

Tips on listening

How to make the most of your listening:

The more you listen the better you get at listening.

Try tuning in to foreign radio: see Resources. Also, you can use any recorded material available at in the Language and Media Resource Centre or in public libraries.

Remember that with listening the first most important step is to get the context. Use what you already know of what's going on in the world to help your understanding. For example, especially if you want to listen to the news, take a few minutes beforehand to jot down what you can remember hearing on the British news - you may be able to hear some of the same items on a foreign news programme.

Above all, think about what you are listening for: Understanding becomes a lot easier if you know what information you want to get.

Preparing for your exam:

Numbers: make sure you can differentiate between similar sounding numbers.

Acronyms: make sure that you know the meaning of the most common ones.

Practise listening with a transcription and pay special attention to the differences between the way words look and the way they sound.

Listen, listen and listen some more! If you make a point in listening to something in the target language every day, you will most definitely improve your skills.

During the exam:

First, make sure you understand what you have to do by paying close attention to the instructions.

Be sure to know which language to use in answering.

Read the questions before listening, it will give you an idea of what the text is about and facilitate your understanding. It will also focus your listening.

Be aware that the number of points allocated per question is often an indication of the amount of information you have to give.

Use the time wisely: listen while the tape is playing and write during the silences. If you don't trust your ability to remember all that you hear, jot down brief notes or key words while listening. You will have time later on to write full sentences if required.

Above all, keep listening: you do not want to miss the next answer because you are writing while the passage is being played. If you do, concentrate on what you missed the next time you hear the passage.