

Keith Speaking Academy

Live Lesson Notes

Listening Skills

10 Useful Tips



Study with me to get a Band 7 or above on
IELTS Speaking
with my Udemy online course

[IELTS Speaking Success - Get a Band 7+](#)

TODAY'S RIDDLE

What occurs once in a **minute**, twice in a **moment** and never in one **thousand years**?

Answer: The letter "M."

Some useful Links

TED talks with transcripts

<https://www.ted.com/talks>

British Council Listening Materials

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening>

British Council Listening Test

<https://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/take-ielts/prepare/free-ielts-practice-tests/listening/section-1>

The Fluency Gym

<https://ieltsspeakingsuccess.com/free-ielts-speaking-practice-online-fluency-gym/>

Get a complete Mock IELTS Test.

Use the CODE: **keith10** to get a 10% **discount**.

<https://takeielts.net/the-path-to-success-in-the-ielts-test/>

Find a teacher so you can start practicing all the language you are learning here.

<https://promos.italki.com/ieltsspeakingsuccess/>

Collect **my free materials** here

<https://ieltsspeakingsuccess.com/ielts-speaking-free-live-lessons/>

Follow me on social media

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/KeithIELTSMastermind/>

<https://www.instagram.com/ieltsspeakingsuccess/>

<youtube.com/c/IELTSSpeakingSuccess>

Listening Skills

There are two main skills to develop

1. Listening for **detail**

(e.g. phone numbers, a street name, a time...)

2. Listening for **gist**

(e.g. A person is complaining in a hotel, two people are arguing about politics...)

The **gist** = the main idea or general meaning

I get the gist = I understand the main idea

We had technical problems in today's class, but the great thing was it produced a new idiom!!

*I am going to **vote with my feet!***

= I am going to leave!

You might have voted with your feet, when I had technical problems in today's class

Tips

1. Be comfortable not understanding everything!

You will most likely never understand everything, so relax and don't stress just because you can't understand everything you hear.

Focus on what you can understand, not what you can't.

When you listen for gist, you actually don't need to understand every word.

In addition, if you always look up lots of words when listening, you will build vocabulary, rather than build your listening skills.

When listening to stuff at home, be clear about your goal.

Do you want to increase your vocabulary or improve your listening? I suggest you just choose one goal each time you 'do listening'.

2. Use context (pictures, text/transcript/questions) and activate schemata (existing knowledge).

That means when you look at the questions in IELTS Listening, think about the ideas and language you know on that topic. Ask yourself,

“What do already know about this topic?”

For example, for this question below...

QUESTIONS: TRANSPORT FROM BAYSWATER
1. Express train leaves at (1)
2. Nearest station is (2)
3. Number 706 bus goes to (3)
4. Number (4) bus goes to station
5. Earlier bus leaves at (5)

...we activated (or brainstormed) the following;

Means of transport include, trains, coaches, buses, ferries, express trains.

*Trains leave from **platforms***

*Ferries leave from **terminals***

Official (train) times are said like this '16:05' (not like this '5 past 4')

*We have **peak times** for travelling - and **off-peak times**.*

*Peak times are **more expensive** than off-peak*

Destination

Departure times, arrival times

3. Develop your **noticing skills**

When practicing listening skills, you should try to **notice** the following things

1. **Word stress**
2. **Chunks**
3. **Weak forms**
4. **Contractions**
5. **Connected Speech**

When you listen, you can stop the audio and try to notice and pick out these features.

If you have the transcript, you can listen again and read at the same time to see where these feature happen.

Let's take a simple example of a sentence from the IELTS listening above.

That'll get you there in under an hour

You can listen to it here

<https://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/take-ielts/prepare/free-ielts-practice-tests/listening/section-1>

This phrase is here at 2 mins. 25 secs.

1. Word stress

That'll get you there in under an hour

We can hear the stressed words 'there', 'hour' and possibly also 'under'.

Focusing and noticing **only** the stressed words is a key way to get the general meaning.

2. Chunks

Chunks are pieces of language, made up usually of two or three words.

In our example, there are two chunks.

CHUNK 1 - *That'll get you there*

CHUNK 2 - *in under an hour*

When we notice chunks, it helps us focus on the **sounds**, rather than the words. This helps us listen to longer pieces more easily, as we are not '**stuck**' at each word.

You can practice listening to and speaking out chunks in the **Fluency Gym**

<https://ieltsspeakingsuccess.com/free-ielts-speaking-practice-online-fluency-gym/>

3. Weak forms

Many of the following have 2 pronunciations.

One is a **strong** form and the other is a **weak** form.

Auxiliaries (be, do, have, can...)

Personal pronouns (you, he, she...)

Prepositions (to, at, of, for...)

Conjunctions (and, but, than...)

We use the **strong** form when we **stress** that word.

E.g. I **do** like pizza.

