

B2 First for Schools Listening Part 1 (Multiple choice)

Summary

- Review the format of Part 1 of the Listening paper.
- Learn some useful vocabulary for giving an opinion.
- Practise two different listening test strategies.
- Do a real timed practice of the Listening paper (Part 1 only).

Before you begin

Locate the audio you need for the lesson Click **here** to download a folder of audio files (MP3 format). You will only need **Track 2** for this lesson.

Top tip! Listen to real audio and video as much as possible.

It takes time to develop listening skills, so it's a good idea to listen to things in English whenever you can. The best things are those which you really find interesting. You could watch a film (perhaps with the subtitles – but only if they're also in English!), download podcasts about your favourite topics, or find English-speaking people on YouTube who share interesting ideas.

Get to know the exam

This lesson focuses on Part 1 of the Listening paper. This is made up of 8 questions and tests your ability to understand feelings, attitudes, opinions and agreement or disagreement expressed by different speakers, as well as the purpose or function of an audio clip.

Task A. What else do you know about this paper? Read the following statements about Listening Part 1 and decide if they are true or false.¹ If they are false, correct them. Answers are at the end of this document.

1. You may hear one or two speakers.
2. You will hear seven different clips.
3. For each question, there are three options for you to choose from (A, B or C).
4. Some of the questions focus on the opinions or feelings of the speaker(s).
5. The options for each question are always presented in the same order as you hear related information.
6. You will hear exactly the same words as you read in the options.
7. You will receive one mark for each correct answer
8. Sometimes you may have to decide whether two speakers agree with each other.

Task B. Now do some research online and check your ideas. You might find the **Cambridge English website** a helpful place to start.

¹ This activity comes from *Exam Booster with answer key for First and First For Schools, Self-study edition*, © Cambridge University Press and UCLES 2017, p. 118.

Useful language: Giving an opinion

We saw above that some of the questions in Listening Part 1 focus on the opinions or the feelings of the speaker (or speakers). It's easier to hear these moments in the recording and answer the questions correctly if you know the kind of language that speakers often use to express their opinions or feelings.

1. Read the dialogues below. Which one is:
 - a. a formal discussion on the news?
 - b. a conversation between a brother and sister?

How do you know? Highlight the parts of the dialogues that helped you to decide.

Dialogue 1: _____

- A: My mate just gave me this amazing new video game for my birthday!
- B: A video game? Isn't that just for little kids?
- A: It's aimed at teenagers, actually. You have to create a whole world on a different planet, with its own language, culture, society and everything. Brilliant, isn't it?
- B: Yeah, if you like aliens, I suppose.
- A: Well, I do. But clearly it's not your thing. You might prefer this other game I have – it's a kind of competitive dancing thing. But I'm not really into dancing, so I don't play it. Do you want it?
- B: Oh wow, that's fantastic! Thanks!

Dialogue 2: _____

- A: This year's event really was excellent. Thousands of people from all over the country took part and we raised a lot of money for charity.
- B: Of course, some of the people who tried to call and donate money weren't able to get through. That isn't to say it wasn't well organised – it most certainly was! Though perhaps next year there could be more staff to answer the phones.
- A: Alright, but in general, I think you'll agree it was a great success. We had far more participants than last year and we included a wider range of activities, including games like chess and cards.
- B: Hmm... I personally would have liked to see more physical activities like gymnastics or yoga, rather than things which keep everybody sitting down for hours!

2. Now match these expressions from the dialogues above to their meanings, below.

When the speaker says this:

1. amazing, brilliant, fantastic
2. It's... actually.
3. If you like... I suppose.
4. It's not your thing. You might prefer...
5. That isn't to say it wasn't... – it most certainly was!
6. I think you'll agree...
7. I personally would have liked..., rather than...

he / she means this:

- a. I know that you don't like this, but I have a suggestion which I think you will like more.
- b. I feel strongly about this and I really want you to agree with me. (But it's possible that you disagree.)
- c. I have a different opinion to you, and I think your opinion is a bit strange! Who likes aliens?!
- d. I really like this.
- e. In my opinion, this wasn't good and I have a better idea about how to do it.
- f. You don't understand – let me correct you.
- g. I think something about this was good, but the rest of my opinion is generally more negative.

Tip! The vocabulary you learn for one paper could be useful for other papers, too.

By studying language for one paper, you're also helping improve your knowledge for the other papers! For example, you could use the expressions you learned above in your Speaking test. It's a good idea to keep a vocabulary notebook so you can record the words and phrases you're learning and begin to use them in your own speech or writing.

