

IELTS ACADEMIC MODULE

How to Maximize Your Score

TARGET BAND



FOURTH EDITION



Covers paper-based and
computer-delivered IELTS



Simone Braverman

TARGET BAND 7

IELTS Academic Module

How to Maximize Your Score

Fourth Edition

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IELTS-Blog.com

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Target Band 7

IELTS Academic Module - How to Maximize Your Score (Fourth Edition)

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From the author

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Together there is no mountain we can't climb!

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Flexible Working in our Workplace - <http://www.acas.org/>

A Threatened Breed (Polar Bears) <http://www.wwf.org.uk/>

Biodegradable Plastic - <http://www.copyrightfreecontent.com>, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>,

<http://green-plastics.net> - Greg Stevens at Green Plastics

The Australian Pearl Industry - <http://www.australia.gov.au>

Blood Type Dieting - <http://www.weightlossresources.co.uk>, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>

Academic Writing - <http://www.publications.parliament.uk>,

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Current_typical_floor_plan,_2013.jpg

Does this book really work?

“

Target Band 7 breaks new ground in the IELTS materials market as its author has actually taken the IELTS test and achieved a high level! This makes the many explanations and tips really relevant and user-friendly and helps to connect the reader to the writer in an authentic way.

The book is organised into many, manageable sections, and written in a personal style, making the excellent suggestions for increasing an IELTS score easy for non-native speakers of English to access, read and to absorb. Definitely a welcome resource for busy test takers.

- Stephen Slater,
Centre for English Language in the
University of South Australia.

“

I'm extremely happy, since today I received my IELTS results and they were much better than I expected... I am Band 8: I've scored 8.5 in Listening and Reading; 8 in Speaking and 7 in Writing. And I was so afraid about not being able to reach 6.5!

- Mari from the UK

“

I got 7.5 in Academic module, applied for and won the scholarship! I'm so happy, I wanted to thank you. Target Band 7 helped a lot in my preparation; it is very useful for those short of time for preparation. Everything in the book is easy to understand and includes the most important things and tips. I find it to be very beneficial for those who do not like spending much time preparing for IELTS.

- Akgul from Kazakhstan

“

I just received my IELTS results and I am quite happy! I've got an overall band score of 8. Personally, I can say that your book was so fundamental to my preparation that without it I think I would barely receive a 6.5. It has an excellent approach and I've already recommended it to all of my friends who think about taking the IELTS.

- Leonardo from Brazil

“

I have completed my exam and got 8.5 in IELTS Academic module. Without your help I don't think I would be able to do it. My reading was 9.0, speaking and listening were 8.5 and writing was 7.0. I just got my letter of offer from UNE for Graduate Diploma in Education. Thank you again.

- Victor from Australia

“

My result went beyond my expectations as I got an 8.5 in the academic module with 9 in speaking. This was absolutely astonishing and there were no anticipations associated with the result. So you and the book Target Band 7 deserve a huge round of applause from all those who have benefited from you. Thank you for coming to my aid.

- Divya from India

“

At first I was really scared to take the IELTS without a proper review in a review center, but the book motivated me to do it by myself. And I made it! I took the Academic exam, with the help of nothing but Target Band 7 book. I passed the exam, with overall band score of 7 and 8.5 speaking.

- Rommel from the Philippines

“

As I promised I am informing you about the result of my IELTS exam. Listening 8, Reading 8, Writing 7, Speaking 7, Overall Band 7.5 (yehey!) Thanks again for everything that I learned.

- Ann from Canada

“

I always thought IELTS is about proficiency in English but I was wrong. IELTS is all about techniques and strategies in answering the 4 components of IELTS. Thanks Simone for writing this book and I highly recommend this book if you are preparing for IELTS by yourself.

- Jessie from Singapore

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Follow instructions on the webpage to save all audio files on your computer. The files are in mp3 format and you will need an audio player to listen to them (any modern computer has that type of software preinstalled).

What this book is about

This guide is here to teach you the IELTS test, not the English language. Why?

Even if English is your first language, you can forget about getting a good score in IELTS, unless you are prepared for it. Three main problems will get in your way: *time, tricks and logic traps*.

