

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback Summer 2010

IGCSE

IGCSE English as a Second Language (4357/02)
Unit 2: Listening

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Background to the paper

The listening paper is divided into three sections. In this session, the first section was a monologue by a careers teacher on different types of universities in the UK. Candidates were required to complete notes based on the information provided. In the second section, candidates listened to a dialogue between a radio interviewer and an adventurer. Candidates were required to answer multiple choice questions. In the third section, candidates listened to a monologue on kitchen gardens and kitchen classrooms in schools. Candidates were required to complete summary sentences based on the talk.

Candidates' responses

Generally candidates did well or very well on this paper. Marks tended to be in high-teens to mid-twenties range.

There were two general types of questions on this paper: multiple choice and sentence completion.

Multiple choice (Section B)

As a rule, candidates followed the instructions given in the rubric for this type of question.

Sentence completion (Sections A and C)

Generally these questions were well attempted, although there were some candidates who did not adhere to the word limit given in the instructions.

Two issues arose out of these types of questions which require candidates to provide the word or words for the answers themselves.

Spelling

This proved to be a problem for some candidates. The general rule applied during marking was that if the answer affected communication, candidates were not awarded a mark. Candidates were not penalised for misspelling a word if it sounded like the target word. For example, Q9 (answer (their) (own) pillows) a spelling such as pullows was accepted. However, if the word sounded like a different word or was a different word (e.g. Q9 pillars), candidates were not awarded a mark.

Grammar

In a few questions, e.g. Q 29, candidates were required to complete a sentence using the correct grammatical forms. Although these forms were given in the recording, many candidates made errors in their answers. These were the most demanding of all the questions on this paper.

Comments on sections of the paper

Each part of the paper presented challenges for the candidates. The easiest section for the candidates was Section B, the multiple choice question. This is due to the fact that candidates have to select an answer, whereas for Sections A and C candidates have to provide the answer themselves.

Section A

Section A required candidates to listen for specific information such as numbers or high-frequency vocabulary items e.g. bicycle. The best candidates found this section straightforward and scored well. Less able candidates had difficulty with some of the questions in this section. There were a number of candidates who did not adhere to the word limit (three words maximum in this instance). It is important for candidates to follow these instructions as they were not awarded a mark if they did not.

Section B

This section was the easiest one for candidates which is most likely due to the nature of the task: answering multiple choice questions. There were a very few candidates who provided multiple answers for some questions and did, in consequence, lose marks.

Section C

This section required candidates to complete sentences by providing the correct word or words (three words maximum in this instance). This was the most difficult part of the paper as candidates needed to process the information they heard more in order to provide the answer. As in Section A, a number of candidates did not adhere to the word limit. Less able candidates had the most difficulty with this section and some attempted to produce phonetically what they heard. The best candidates were able to identify the correct words and provide grammatically correct sentences. Several candidates repeated words that were already given in the sentence which resulted in no mark being awarded.

Advice to centres

It is recommended that candidates listen to a wide range of different types of texts such as current affairs, TV and radio programmes in order to familiarise themselves with a wide range of topics.

Centres should prepare candidates for the listening examination by familiarising them with the style of the test and with the types of questions they can expect to find on the paper.

Candidates should make good use of the time before the tape is played to predict possible answers and consider the context when providing their answers.

Candidates should be advised to follow the instructions when answering the questions and to adhere to the word limit.

Candidates should consider the grammatical fit of their answers in sentence completion questions.

Candidates should consider the spelling of words when providing their answers.

Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Subject mark	100	90	80	70	60	53	46	40	34

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