Test strategies: Find what works for you

A lot of students find listening difficult. It takes time to improve your listening skills, and there are different ways of doing the exam tasks which work well for some people and not for others.

Let's try two different strategies now...

Test strategy 1: "Find, focus, favourite!"

Every clip in the Listening paper is played twice. This strategy uses the first time to listen and the second time to choose the best answer (A, B or C). Here are the steps to follow:

What's happening in the clip:

1. The narrator is reading the instructions before the clip begins.



What you do:

Find: look for key words in the question. Do you know any synonyms? This helps you predict what the speakers might say.

2. The clip is played for the first time.



Focus: Listen and take notes. Did you hear any of the key words or synonyms? Be careful – sometimes you'll hear a specific word from the question, but the context makes it clear that this is not the right answer.

3. The clip is repeated.



Favourite: Listen again and choose your answer. Sometimes it seems clear which answer is the best, and sometimes it isn't very clear. Which option is your favourite? Which seems better than the others? Choose it, then forget this question and move on. It's time to focus on the next one...

Let's try this strategy now with the following task.²

Audio track 2. ▶ Start at 09:40. ■ Stop at 11:08.

You hear a review of a film.

What is the reviewer's opinion of it?

² This example task comes from *Exam Booster with answer key for First and First For Schools, Self-study edition*, © Cambridge University Press and UCLES 2017, p. 75.

- A the ending was disappointing
- B the scenery was breath-taking
- C the acting was unconvincing

Test strategy 2: “Chill out, choose, check!”

Remember, every clip in the Listening paper is played twice. This strategy uses the first time to choose your answer (A, B or C) and the second time to check it again. Here are the steps to follow:

What's happening in the clip:	What you do:
1. The narrator is reading the instructions before the clip begins.	Chill out: To “chill out” means to <i>relax</i> ! Read the question and the options and just keep them in your mind. Stay calm. Don't worry about taking notes now. You just need to listen.
2. The clip is played for the first time.	Choose: Close your eyes and listen. As you listen, think about the options you just read. Which one seems correct? Open your eyes and tick (✓) this option.
3. The clip is repeated.	Check: Listen again and check your answer. Sometimes you realise when you hear the clip again that you misunderstood something the first time. For example, maybe you heard a word from the question but now you realise that this was distracting you from the correct answer! So double-check your answer now – and remember to circle your final choice and transfer it to your answer paper later.

Let's try Test Strategy 2 now with the following task.³

Audio track 2. ▶ Start at 11:09. ■ Stop at 12:46 (when the track stops.) Audio link is at top of p1.

You hear two friends talking about taking photos to put on social media websites.

What does the boy say he likes about it?

- A trying different techniques
- B receiving positive comments
- C analysing his friends' photos

³ This example task comes from *Exam Booster with answer key for First and First For Schools, Self-study edition*, © Cambridge University Press and UCLES 2017, p. 75.

Reflect: Which way works for you?

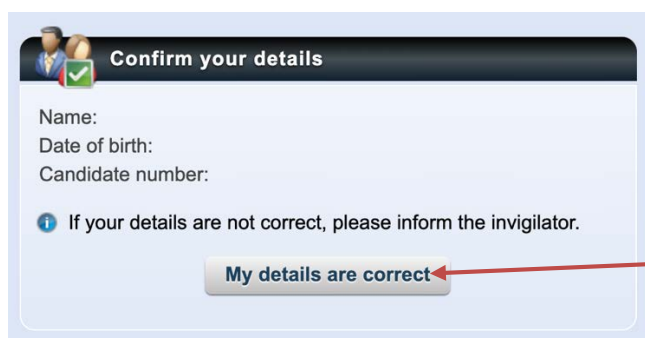
Remember, there are different ways to do the Listening test. You need to find an approach that works well for you. This means trying different strategies under practice conditions, so you feel prepared when you take the real test. Think about these questions and take some notes in your journal or notebook:

1. Did you prefer following **Test Strategy 1** or **Test Strategy 2**? Why?
2. Do you know any other useful strategies for the Listening test? What about other students? Ask your classmates what they do. Find somebody who does something different and whose approach seems to work well. Make a note of this and try it the next time you practise.

