

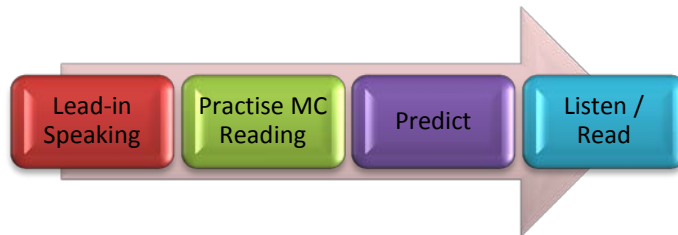
Listen up!

Cambridge B2 Business Vantage listening task: MULTIPLE CHOICE

Focus strategy: filter distractors

Original material available here: <http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/resources-for-teachers/>.

Main lesson steps:



Lead-in: speaking

Elicit ideas on questions such as: *What do business consultants do? What service do they offer? How do they do that? What skills and knowledge do they need?*

Practise MC reading

The following is an activity building awareness of the strategies involved in answering multiple-choice questions. It relies on the similarities between listening and reading and gives students an opportunity to practise reading comprehension strategies before attempting to deal with a multiple-choice listening task.

Tell them that they are going to read the script of an interview with a business consultant, and search in the text for evidence in answering detailed comprehension questions. Hand out Worksheet 1 and explain that this is the first part of an interview. Originally there were 3 multiple choice questions, but they have already been answered; they should work together in pairs underlining a) the phrases that show that the question is about to be answered, and b) the section that answers the question.

Then explain that now they will have to choose the right answer from A-C, by reading the script and underlining the evidence in it for their choice. Hand out Worksheet 2. (see Key on the last pages of this material).

Predict:

Tell them what they are going to listen to / read, and ask them to predict what Paula Doherty might say on

- The advantages for a business of using professional website designers
- What features a good business website should have
- Typical flaws of business websites

Listen:

Hand out Worksheet 3 and allow about one minute for students to read the questions. **NB:** There are always 8 questions in the actual exam. Then play the recording. Collect answers, even if students might not yet be sure of all of them. Then ask students to listen again. Checking the final answers you can use the script for identifying (optionally underlining) the evidence in the text. Answers: 1C, 2A, 3B, 4B, 5B, 6C

Worksheet 1

Read these three questions and the interview below with a leading industrialist and business consultant, Philip Spencer. Each statement relates to the section of the script immediately after it. Underline the part of the script that shows that the question is about to be answered, and the part that gives the answer. There is an example (0) to help you.

NB: G = Gemma, the interviewer; PS = Philip Spencer

0 *When visiting companies, Philip Spencer's objective is to **identify problem areas**.*

G And now let's meet Philip Spencer, one of Britain's top industrialists, and hear about his experiences and ideas on improving company performance... Welcome, Philip.

PS Thanks, Gemma. Good to be here.

G Philip, you're famous for your unique approach when called in to advise companies...

PS Well, I'm certainly very generous with my advice! I always acknowledge genuine effort wherever possible - it is important to do so; but my job isn't to manage the company, it's to hunt down underlying weaknesses in the systems; that's what I'm trained to do.

1 *Problems at Manson's had continued after Spencer's first visit because of **outdated production methods**.*

G Your visit to Manson's received a very mixed response, didn't it?

PS Well, yes. Following my first visit, they'd researched the market more deeply and had improved product quality considerably, but, on my return, I blamed their failures on the ancient assembly line which they'd still done nothing about, despite my report, and which by now had led to a ten-year waiting list for their customers. The company was so upset by the comments I made during my second visit that they didn't invite me back!

2 *Difficulties at Criterion Glass stemmed from lack of attention to **consumer demand**.*

G Another of your consultations took you to Criterion Glass, a family-run business...

PS Yes. Their troubles started with an over-concentration on the actual making of the product, on the craftsmanship involved, without asking themselves whether there was still enough of a market for that type of product. Prices needed to be more competitive too, something they hadn't considered sufficiently.

3 *Philip Spencer blames his early business difficulties on **lack of knowledge of the financial sector**.*

G As you said, you're famous for your advice to industry, but for a long time you were not at all successful in business yourself, were you?

PS True! The first two organisations I headed went into liquidation! They were both relatively new companies, though, without a long history and were trying to establish their brand name. People had tried to warn me, of course. The resources were there – that wasn't the problem – but I just couldn't get things to work – basically because financial services just isn't my field.

