



# Examiners' Report

## Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

In English as a Second Language (4WES2\_01)

Unit 2: Listening

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## Introduction

This report will provide tips and comments for 4WES2 01 (Listening) of the International GCSE 2023 specification in English as a Second Language (4XES2).

This qualification consists of four units: Unit 1: Reading - 25% (examination); Unit 2: Listening - 25% (this examination), Unit 3: Writing - 25% (examination) and Unit 4 – Speaking – 25% (oral examination).

Unit 2 for Listening is assessed through an examination lasting 45 minutes. The total number of marks available is 50.

The recordings used relate to topics detailed in the specification *List of topics and subtopics*. The unit includes a range of recordings covering content taken from the compulsory subtopics in Topics 1–4. Recordings cover a broad range of extracts including information requests, explanations, opinions, monologues, dialogues and narration. The recordings will include a range of styles.

This focus of this component is:

### **AO2 – Listening – Understand and provide a response in English to a variety of types of spoken English language**

The specification identifies that candidates must be able to listen to and understand:

1. spoken English language extracts and identify key information
2. informational broadcasts such as extracts from podcasts which may involve more than one speaker, and identify key details, opinions, and information conveyed
3. conversations which may be casual or in the form of interviews and identify key information the speakers are exchanging
4. extracts from public presentations on general interest topics, identifying facts and viewpoints, such as comparing the advantages and disadvantages of an idea or process
5. a wide range of grammatical forms and structures, as defined in the *Grammar list*
6. a wide range of relevant and appropriate vocabulary, as suggested in the *Core vocabulary list*.

The Listening unit assessment consists of **nine** recordings of increasing length and challenge. Some recordings are divided into two or more audio clips followed by examination questions.

Candidates hear each recording twice. They are given time to read the questions before each part of the recording begins and are expected to respond to the questions as they listen.

Recorded texts may be in the form of monologues, dialogues and occasionally there may be three speakers involved. Where there are two or three speakers, the identity of each speaker is clearly signposted. Recordings may be both informal and formal conversation styles, points of view, explanations, discussions, or simple topical conversations. Recordings and exam questions are contextualised.

The aim of the Listening examination is to assess understanding of spoken English language and provide an appropriate response in written English. A maximum of two different question types, for example multiple choice and gap-fill questions, are used per one recording playback (or if the recording is divided in two audio clips). Correct spelling is not a requirement as long as the response is comprehensible.

This was the first summer series of the Listening paper for the new English as a Second Language specification (2023). It was clear that candidates were all able to respond to the recordings in the examination. They had been prepared well and had, at different levels, developed the skills required to answer the questions.

It was also clear that candidates used the skills developed in other units to support them in listening. As the specification identifies, the main aims for our candidates in this paper are:

- understand written and spoken English language in a range of practical, familiar and unfamiliar contexts, and for a variety of purposes
- communicate effectively in written and spoken English using a range of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures
- effectively use English language grammar, sentence structures, and vocabulary.

This qualification aims to provide candidates with the opportunity to explore and develop an understanding of the cultures and diverse communities where English is used around the world.

As Principal Examiner for this paper it was very pleasing to see that candidates had listened carefully, crafting and deleting responses as they listened, where required.

The responses of candidates had many positive features. Examiners were impressed by:

- evidence that many candidates had understood and engaged with the content of and ideas in the spoken extracts heard
- evidence that candidates were able to provide a response in English to the questions that required written answers
- accuracy of responses to multiple-choice questions
- evidence of completion of the questions across the paper.

Less successful responses:

- demonstrated a lack of awareness of the ideas in the spoken extracts that were specifically relevant to the question
- gave more generic, non-specific responses that did not demonstrate careful listening skills
- sometimes used written English in such a way that it made it impossible to see the quality of the answer. While spelling and grammatical accuracy are not a requirement, the response does need to make sense to the examiner marking it.

### **Recording 1 (transcript length 90–100 words)**

*Topic: Myself and others*

*Sub-topic: Family, friends and relationships*

The stimulus for this question was a short extract with a single speaker talking about family. Candidates answered 1 multiple-choice question with 6 parts to achieve a maximum of 6 marks.