Exam practice: Listening Part 1 (multiple choice)

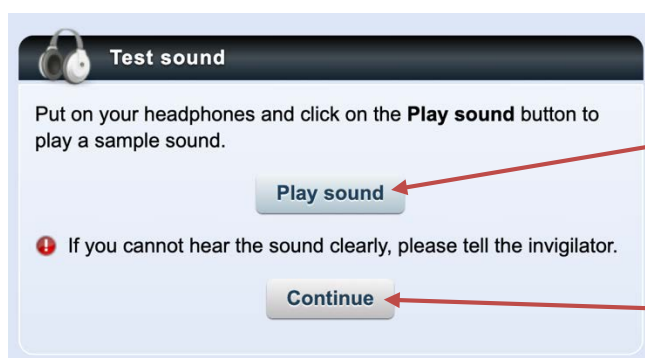
Great work! You're ready to practise a real Listening Part 1 test now. There are two ways you can do this: on the computer, or on paper. Both options are explained below:

1. To try the computer-based test, use the Firefox or Chrome browser. **Click here to open the test website** and then follow these steps to begin the timed test:



1. This is only a *practice* test. You do *not* have to enter any personal details here.

2. Simply click this button to continue.

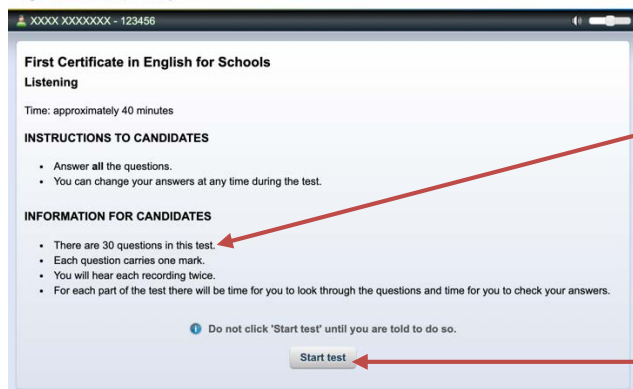


3. Put your headphones on, if you have a pair.

4. Test your sound settings by clicking here.

5. Ignore this instruction. (This is for students who are taking the real exam on a computer.)

6. Click this button to continue.



7. Read all the instructions carefully, except...

8. ...you should ignore the sentence which says "There are 30 questions in this test." This refers to the *whole* Listening paper. In this lesson, we are focusing only on Part 1. (Part 1 has 8 questions.)

9. Click this button to start the test. You will move to the next screen and the audio recording will begin playing automatically.

Important note: If you take the computer-based test, do not close the test when you are finished, or you will lose your answers! Just click a question number at the bottom to check that specific answer.

2. If you prefer to do the test on paper, you can find the questions below on **pages 7–8**. Just print these pages, write your answers, and follow all the steps above for the computer-based option to access the recording. (You don't need to use the questions on the screen. The audio will play automatically.)

When you are finished with the Part 1 practice task:

1. Stop the recording without continuing to Part 2.

(Note: It's not possible to control the recording in the computer-based test, so to stop listening, you will have to remove your headphones or mute the sound on your computer.)

2. Come back to this document and check your answers on **pages 10–11**.

Top tips for exam success⁴

- Each question has two sentences. The first sentence tells you who will be talking and what they'll be talking about; the second sentence is the question you have to answer.
- If you still don't know the answer after the second listening, make a guess. You won't lose marks for incorrect answers.
- Don't get distracted by individual words in the clips – you need to listen to the whole message.
- If you're finding a question very difficult, try to stop concentrating on this when the next clip begins. You don't want to miss the next question!

Keep learning!

Visit the **Cambridge English website** to find more practice activities. You can also improve your English listening skills by following the podcast **Virtually Anywhere**. There are seven episodes.

⁴ Adapted from *Exam Booster with answer key for First and First For Schools, Self-study edition*, © Cambridge University Press and UCLES 2017, p. 75.

Listening • Part 1

Questions 1 – 8

You'll hear people talking in eight different situations. For questions 1–8, choose the best answer (A, B or C).

- 1 You hear a young singer talking about his childhood.
What is he grateful for?
A being encouraged to sing by his father
B being exposed to music at an early age
C inheriting his mother's talent as a singer
- 2 You overhear a girl talking on the phone about a clothes shop.
She thinks her friend would appreciate
A the helpful attitude of the staff.
B the lively atmosphere created by the music.
C the low prices compared to other shops.
- 3 You hear part of an interview with a farmer.
What is he doing?
A describing his lifestyle
B justifying his choice of career
C promoting an event he's involved in
- 4 You hear two friends talking about a school concert.
How does the girl feel?
A worried that she hasn't done enough practice
B nervous about performing in front of her family
C concerned that her clarinet doesn't sound right
- 5 You hear a news report about a football club.
Who has suggested a change in club policy?
A the club's doctor
B the club's supporters
C the club's new manager
- 6 You hear two friends talking about a newspaper for teenagers.
What do they agree about?
A how boring it is to read one regularly
B how interesting it would be to write for it
C how important it is to keep up with the news

7 You hear a boy telling a friend about climbing a mountain with his father.

What does he remember most clearly about reaching the top?

