, PPT, diagrams.*
  *In IELTS, these types of 'visual aids' are mirrored in the question types e.g. note completion, diagram completion, table completion etc.*

**Activity 2:** Summary completion
**Material:** Worksheet 1
**Time:** 10-15 minutes
**Procedure:**

- draw attention to Exercise 3, the summary completion, and elicit when you might write something like this at university, before, during or AFTER a lecture.
- clarify, if needed, that at university you'd attend a number of lectures a day, so to keep a record of each one, you might write a summary of the content of the lecture afterwards.
- elicit what you would need to do this – main ideas, concepts, i.e. keywords.
- elicit any strategies for this type of IELTS task that students already use.
- draw attention to **the instructions** eliciting from students what they are allowed to write in the gaps. Note, instructions for any completion task must be read carefully, every single time, to be sure of the word count for each gap.
- give students a few seconds to **skim read the summary** and elicit the focus – the theory of flow.
- elicit **missing parts of speech** for each of the gaps.
- elicit **possible predictions** based on students' own understanding of the topic/logical predictions
- be careful not to confirm/reject any answers at this stage unless they do not fit the word limit of the instruction.
- clarify that the answers will be in sequence, i.e. they will follow the order of the text.
- elicit possible difficulties here, speed of the speech, time between answers.
- clarify the importance of **keywords** within the text to identify what they are listening for to know that an answer is coming.
- elicit what these might be and clarify that the summary is a paraphrase of the text so expect to hear synonyms of the keywords but that answers must be **EXACTLY** the same as the text.
- play the second half of the recording.
- allow time for students to check together before checking in open class.
- get class feedback on the level of challenge in the task and how the strategy helped them prepare to listen.

**Answers**

1 external, 2 involved, 3 artists, 4 hungry, 5 tired, 6 river

**Activity 3:** Diagram and Table Completion
**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 and discuss, in pairs, the differences / similarities between these question types (Diagram Completion and Table Completion) and Summary Completion.
- elicit student responses and clarify
  Differences: not written in continuous prose – note forms; layout; use of visuals; position of items not necessarily linear (36, 35, 34); much less reading in the Diagram Completion task compared to Summary.
  Similarities: instructions; in sequential order; prepare by looking around the gaps for textual clues to identify missing parts of speech, predicting logical answers; listening for keywords to know when an answer is coming up; listening for content words
- draw attention to Exercise 2. Split the class into 2 groups assigning each group one question type (1st group A Diagram Completion, 2nd group B Table Completion). If teaching 1-1, you can work through ideas for strategy with your student, type by type.
- briefly recall the strategy used for Summary Completion before students are on task.
- monitor closely. For A 'Diagram Completion', draw attention to how the question numbers appear and encourage students to include identifying first question and the direction/flow of answers, as one of their steps. For B 'Table Completion', draw attention to the importance of column headings.
- set up an information exchange (Exercise 3). Depending on how your students have got on with this task, you might want to do this open class to allow for clarification, alternatively in small groups / AB pairings.

## Suggested strategies

| | |
|---|---|
| **a. diagram completion** | Read instructions carefully.<br>Skim read the diagram to get an idea of what it's about.<br>**Identify the flow of answers and what you'll hear first.**<br>Look around the gaps/at other examples to identify missing parts of speech.<br>Try to predict possible answers.<br>Look for keywords which indicate when it's time to move on and listen carefully for these.<br>Listen and write EXACTLY what the speaker says in answers, paying attention to the word limit of the instruction. |
| **b. table completion** | Read instructions carefully.<br>**Skim read the column/row headings to get an idea of what it's about.**<br>**Identify the flow of answers and what you'll hear first**<br>Look around the gaps/at other examples to identify missing parts of speech<br>Try to predict possible answers<br>Look for keywords which indicate when it's time to move on and listen carefully for these<br>Listen and write EXACTLY what the speaker says in answers, paying attention to word limit of the instruction. |

**Activity 4:** Listening practice
**Material:** Worksheet 2
**Time:** 15-20 minutes
**Procedure:**

- 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. using the strategies on the questions they haven't looked at yet (Summary Completion included).
- access the listening here.
- get students to work in pairs to check their answers.
- get class feedback.

## Answers

31 living entity, 32 nutrients, 33 minerals, 34 bedrock, 35 subsoil,

36 topsoil, 37 pollution, 38 pest control, 39 production practices, 40 predators

## Follow up task

You can use the audio scripts of either/both of the texts used in this lesson to identify the length of time between answers, signposting expressions, the use of synonyms etc.

### Audio script for first listening task

Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the first lecture of our new course in Positive Psychology. While some people may associate psychology with looking at what's wrong with us, and at what problems we have, there is much more to psychology than that. Positive psychology, for example, looks at how to help people become happier.

This lecture begins with a question: what makes a happy life?

Now, I'm going to give you one possible answer. A happy life is a life in which you are completely absorbed in what you do. Now, how does this compare with what you and your partner said?