These questions were accurately answered in almost all cases with very few incorrect answers. In this first part of the paper, the level of this extract and question is A0/A1.

### **Recording 2 (split into a) and b), transcript length in total 100–120 words)**

*Topic: Myself and others*

*Sub-topic: Hobbies and leisure time*

The stimulus for this question was two short extracts with two speakers talking about a Book Group. Candidates answered 1 multiple-response question on the first extract for 3 marks and 1 multiple-response question on the second extract for 3 marks. Candidates needed to select 3 correct answers in both parts from a selection of 6.

If a candidate had selected more than three answers, a mark for one otherwise correct answer was removed for each additional incorrect answer. For example, a candidate who had selected four answers (three correct, one incorrect) would score 2 marks.

These questions were accurately answered in the main with very few incorrect answers. In this early part of the paper, the level of this extract and question is A1.

### **Recording 3 (transcript length 130–140 words)**

*Topic: Education*

*Sub-topic: School life*

The stimulus for this question was a short extract with two speakers talking about the school day. Candidates answered 1 multiple-choice question with 5 parts, each worth 1 mark. A maximum of 5 marks were available.

These questions were accurately answered in almost all cases with very few incorrect answers, even though this was a longer single recording to be listened to. The level of the extract and question was A1.

#### **Recording 4 (transcript length 50-60 words)**

*Topic: Employment*

*Sub-topic: Job applications*

The stimulus for this question was a short extract with a single speaker leaving a voicemail about a job interview. Candidates answered 1 multiple-response question for 3 marks, selecting 3 correct answers from a selection of 6.

This question was accurately answered in the main, although some candidates needed to take more care with listening to the content to ensure they knew the roles of the two people being talked about. The level of the extract and question was A2, indicating some ramping up.

#### **Recording 5 (transcript length 70–80 words)**

*Topic: Employment*

*Sub-topic: Job applications*

The stimulus for this question was a short extract with a single speaker leaving a voicemail in response to the message in Question 4 about a job interview. Candidates answered 1 open-response question with 3 parts, each worth 1 mark. Full sentences are not required. Candidates were able to identify when Kajal was free for part (a), but not all candidates were able to pick up on the specific detail of what Kajal would tell Sam about in the interview. Incorrect answers were location, time and school experience (experience needed to be specific to work).

For part (c), some candidates did not answer specifically enough to achieve the mark. Some put 'office', when, to indicate that they had responded specifically to this extract, they needed to say 'head office'. Responses must show careful listening to the extract rather than offering a generic response that could be correct in any context or applicable to any text. Some candidates lost a mark by confusing Kajal and Sam, as they said 'Kajal's head office' when Kajal was going for the interview.

The level of the extract and questions was A2, indicating some ramping up.

#### **Recording 6 (transcript length 110–120 words)**

*Topic: Employment*

*Sub-topic: Future employment plans*

The stimulus for this question was a presentation about work experience featuring two speakers. Candidates answered 1 multiple-choice question with 3 parts, each worth 1 mark. A maximum of 3 marks were available.

These questions were accurately answered in the main with very few incorrect answers, even though this was a longer single recording to be listened to and to select material from. Candidates that did not achieve a mark for a specific part had not distinguished clearly the distractors from the correct answer. The level of the extract and question was A2.

### **Recording 7 (transcript length 60-70 words)**

*Topic: Employment*

*Sub-topic: Future employment plans*

The stimulus for this question was a continuation of the presentation about work experience featuring two speakers. Candidates answered 1 open-response question with 3 parts, each worth 1 mark. Full sentences are not required.

Candidates were able to identify how long the work experience lasted for part (a) in the majority of cases, with incorrect answers tending to be where candidates could not distinguish between singular and plural and answered 'weeks'. Not all candidates were able to pick up on the specific detail of what Charlie said about her talk. Incorrect answers were not as accurate as they needed to be, for example 'respect of work' and 'respect' did not achieve marks, the first as it is incorrect and the second as it is just a random word from the transcript. For part (c), some candidates did not answer specifically enough to achieve the mark. The answer must include some qualifying reasoning for Charlie wanting to go back, such as 'so much to learn', 'lots to learn' or 'more to learn'. The level of the extract and questions was A2.

