

IELTS Listening Tips

- **The accents of the speakers on the tape are primarily British.** This means you **must** become accustomed to understanding the nuances of such accents. If you have been watching a lot of American television, (shows such as *Friends*, for example) it will not really help you. British accents are quite different and it is better to spend time in the months before the test listening to British radio stations and podcasts or watching the BBC, British shows, and movies. This is one of the **major differences between the IELTS exam and the TOEFL**, which features more American accents.
- **Get used to the way letters and numbers are pronounced in British (and American) English.** Sometimes, in the listening section, you are asked to write down the spelling of a name, place, or address. If you make a mistake in the spelling while writing it down, you will get the answer wrong.
- **The expressions used also tend to be taken from British rather than American English.** This means you may hear unfamiliar idioms, which can confuse you. Speakers may also use British words for common items such as "flat" for "apartment", "lorry" for "truck", or "advert" for advertisement. Make sure you study the most common differences in British and American vocabulary and listen to as many IELTS exercises as possible before your exam to prepare you for the actual test experience.
- **Learn to distinguish opinion from fact.** In the third and fourth listening passages, you will probably be tested on what one of the speakers thinks or what his / her view is. This may or may not be

stated outright, but as an underlying theme in the whole conversation or in the tone of the speaker's voice, rather than the words themselves.

- **Don't worry if your classmates or friends get higher listening scores than you.** Each one has his or her strengths and weaknesses, just like you. Each one also has his or her own language goals. Just focus on your own needs and don't compare yourself to others.
- **Follow instructions very carefully.** If the instructions state, "Write no more than three words", then you must not write more or you will receive no marks for your answer, even if some of the words you wrote were part of the correct answer. Similarly, read each instruction carefully. Sometimes, you are asked to circle two answers, sometimes three, and so on. You must read the instruction each time as it may differ from the previous ones. Remember, the ability to follow instructions in English is a test in itself.
- **The questions follow the oral text.** Remember this - it will make it easier for you to focus on the current question, or to know when you've been left behind, in case the speakers have gone on to providing the answer to the following questions.
- **Familiarize yourself with charts, graphs, flow-charts, bar charts and pie charts, etc.** These often appear as part of the answer choices in the fourth section. The more comfortable you are with interpreting the data represented in them, the easier your exam will be.