Worksheet 2

Read the rest of the interview. For each question **4 – 7**, mark one letter (**A**, **B** or **C**) for the correct answer. Underline the part of the script that shows that the question is about to be answered, and the part that gives the answer.

- 4 *He defends his unusual personal style by saying that*
A it is important in business to make a strong impression.
B his business ideas are more important than his appearance.
C most business people are too serious and traditional.

G You enjoy a strong public image, with your unusual choice of clothes, etc. Why did you start to cultivate this original style?

PS Well, many people think I've developed this style just to get myself noticed, but it's really because I think my ability is what matters in business – more than my image. I like to do my own thing, so why shouldn't I please myself how I look? I know many other business people prefer to follow convention and dress more seriously – that's up to them.

- 5 *He thinks he was appointed chairman of LBI because the company*
A knew of his successes with failing companies.
B felt he had a positive image with the public.
C liked his fearless approach to problem-solving.

G Did this help you to get one of the top jobs in the country – the chairmanship of LBI?

PS That's not really for me to say... The company was in serious trouble when I joined... I think they recognised the risk-taker in me and they needed someone who wasn't afraid of change. The management had preferred to play safe until then – and this, together with their rather poor reputation, was the cause of their problems.

- 6 *According to Philip Spencer, successful managers are distinguished by their*
A concern for detail.
B desire to make money.
C strong leadership.

G Your record in the second half of your career speaks for itself, of course. Now, when you look at managers today, how effective do you think they are?

PS Well – there's great emphasis now on making money, which I know is what business is about, but too many managers today are interested in making money for themselves. There are a lot of strong personalities around, too, in leadership positions. But people forget that the sort of success which lasts requires close attention to every single aspect of the company, however unimportant it may appear.

- 7 *His final advice to people starting in business is to*
A make every effort to prevent mistakes.
B find the best sources of information.
C maintain a positive attitude at all times.

G Well, you're full of energy yourself, and working harder than ever at the age of seventy...as you reflect on your long career, have you any advice for those just starting?

PS Well, I've taken risks and made errors, but I've learnt it's best never to worry about things you can't do anything about. If you did your best with the information you had at the time, then you must live with your mistakes and move on.

G Philip Spencer, thank you very much indeed.

Worksheet 3

You will hear a web designer called Paula Doherty giving advice about creating a website to a group of people who own a small business. For each question 1 – 6, mark **one** letter (A, B or C) for the correct answer. You will hear the talk **twice**.

- 1 Paula Doherty advises getting ideas from websites which
A have been set up by local competitors.

B are offering a range of different goods.

C are based abroad.
- 2 According to Paula Doherty, what is the advantage of using a website designer?

A It may be cheaper than doing it yourself.

B It is likely to be quicker than doing it yourself.

C It will be more professional than doing it yourself.
- 3 Paula Doherty says that when producing your own web pages you should

A make the pages bright and colourful.

B use the same typeface throughout.

C put your logo on every page.
- 4 Paula Doherty says that a good website should also include

A a counter to see how many hits you've had.

B background information on staff.

C a range of charts and graphs.
- 5 Paula Doherty says that many companies fail to

A display full contact details.

B update their web pages regularly.

C employ someone to check emails.
- 6 Paula Doherty thinks one good way to get customers to return to a site is

A to offer a new tip each day.

B to provide a free calculator.

C to have quizzes for customers.

Key to Student's Worksheets 1 and 2

1. *Indication that the question is about to be answered:* Your visit to Manson's ... ; Following my first visit ... *Answer:* I blamed their failures on the ancient assembly line which they'd still done nothing about
2. *Indication that the question is about to be answered:* Criterion Glass ... ; Their troubles started... *Answer:* ... without asking themselves whether there was still enough of a market for that type of product.
3. *Indication that the question is about to be answered:* you were not at all successful in business yourself. *Answer:* I just couldn't get things to work – basically because financial services just isn't my field.
4. *B. Indication that the question is about to be answered:* your unusual choice of clothes, etc. *Answer:* I think my ability is what matters in business – more than my image.
5. *C. Indication that the question is about to be answered:* Did this help you to get one of the top jobs in the country – the chairmanship of LBI. *Answer:* they recognised the risk-taker in me and they needed someone who wasn't afraid of change.
6. *A. Indication that the question is about to be answered:* when you look at managers today, how effective do you think they are? *Answer:* the sort of success which lasts requires close attention to every single aspect of the company, however unimportant it may appear.
7. *C. Indication that the question is about to be answered:* have you any advice for those just starting? *Answer:* it's best never to worry about things you can't do anything about; ... then you must live with your mistakes and move on.