

COMMON MISTAKES IN THE IELTS LISTENING SECTION AND STRATEGIES TO AVOID THEM

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Abstract: This article gives information about the mistakes in English listening section. IELTS Listening section is a critical part of the exam that assesses candidates' ability to understand spoken English in various contexts. Many students lose marks not due to a lack of knowledge but because of common and avoidable mistakes. This article identifies the most frequent errors made during the listening test, analyzes their causes, and provides practical strategies to overcome them. By recognizing these mistakes and adopting effective techniques, candidates can significantly improve their listening scores.

Keywords: IELTS Listening, common mistakes, listening skills, test strategies, language learning, exam preparation, English proficiency

Introduction: The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is one of the most widely recognized English proficiency tests globally. The Listening section, which lasts around 30 minutes, is often underestimated by candidates. Although the tasks seem simple, many test-takers lose valuable marks due to common mistakes such as misreading instructions, spelling errors, and lack of focus. These errors are not necessarily signs of poor English skills, but rather the result of poor test strategies. This article discusses the most frequent mistakes made in the IELTS Listening section and offers useful tips for avoiding them.

Misunderstanding the Question Format

Candidates often begin the listening test without fully understanding the question types. The IELTS Listening section includes multiple-choice, form completion, labeling maps, and sentence completion tasks. Misinterpreting these can lead to incorrect answers.

Strategy: Before listening begins, carefully read all instructions and identify what kind of answer is required.

1. Ignoring the Word Limit

Instructions often include limits like "NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS." Writing extra words—even if the meaning is correct—results in a loss of marks.

Strategy: Practice answering within the word limit and double-check your responses during the transfer time.

2. Spelling and Grammar Mistakes

Spelling errors are one of the most common reasons students lose marks. Words like “accommodation” or “environment” are frequently misspelled. Grammar errors, especially in sentence completion, also affect the score.

Strategy: Create a list of commonly used IELTS words and review their spellings regularly. Also, check if the answer grammatically fits the sentence.

3. Getting Distracted by Distractors

The recording often includes distractors—false starts, corrections, or information changes. Many students get confused when the speaker changes their mind or corrects a previous statement.

Strategy: Stay alert throughout the recording. Listen until the speaker finishes the sentence before deciding on your answer.

4. Difficulty with Accents

IELTS recordings include various English accents. Candidates unfamiliar with certain pronunciations may miss key information.

Strategy: Regularly listen to British, Australian, and Canadian audio materials to build confidence in understanding different accents.

5. Transferring Answers Incorrectly

In the paper-based test, candidates have 10 minutes to transfer their answers to the answer sheet. Mistakes in this step can lead to a lower score.

Strategy: Practice with official answer sheets and make sure to write clearly and accurately, especially under time pressure.

Success in the IELTS Listening section requires more than just good English—it demands strong attention, effective time management, and familiarity with the test format. By identifying and correcting common mistakes such as misreading questions, making spelling errors, or getting distracted by accent or speech changes, candidates can significantly boost their performance.

Certainly! Since the article is an informative piece based on common IELTS preparation strategies and widely observed mistakes, the references would typically include IELTS preparation books, official guidelines, and expert advice from reliable sources. Here’s how you can list references in APA style:

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