This answer comes from the work of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and the theory of flow. Csikszentmihalyi is a psychologist who has spent much of his professional life on the study of what makes people happy and how we can find happiness.

Csikszentmihalyi suggests the theory that happiness is not caused by external events or things that happen to us. Our perception of these things and how we see these events either makes us happy or sad. In other words, if we want happiness, we have to actively look for it. However, this does not mean that we should always look for happiness! Csikszentmihalyi believed that our happiest moments happen when we are in a state of flow.

The theory of flow can be summarised like this: when we are totally involved in, or focused on, what we are doing, we are in a state of flow.

Csikszentmihalyi got the inspiration for this theory when he noticed how artists worked in a studio. They completely lost track of time, they didn't notice they were hungry or tired, and they could work for hours, even days, without stopping. Anyone I have spoken to who has experienced this state of concentration has said it's difficult to explain. The best way to explain it is that it is like being in a river and the flow of the water carries you away.

For the rest of this lecture, I will explore this theory of flow in more detail. First we will look at Csikszentmihalyi's life, and how it influenced his ideas. Then we will look at the conditions that go with a state of flow. What creates flow, exactly? Finally, we will look at activities that can help us achieve flow in our everyday lives. Will this course make you happy for life? Well, maybe. Maybe.

Right, let's get started. If you look at the next slide …

## Audio script for Listening Part 4

*PART 4*

*Narrator:*
*You will hear a talk on the importance of soil in organic agriculture. First you have some time to look at questions 31 to 40.*

*[20 seconds]*

*Listen carefully and answer questions 31 to 40.*

Welcome to this talk on soil science and organic farming. Dirt, soil, earth, loam, mud or dust – it doesn't matter what you call it – is of primary importance in the production of food and other crops. Most people think of it just as a substrate (or medium) in which plants grow, but it's more than that, it's actually a living entity – or it should be if it's healthy – and human health is affected by the health of the soil.

Healthy, living soil is literally crawling with life – there are the obvious earthworms, which burrow in the soil and help to aerate and improve it, beetles and other hard-backed insects, and various invertebrates like centipedes. Then there are fungi and bacteria – also living forms. Healthy soil needs food, air and water to help plants grow … and the more nutrients in plants, the more available for humans and livestock. It stands to reason, therefore, that plants grown in poor soil will have few nutrients to pass on to the consumer, whose well-being will be worse-off over the long term.

So, where do plants get their nourishment? Most of it comes from the soil. Some nutrients are made up of minerals from the earth, while others come from dead plant and animal matter which is broken down over time by the living insects and other organisms in the soil. Plants depend on these little living creatures to convert minerals and other vital elements into a utilisable form that can be taken up by the plants. And it's a synergistic relationship – in turn, the plants assist those helpful organisms by releasing sugars and enzymes back into the soil.

Before I go any further, let's take a look at the structure of soil. Now … if you look at the diagram, you'll see that soil is made up of many different layers. Let's start at the bottom – this is the bedrock under all the other layers. The layer above that is called regolith – here the bedrock is slightly broken up but plant roots don't penetrate this layer. Moving up the chart, to the next layer, we come to the subsoil which contains clay and mineral deposits. On top of that, is the eluviation (or leaching) layer

… this is quite light in colour and is mostly just sand and silt. As we get near the surface, we find the topsoil. You will hear a lot of talk about topsoil amongst farmers and other agriculturalists. It's the most important layer of all because it's where seeds germinate and roots grow. Now, at the top of the chart, you will see a comparatively thin layer – this is organic matter that is still in the process of decomposition. It mostly consists of leaf litter and humus – just think of the surface of the forest floor – partly-decayed leaves and twigs – that sort of thing.

As you can imagine, good soil forms very slowly over time but it can be lost very rapidly through erosion. And, in addition, soil quality can be affected by pollution due to anything from industrial waste to the artificial fertilisers used by conventional farmers which have been shown to suppress the diverse life forms in the soil. This is why organic agriculture is the way of the future.

Let's take a quick look at the conventional system, which is often based on monoculture – the production of a single large crop. It relies on chemicals for fertiliser and pest control. It is also becoming an increasingly common practice to use genetically-engineered seeds. And more chemicals are used to control insects and fungi which attack crops in storage and during transportation. Also, did you know that there is no requirement for conventional growers to maintain records of their production practices?

Organic growers, on the other hand, choose the most environmentally-friendly options for dealing with pests and disease problems, working towards prevention in the first place. Some of the strategies they employ include alternating the crops grown in each field (as opposed to mono-cropping). Because different plants add different nutrients to the soil, by rotating crops, the soil is naturally replenished. This can do away with the need for pesticides, because the problem insects' life cycles are naturally interrupted.
Surrounding crops with green waste can not only conserve moisture in the soil, but it can prevent weeds from springing up and it also feeds the beneficial micro-organisms. When it's ploughed under, it feeds the soil by building more organic matter.