Do is pronounced /duː/

*But most of the time, these words are **not stressed**, and so use the weak form*

E.g. **Do** you like pizza?

Do is pronounced /də/

Coming back to our sentence...

*That'll get **you** there in under **an** hour*

You is not stressed and weak, pronounced /jə /

An is not stressed and weak, pronounced /ən/

That'll get /jə / there in under **ən**/ hour

4. Contractions

When we speaking we nearly always use contractions.

I will = I'll

I would = I'd

I would have = I'd've

We can hear this in our example sentence.

That'll get you there in under an hour

5. Connected speech

The final big thing that makes listening extremely difficult is connected speech.

If you can crack this, your listening skills will rocket.

RULE:

When a word ends with a consonant sound and the next word begins with a vowel sound, we usually connect the two words.

In the first chunk you can see a link between GET and YOU

That'll **get_you** there

In the second chunk you can see a link between IN and UNDER, UNDER and AN, and finally AN and HOUR.

in_under_an_hour

Whenever you hear connected speech, notice it and try repeating it.

4. Train your memory processing time (to make it longer)

In IELTS listening we have to listen for details, often numbers or the spelling of a name.

Our brain works like this; we hear, understand, store the information, produce it (usually writing).

A simple way to train this skill is record yourself saying a series of numbers (or letters) with increasing difficulty.

Play the recording non-stop, and try to write down the numbers.

For example,

84

7253

901 56 79

534 87 24 03

679 21 54 62 89

Do the same with letters (BUT NOT WORDS YOU KNOW)

R-I-G

T-I-G-G-L-E

F-I-S-T-L-E-T-O-N

H-O-P-P-L-E-S-T-A-N

P-A-S-T-O-R-S-H-I-P-E-D

VARIETY IS THE KEY TO IMPROVING YOUR LISTENING

5. Listen to all levels

Listen to material **lower than your level**, to build confidence and fluency.

This is really good when noticing weak forms, connected speech....

Listen to material at the **same, or higher, than your level**

Try the resources here.

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening>

6. Listen to all speeds

You can change the speed in Youtube videos in the navigation bar below the video.

Listen to **slow English** for confidence and fluency!

Try the audios from

www.esl.culips.com

Listen to **fast English** to improve your processing skills.

Find examples of native speaker content Check out the 'useful podcasts' recommended here

<https://ieltsspeakingsuccess.com/resources-courses-e-books-tips/>

7. Listen Intensively (short clips 3 mins) and Extensively (long clips +30 mins)

Listening to short clips intensively helps you develop your 'listening for details' skills.

Listening to longer clips helps you develop your 'listening for gist' skills, as well as building your stamina, so you can stay focussed throughout the IELTS Listening test.

8. Listen to different genres and topics

Check out LingQ

www.lingq.com

or go through my referral (same for you but I earn points to my account!)

<https://www.lingq.com/?referral=keitho123>













This is a programme for language learning, but it has thousands of audio clips, with transcripts, that you can access for free. It also covers a wide range of topics and genres.

The first thing they do when you register is ask you what topics you are interested in.

This way, you can access a variety of content.

What topics do you love?

Choose 5 or more categories to customize your Lesson Feed

Books 	Podcasts 	News 
Business 	Entertainment 	Sports 
Technology 	Pronunciation 	Grammar 
Health 	Science 	Culture 

You can pay to join if you want to follow their complete course, but you can access lots of listening content for free!

Lyrics Training <https://lyricstraining.com/>

English Central <https://www.englishcentral.com/>

Elllo <http://elllo.org>

ESOL courses <https://www.esolcourses.com>

[ESLvideo.com](https://www.eslvideo.com)

9. Listen to different accents

In IELTS listening, you need to be familiar with at least the main native-speaker accents of English; American, Canadian, British, Irish, Australian, and New Zealand.

Remember these countries have lots of very different accents within each country, so look for as wide a variety as possible.

So actively search for videos and podcasts that expose you to these accents.

Some interesting podcasts here focusing on accents.

FM player - <https://player.fm/podcasts/Accent>

Try a free **radio app** with International stations and then tune into programmes from around the world.

I have used these before (available from Apple or Google Play stores)

[Simple Radio](#)

[FM Player](#)

10. Enjoy yourself

There is a lot of research shows that you learn more when you are relaxed and enjoying what you do.

You can read about Krashen's Affective Filter here - <https://www.sk.com.br/sk-krash-english.html>

Stress blocks learning.

So, as well as doing IELTS Practice tests, which are a great idea, you should also choose lots of stuff that you will enjoy listening to (and yes, that includes songs too).

Get a balance between what is good for you (variety of topics, levels and accents) and what you enjoy.

It's a bit like a healthy diet, right?

Eat a variety of stuff, some healthy and some that you just love.

Just get a balance.

Now go to it....

Go and listen to something and improve your listening skills.