- A being glad that he'd followed his father's advice
- B feeling quite a bit of physical discomfort
- C enjoying the beauty of the scenery around him

8 You hear a teacher talking about an environmental project.

Why is she talking to her class?

- A to encourage them to remain involved in the project
- B to inform them about changes to the project
- C to remind them about a future project

Answer key

Preview: Get to know the exam

1. You may hear one or two speakers. [True]
2. You will hear seven different clips. [False. There are 8 different clips.]
3. For each question, there are three options for you to choose from (A, B or C). [True.]
4. Some of the questions focus on the opinions or feelings of the speaker(s). [True.]
5. The options for each question are always presented in the same order as you hear related information. [False. The information you hear may be in a different order from the options.]
6. You will hear exactly the same words as you read in the options. [False. The words in the options may not be the same as the words you hear.]
7. You will receive one mark for each correct answer. [True.]
8. Sometimes you may have to decide whether two speakers agree with each other. [True.]

Useful language: Giving an opinion

1. Dialogue 1: **b** (a conversation between brother and sister). The speakers use more informal language which is common in conversation, such as “yeah”, “wow”, “brilliant” and “amazing”.

Dialogue 2: **a** (a formal discussion on the news). The speakers use more formal adjectives such as “excellent” and “well organised”, and the speakers generally take longer turns, which is more common in formal discussions or news interviews than in everyday conversations.

2. When the speaker says this:

1. amazing, brilliant, fantastic
2. It's... actually.
3. If you like... I suppose.
4. It's not your thing. You might prefer...
5. That isn't to say it wasn't... – it most certainly was!
6. I think you'll agree...
7. I personally would have liked..., rather than...

he / she means this:

- d. I really like this.
- f. You don't understand – let me correct you.
- c. I have a different opinion to you, and I think your opinion is a bit strange!
- a. I know that you don't like this, but I have a suggestion which I think you will like more.
- g. I think something about this was good, but the rest of my opinion is generally more negative.
- b. I feel strongly about this and I really want you to agree with me. (But it's possible that you disagree.)
- e. In my opinion, this wasn't good and I have a better idea about how to do it.

Test strategy 1: “Find, focus, favourite!”

The correct answer is **C: the acting was unconvincing**.

Audio script:

(Narrator: Question 7. You hear a review of a film.)

This week’s film of the week sees Ricky Riley return as the hero in Mark Martin’s latest thriller, *Midnight*. I’m sure you all remember Riley’s stunning acting in *Red Wood* last year. Well, I’m afraid to say that despite the complex plots and satisfying closing scenes, Riley’s performance fails to live up to expectations this time. That isn’t to say the film isn’t worth seeing – it most certainly is, though I personally would have liked to see some of the beautiful mountains and lakes of the area the film’s set in, rather than the inside of the main character’s apartment, which is where most of the action takes place.

Test strategy 2: “Chill out, choose, check!”

The correct answer is **A: trying different techniques**.

Audio script:

(Narrator: Question 8. You hear two friends talking about taking photos to put on social media websites..)

Woman: You take loads of photos, don’t you? Do you upload onto the InstantPhoto site?

Man: Yeah, I do. I’ve got this amazing phone with loads of different apps on it – you can create all kinds of weird and wonderful effects with it – it’s brilliant for experimenting with. People do loads of crazy stuff, though I tend to avoid looking closely at pictures posted by mates in case I’m too influenced by them.

Woman: You’ve got to start out with a decent photo in the first place, though, haven’t you?

Man: Yeah, it helps. You’ll only get either negative feedback or none at all if the composition or lighting are no good – and no one wants that.

Exam practice: Listening Part 1 (multiple choice)

When preparing for an exam, it’s important not only to know which answers are correct and which are incorrect, but also **why** they are correct or incorrect. For each item below, check your own answers and take some notes on **why** the answers below are correct. You can refer to the audio scripts on the next page to help you.

Q	Answer	Listen again with the script below. Why is this answer correct?
1	B	
2	A	
3	C	

4	B	
5	C	
6	C	
7	B	
8	A	

Audio script for practice test on p. 7–8

Cambridge English. B2 First for Schools. Listening Test. Part 1.

[pause]

You'll hear people talking in eight different situations. For questions 1–8, choose the answer which fits best according to what you hear.