When it comes to IELTS, **time is your worst enemy**. You need to do things fast. Of course you would get all the answers right if you had the time. But the reality is that there are a lot of questions to be answered, a lot of writing to be done, and very little time to do it.

This guide teaches you **HOW TO**:

- Listen, hear the right answers and write them down FAST
- Scan through the text and deal with all kinds of questions FAST
- Get your essay written FAST
- Build a speech in your head on any topic FAST
- Know and avoid the traps when you see them

This book might not make your English perfect, but it will certainly help you to get in shape and get your target Band Score!

Attitude tips

In my opinion, validated by the IELTS scores of the people I trained, you don't need more than 4 weeks of daily training. Set aside 3 hours that you will devote to practice for IELTS - and it will get you the desired result.

I believe that if you can read and understand this e-book, your English is good enough. Just stick to the guidelines of this book and they will help you get the best IELTS score you can at your current level of English. You can even give yourself a day off once a week, and still be able to ace the IELTS!

To get free IELTS advice and updates to your email go to <https://www.ielts-blog.com> and subscribe. You will be pleasantly surprised by the amount of useful information and friendly support you will receive.

How to use this book

The way this manual has been put together makes it possible for you to read the main chapters (Listening, Reading, Writing or Speaking tips) in any order you like - each is completely independent of the other. You don't have to follow the order in which the book is written.

Since there are two ways to take the IELTS test, on paper and on a computer, this book covers both. In every chapter you will find tips for the paper-based test followed by tips for the computer-delivered. There are things you can do on paper that you cannot do on a computer and vice versa, and some techniques are different for the paper-based and computer-delivered test. Whatever type of test you are taking, this book has you covered.

If you don't have much time, I suggest reading this book and doing only the exercises that are included in it, no extra work. This is not the ideal way though. In case you do have the time, I highly recommend that you read and pay attention to all the tips in this manual and then try to use them when you practice real IELTS tests. There are links to IELTS materials at the end of every main chapter and a detailed study plan at the end of the book.

At the end of the book there are Pocket tips - short summaries of the most important hints in each of the chapters - Listening, Reading, Writing or Speaking. Every time you practice, read them before you start a test - they will refresh your memory and focus you on what's really important. Enjoy!

The IELTS Routine

The IELTS test consists of four parts: **Listening**, **Reading**, **Writing** and **Speaking**.

Listening takes about 40 minutes - 30 minutes to listen to a recording and to answer questions on what you hear, and 10 minutes to transfer your answers to the Answer Sheet (in the paper-based test). In the computer-delivered test the answers are typed into their spaces directly, there is no need to transfer them after the test.

Reading takes 1 hour and your task is to read passages of text and to answer questions according to what you have read. There are also other types of task which I will cover later on.

Writing also takes 1 hour and is divided into 2 sub-parts: 20 minutes to write a report and 40 minutes to write an essay.

Speaking takes up to 15 minutes and consists of 3 parts: a Personal Interview, a Short Speech and a Discussion.

All the parts continue one after another, and the only break you get is before the Speaking. In some cases the Speaking test is held on a different day.

The Listening test at a glance

The Listening test consists of 4 parts. There are 40 questions in total. You need to answer all the questions as you listen to the recording. The recording is not paused at any time and you hear it only once, but it gives you some time to read the questions. Finding answers gets harder as you progress through the test.

Are you scared yet? Don't be! There is a technique to get you through it. Just make sure that your answers are readable and easy to understand when you copy them to the Answer Sheet. You may write in **pencil only**. If you are taking the computer-delivered test, you won't have to copy your answers at the end, as you would have typed them directly into their spaces.

The Reading test at a glance

The Reading test consists of 3 long passages of text and has 40 questions in total. Your job is to read the texts and either answer questions, label diagrams, complete sentences or fill in the blanks. For every type of task there are instructions. The passages are taken from books, newspapers, magazines and the topics are very diverse, from scuba diving to space exploration. The passages progress in difficulty, with the first being the easiest and the third the hardest.