Organic farmers often release beneficial insects as predators which precludes the need for artificial pesticides. Animal manure combined with green waste materials, correctly composted (to kill pathogens and weed seeds), fertilises the soil in a way that encourages life rather than suppressing it. And, by the

way, use of manure in organic farming is highly regulated – in fact, all agricultural inputs are evaluated for their long-term effects on the environment, regardless of whether they are synthetic or natural.

To sum up, organic farming is the only sustainable way of feeding the people on this planet and keeping both the planet and the people in good health.

*Narrator:*

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

*[30 seconds]*

## Listening Part 4

## Worksheet 1

# Academic note-taking

1 *You are going to listen to an academic lecture. Use the blank space below to take notes about what you hear.*

2 *Compare your notes with a partner and discuss the following questions:*

a) Did you know, before listening, what the lecture was going to be about?

b) Was it possible to write down everything the lecturer said? How would you describe the words that you did take down?

c) In this lecture, what else might the lecturer use to clarify his points?

## Summary Completion

*3 Complete the summary below.*

*Write **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER** for each answer.*

The theory of flow founded by Csikszentmihalyi suggests that happiness is not a passive response to **1……**events but something that we must **2……..** seek in our lives**.** Inspired by observations of **3……** working in their studio, Csikszentmihaly arrived at his theory of the state of flow as those so involved in a task that they don't notice time, don't feel **4……** or **5……** and can work for extended periods of time. The flow of concentration that carries you away is likened to that of a **6……..**

*Before you listen, consider the following points*

- Topic
- Instructions
- Parts of speech
- Logical answers
- Keywords

## Listening Part 4

## Worksheet 2

# Diagram and Table Completion

1 *Work with a partner. Take 5 seconds to glance at the diagram and table on the following question sheet.*

*What is the topic of the lecture?*

*What is different in these question types compared to Summary Completion?*

*What is similar?*

2 *Working with a partner / in small groups, use the space below to outline a possible strategy to help you answer your question type.*

Step 1: ……..

Step 2: ……..

Step 3: ……..

Step 4: ……..

Step 5: ……..

……: ……..

……..: ……..

3 *Exchange ideas with the other group. What do your strategies have in common? How are they different?*

## Listening Part 4

## Question sheet

### *Questions 31–33*

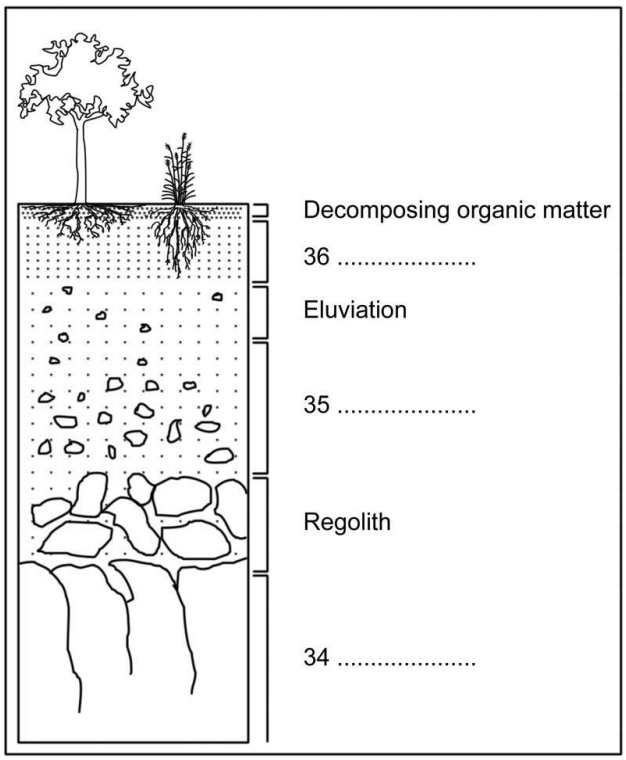
*Complete the summary below.*
*Write **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** for each answer.*

If soil is healthy, it is a **31 .....** teeming with life such as worms, fungi and bacteria. If plants are grown in poor soil, they will lack **32 .....** and human health will suffer. Plants are nourished by organic matter, **33 .....** and other essential elements which are broken down by insects and other organisms in a synergistic relationship.

### *Questions 34–36*

*Label the diagram below.*
*Write **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** for each answer.*

Layers of Soil



***Questions 37–40***

*Complete the notes below.*

*Write **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** for each answer.*

Problems:

- Erosion
- **37 ……** from various sources, including chemical fertilisers

| **Conventional farming methods** | **Organic farming methods** |
|---|---|
| • monoculture<br>• synthetic fertiliser & chemicals used for **38 ……**<br>• genetically-modified seeds<br>• pesticide & fungicide sprayed on crops after picking<br>• no need for documentation of **39……** | • crop rotation<br>• covering crops<br>• use of insects as natural **40 ……**<br>• addition of manure & green waste |

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*Narrator:*

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*[30 seconds]*