1: You hear a young singer talking about his childhood.

[pause]

When I was a little kid, my father used to watch a lot of old movies and I sat with him and loved them too, especially the musicals. So you see, my career was inspired by him in a way and these old movies played a big part in my life. They were the reason I wanted to learn to sing, though my dad never suggested it to me. There's no musical background in my family, though my mother could sing, but she didn't have much ability really – it was just fun for her. I think my parents must have looked at me and thought: 'where did that come from?'

[The clip is repeated.]

2: You overhear a girl talking on the phone about a clothes shop.

[pause]

Well, I think that new clothes store called Smart Girls is certainly a place where you can be sure of picking up a bargain or two, though most of the shops in the mall have them at the moment. The assistants are friendly and they really know about fashion, instead of just pretending to be cool! They're honest too and don't just tell you that you look great all the time. I like the music they play 'cos it sort of puts you in the mood as soon as you walk in, though I don't think it's your thing – you might prefer somewhere a bit quieter.

[The clip is repeated.]

3: *You hear part of an interview with a farmer.*

[pause]

Interviewer: So Josh, for our teenage listeners, who live in towns and cities, tell us about what it's like living on a farm.

Farmer: Well actually you can come along and experience it for yourself this weekend. There's going to be something called an Open Farm Day. More than 450 farms all over the country will be open to the public and you can go along and meet the animals, ride on a tractor, learn about cheese making and wool spinning, all that sort of thing. Who knows? It might even persuade a few to think about farming as a career. It's not an easy life but it's a good one.

[The clip is repeated.]

4: *You hear two friends talking about a school concert.*

[pause]

Male speaker: Hi Judy! Are you ready for the school concert tomorrow? I've been practising all week so I think it'll be OK.

Female speaker: There are a few tricky bits in that new piece of music we'll be playing. I'm getting my head round it, though. My clarinet was making a funny noise but I've got it sorted now. That could've been embarrassing.

Male speaker: I'm a bit worried about my solo part, especially with all those people watching.

Female speaker: Imagine how awful it would be to make a mistake with your mum and dad there! I'm not so bothered about strangers, though.

Male speaker: Just stay cool. If you mess up, just keep going like nothing's happened.

[The clip is repeated.]

5: *You hear a news report about a football club.*

[pause]

Fast food is off the menu for everyone at Park Town Rangers football club! The new manager of the club has coached in many countries around the world and has picked up some ideas from his travels in Europe and Asia. He has banned the players from eating meat when they are preparing for important games. He thinks this will strengthen their physical condition and improve the team's results, a view shared by our medical experts in the studio today. Now the club have decided to go a step further and have stopped selling burgers in the stadium, a move which may not be popular with all the young fans!

[The clip is repeated.]

6: *You hear two friends talking about a newspaper for teenagers.*

[pause]

Male speaker: I read this great newspaper the other day.

Female speaker: A newspaper? Isn't it full of dull stuff?

Male speaker: It's aimed at our age group, actually, so it presents the news in a way that's easy to understand – so it's a good way to find out what's going on in the world. It's interactive too.

Female speaker: Really?

Male speaker: Yeah, you can write reports for it and they include the best ones in the paper. Cool, huh?

Female speaker: If you like writing, I suppose. Not a talent of mine.

Male speaker: So you don't bother with the news then?

Female speaker: Oh I wouldn't say that. I do follow it – just as long as it doesn't seem too much like schoolwork.

[The clip is repeated.]

7: *You hear a boy telling a friend about climbing a mountain with his father.*

[pause]

F: How often do you go mountain climbing?

M: My dad and I go climbing together a lot, which is really cool 'cos I get plenty of time to talk with him. I remember the last mountain we climbed together, he was telling me about how you can only really enjoy the wonderful scenery once you get to the top, 'cos when you're just halfway up you're concentrating on the climb. I was really sore, and I just wanted to quit, but I carried on to the top so I could admire the beautiful view – but my legs were aching so much I couldn't appreciate it fully, or my dad's wise words.

[The clip is repeated.]

8: *You hear a teacher talking about an environmental project.*

[pause]

Right everyone, I'm sure you'll agree it was great fun enhancing our school grounds with the butterfly garden, and I hope you all got something out of it and are more aware of your natural environment now. What you've achieved is much appreciated and the project will continue so I'd like you to keep thinking about things we can do to maintain the garden. The idea is to keep it going for future students at the school so all suggestions are welcome. I think you'll all agree it's been a great success – which I hope we can repeat in the future.

[The clip is repeated.]