The good news is that you don't really have to read the whole passage, thanks to the techniques I will refer to later. The not so good news is that there is no additional time to copy your answers to the Answer Sheet and you need to squeeze it into the 60 minutes that you have. Please, don't forget to do this - I witnessed someone who did forget, and it was not a pretty sight. The poor guy was crying, he received a score of '0' for the **entire** Reading test. Here too you may write in **pencil only**, no pens are allowed. If you are taking the computer-delivered test, you won't have to copy answers, as you would have typed them directly into their spaces.

The Writing test at a glance

The Writing test has 2 tasks. The Writing Task 1 is to write a **report** based on a graph, a diagram or a table you receive, using at least 150 words. The Writing Task 2 is to write an **essay** on a given topic, present and justify an opinion or give a solution to a problem, using no fewer than 250 words.

Nothing to worry about here! Once you start using a certain structure which I'll explain later on for the report and the essay, in addition to your imagination, it is a piece of cake. This kind of task requires a bit of training, but after you have written a few essays and reports you will be well-prepared for the test and you will feel **confident**.

The Speaking test at a glance

This is the fun part of the test, for many reasons. You get to rest before it. You are a little tired from the previous 3 parts and therefore more relaxed. The examiners are trained to smile no matter what, so you feel as if you are speaking to your best friend.

The first part of the Speaking test is an interview, which means that the examiner asks you some questions about yourself, your work or studies, a place where you live, your likes and dislikes, and so on. This is an easy task to prepare for.

In Part 2 of the Speaking test you receive a card with a topic and bullet points to cover in your talk. You get 1 minute to prepare and think about something to say, and after that you should talk for one to two minutes on your topic. At the end the examiner might ask you a follow-up question.

In Part 3 of the test you have a discussion with the examiner. The topic is somehow related to the one from Part 2, but it is about more abstract ideas. You have to express and justify your opinions.

The examiner will record your session. Don't worry about it; the recording is to test the examiner and not you.

Tips for the Listening Test

In general

The Listening Test is probably the one people get most scared of. To help yourself overcome that fear, start watching TV programs in English. These are better than radio or audio books, because you also see images that help you understand the words you hear.

Listening - a skill, not a gift!

From my experience, in many cases Listening is the least developed skill. So if you feel especially weak in that area, pay attention to the following tips, as they will help you improve your Listening ability. Remember - nobody is born with it, it's just a skill and you learn it. If you think your Listening needs no improvements - skip "Teach yourself the words" part and move forward to the tips that follow.

Teach yourself the words

The only way to improve your Listening ability is to train your ears to separate and understand the words you hear in the flow of a sentence. Often what you hear is "Blablablablabla" that you can't break into words, and for that reason it makes no sense to you. When work with a recording of the news, a lecture, a television program, a movie or an actual IELTS Listening test. I suggest using a device that lets you record, play and rewind a recording easily – a smartphone or an MP3 player. You can easily record English from the radio or any other source onto it. It is also easy to repeat (re-play) sentences you didn't understand. Choose a device that is small and light, to use in any spare moment you may have - riding on a bus or a tram, walking the dog, taking a walk, etc.

First, listen, remember what you heard and stop the recording after each phrase. Even if you didn't understand the phrase, play it in your head a couple of times, like a broken record - "Tonight we have a special guest", "Tonight we have a special guest", "Tonight we have a special guest".

Then say it out loud. If you understood that phrase the first time you heard it, this exercise will improve your pronunciation. If you didn't understand the phrase the first time, this repetition will give you more time to hear it better, break it into words and make sense out of them. If it is still difficult, you can always rewind and hear the phrase again.

There is a big difference between **seeing** a word printed on paper while reading, and **hearing** it. If you saw a word, it doesn't mean you will recognize it when you hear it. **This is why you must hear every word you have seen at least once.**

Instructions will keep you safe

Every task in the IELTS Listening test has its instructions. It may sound silly, but you really need to read them carefully. Why? Because they will tell you exactly what to do with the information: how many words you can use to answer questions, whether or not there is a table you must fill in, whether there is a list to choose words from, how many items you must name, etc. Remember, too, that if the answer must be in 'no more than two words' - write one or two words, because writing three words will drop your score to 0 for that question.

To make my point crystal clear, let's take the following scenario as an example:

The speaker on the recording says, "A *valid UK passport* is required at the check-in desk."

