



THE ENGLISH EATERY

Listening for specific information

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What is listening for - specific information?

Specific information is often factual in nature, for example, a name, a place, a profession, an object, a number or a quantity.

Why is listening for specific information important?

When you listen for specific information, you need to have some idea of what you're listening for before you listen and while you're listening. In an exam situation, predict and anticipate the kind of information that will answer the question, being aware that the idea you're listening for could be expressed in the recording in a number of different ways. As you listen, you need to recognise when the information is about to be given, and pay particularly close attention at that point. Sometimes, listening for specific information also involves listening to determine whether information is stated or not.



How do we listen for gist?

- Think about the topic of the text you are going to listen to. What do you already know about it? What could possibly be the content of the text? Which words come to mind that you already know? Which words would you want to look up?
- It is not necessary to understand every single word. Try to ignore words that you think are less important.
- If there are words or issues that you don't understand, use your general knowledge as well as the context to find out the meaning.
- If you still don't understand something, use a dictionary to look up the words or ask someone else for help.
- Focus on keywords and facts.
- Think about the text again. Have you understood the main points?
- Remember the speculations you made before you listened. Did they come true?



Multiple Choice tips

- Read the instructions carefully.
- Read the questions and identify what is actually being asked. Highlight the keyword in the question.
- Look at the different options and underline any keywords that help you tell the difference in meaning.
- Think of any synonyms or paraphrases you might hear.
- Predict the answer.
- When listening, listen for any keywords and synonyms.
- Don't write the first answer you hear. They will probably talk about more than one option so wait until they have talked about them all and then answer. Be careful with answers that are given by the speaker and then taken away.
- If you think an answer is correct, put a tick beside it and keep listening to make sure.
- Don't spend any more time than is necessary. If you miss an answer, make a guess and move on.