### **Recording 8 (transcript length 190-200 words)**

*Topic: Myself and others*

*Sub-topic: Homes*

The stimulus for this question was a two-speaker interaction about a room to rent. Candidates answered 1 'complete the sentences' question worth 5 marks. For this item type candidates select their response by choosing (single/double word) options contained within a box / cloud. The responses complete a statement or statements.

These questions were accurately answered in the main with very few incorrect answers, even though this was a longer recording to be listened to and to select material from. Candidates who did not achieve a mark for a specific part had not taken time to listen to the whole recording and ensure that they were using the correct response in the correct place. The level of the extract and question was B1.

### **Recording 9 (transcript length 210–220 words)**

*Topic: Travel and tourism*

*Sub-topic: Travel and accommodation*

The stimulus for this question was a meeting about travel tours featuring two speakers. Candidates answered 1 multiple-choice question with 6 parts, each worth 1 mark. A maximum of 6 marks were available.

These questions were accurately answered in the main with very few incorrect answers, even though this was a longer single recording to be listened to and to select material from. Candidates who did not achieve a mark for a specific part had not distinguished clearly the distractors from the correct answer and this seemed to be more the case in the later parts of the question which used information later in the recording. The level of the extract and questions was B1.

### **Recording 10 (transcript length 230–240 words)**

*Topic: Employment*

*Sub-topic: Part-time and voluntary work*

The stimulus for this question was a conversation about volunteering featuring three speakers. Candidates answered an open-response question which was part (a) with 4 parts, each worth 1 mark and then another open-response question which was part (b) worth 1 mark. A maximum of 5 marks were available.

These questions depended on candidates understanding advantages and disadvantages, which they did, and also understanding which speaker they are answering about, requiring careful reading of the question. Candidates were able to identify what the advantages and disadvantages of volunteering at the food bank according to Luca were, although, as with other open-response questions, it cannot be an answer that comes from ‘outside of the recording’. Candidates who answered ‘helping people’ did not answer specifically enough with an answer from this recording – anyone could pick that answer as a possible advantage of volunteering. The majority of candidates were able to identify the length of travel / the temperature as disadvantages. This pattern followed with what Sasha said, as sometimes the advantage was not specific enough, whereas the disadvantage was specific for the majority of candidates.

The final part was answered well in the main, although where candidates did not achieve the mark it was due to missing information – answers that referenced the mother must also have a link to helping her (‘because of his mum’ was not specific enough for this level). The level of the extract and question was B1.

### **Recording 11 (transcript length 280–290 words)**

*Topic: Education*

*Sub-topic: ICT*

The stimulus for this question was a single-speaker podcast about internet security. Candidates answered an open-response question which had 5 parts, each worth 1 mark. A maximum of 5 marks were available. This question had more blank responses than other questions, possibly due to its higher level of cognitive demand and the length of the recording.

These questions relied on candidates not just trying to answer from their own knowledge of internet security, but listening to the recording and answering the question given based on the material. For

example, many candidates said 'she was hacked' for part (a), which was not focussed enough for the mark – it was specifically her email that was hacked. Part (b) tended to be accurately answered, that she was concerned with keeping her details or information safe. Part (c) needed specific reference to a way of improving the password or how it was changed. For the final part, the reflect the level of demand for this question, the answers 'key for internet security', 'it's protection' or 'it is a wall' were not specific enough. Responses needed to make reference to it acting as a barrier for protection. The level of the extract and question was B2.

## **Summary**

Based on their performance on the paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- make sure you listen to a wide range of different types of texts to make you more familiar with a wide range of topics
- review the sample assessment materials to look at the style of the paper and the types of questions
- make good use of the time before the recordings start to read the questions, to check who you are being asked about, to think about possible answers and consider the context and topic
- follow the instructions carefully when answering the questions, including using the correct space for the response and not writing too much when a question is worth 1 mark only
- think about the spelling of words when writing answers and think about the sentence construction if you write a sentence
- answer the questions with information from the recording you have heard, rather than giving an answer from your general knowledge.

