



How can I improve my listening?



A brief guide with tips for improving listening skills.

Contents



1 • Introduction

This guide provides tips and general advice to help prepare for a Cambridge English Qualification such as A2 Key or A2 Key for Schools, B1 Preliminary or B1 Preliminary for Schools.

PARENTS, STUDENTS AND TEACHERS:

The guide contains some practical steps to help improve listening skills and develop listening strategies for a listening test.



2 Listening in general

TIPS TO IMPROVE IT



A

Timetable regular practice.

For example, 15 minutes at lunch, 15 minutes before breakfast – aim for a manageable amount of time which you can dedicate every day to listening to something in English.





Expand your range.

Everything helps, but you are more likely to be motivated when you are listening to something that interests you, something you enjoy. If you like watching films, then that's fine, but remember in a test you won't see the person who is speaking so it's also good practice to add non-interactive listenings to your practice. Podcasts, radio stations (online), and international news websites often have short audio news items. Pick out stories that interest you!



Practise in chunks.

Targeted, focused practice can really help to stretch your ability to understand main contexts, and can help you to learn new works and become familiar with grammar structures and accents. For example, listen to a 2 minute chunk of a podcast - then check understanding and continue listening to the next 2 minutes, and so on. Try this two or three times and then relax and listen to the rest of the text.



Repeated practice.

The more you listen, the more you will hear. Go back to a text you have listened to before and practise listening for more ideas. If you are using a book to study then these can be a great source for listening texts. Keep a record of new words and phrases you pick out - this will help your reading, listening, speaking and writing.

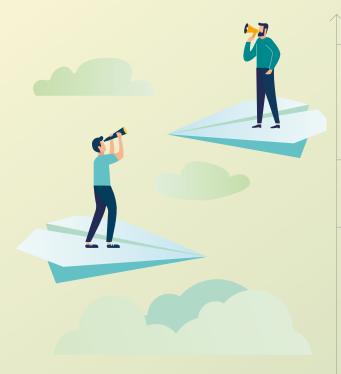
PARENTS

Use local subtitles for TV programs and films in English. Your child will pick up a lot of English just by listening to their favourite shows or films in English. Try to avoid dubbed shows and switch to the original soundtrack.

3 • Listening in exams



Before listening.



Read and listen to instructions - this will give you information such as how many questions you need to answer in this section.

Underline key words in the questions – usually nouns and verbs.

Understanding each context will help you better understand the answer options.
Always read the question and think about the person talking and if they are giving an opinion or expressing an attitude or a feeling, for example.

Read and listen carefully to the example given at the start of each part, this will show you how to answer the questions.

Can you predict any answers? Name? Noun? Number? Place? Actual answer?

B While listening.



Don't worry if you don't understand everything; understanding the main idea is usually enough.

You hear the recordings twice, so don't worry if you miss the answer the first time.

Try to listen to the whole recording the first time to help you with the context, then check your answers the second time.

When you move to the next question, forget the previous ones.

After listening.



Don't leave empty spaces on your answer sheet.

Check everything on your answer sheet.



PARENTS

It's important that your child becomes familiar with the Listening paper format and that they understand how to use the answer sheet. Practice at home can help familiarise them with this.

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For more tips and lessons on reading for exams visit practicemakesperfect.cambridge.org

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