This is what you see in the question booklet:

Complete the notes below. Write **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the listening for each answer.

"Guests are required to present a _____ to check in.

The correct answer may be "UK passport" or "valid passport" (**2 words**), but **not the 3-word long "valid UK passport"!!!** Anyone who writes "**valid UK passport**", just to be on the safe side or because they wanted to give a 'full answer', receives zero marks for that question.

Note: when counting words - "a", "the" or a number (e.g. 159) is considered a word.

When instructions say "NO MORE THAN 3 WORDS" - you can write one, two or three words, but **never** more than three.

Divide and conquer!

The recording divides questions into **groups**, so every time you are instructed to answer 4-5 questions. There are 20-30 seconds of silence before each group. The only exception is Listening Part 4, where you have one group of 10 questions and you are given more time to read them than in Parts 1-3.

The first thing you should do when the recording starts playing, is understand which group of questions you need to answer.

For example, the recording says: "Look at questions one to four". It means that you have about 20 seconds to look at those questions. Go over the questions, read them and underline keywords. Keywords are the words that contain the main idea of the question. They will help you guess what you will hear - numbers, opening hours, names, locations, etc.

Draw a line under the fourth question, so you won't look further before it's time to do so.

In the computer-delivered IELTS you can't underline, but you can highlight keywords and highlight the last question in the group to have a visual marker on the screen. Remember that you may need to scroll down to see all of the questions. Position them on the screen so that you see all of the group you need to answer now.

Next you will hear a piece of spoken language and answer the questions one to four **as you listen**. It means that you should be able to write/type one answer and listen to another.

After that, the recording will say the numbers of the questions in the next group. Repeat the same process, including drawing the line or highlighting. This dividing technique is very efficient because every time you concentrate on a **limited** number of questions, it makes you more focused and in control.

Distractions

Don't get confused by all the different voices you are going to hear. The recording uses several different voices - of younger and older people, men and women. You may also hear different accents - Australian, British, American, Canadian, etc. The background noises also vary. They can be from an airport, a coffee-shop, a street, a university lecture hall, you name it. Be ready for it and don't let it distract you - because that is exactly what they want. Ignore the noises and listen for the answers.

Listen for specifics

When you are listening, look for descriptions and details, such as dates, places, prices, telephone numbers, opening hours, years (1995), transportation (car, bike, train), etc.

If you hear them, but don't know where to place them yet - write them in the margins of the Listening booklet (paper-based) or on the draft paper that you got (computer-delivered). Later you will have some time to check your answers. Going over the questions that you couldn't answer during the Listening passage, you might discover that a piece of information you've quickly written down is the answer to one of those questions.

Answer as you listen

The reason you have to "answer as you listen" is that you immediately forget the sentences after you have heard them - because of stress, foreign language, constant flow of information, etc. After hearing the third sentence you won't be able to repeat the first. It means that when any part of the Listening is over you won't be able to remember any of the answers. So write them as you hear them, leave nothing for later.

Keep moving forward

A worst case scenario is you "losing the sequence of answers" - so you miss one answer and then you miss another one and so on. To prevent this from happening, always look one or two questions ahead. It sounds confusing, but after a little practice it becomes very natural and helps a lot. Even if you have missed the answer to a question - **admit it** and move to the next one, otherwise you might lose it too.

Know your clues

The answer is usually pronounced **louder and clearer**, so it is easier to hear and understand. If you can't hear something clearly (because the speaker swallows words or whispers), then probably the answer is not there. With some practice you will be able to tell the difference.

A good clue to an answer is when you hear a repetition of a word, a word being **spelled** out (G A R F U N K E L) or a number **dictated**.

Spelling tasks

As simple as it sounds, the spelling task is not so easy. You should practice a little to be prepared for it. Just ask someone to spell the names of cities from the following list for you. If you study alone, you could record yourself spelling those names and numbers, and then play the recording. The same goes for the list of telephone numbers I've included here. It is good practice and will only add to your confidence. Note: in numbers, '00' is sometimes read as "double o" instead of "zero-zero".

<u>Cities</u>	<u>Numbers</u>
Antananarivo	423-5207-0074
Brazzaville	628-2087-2311
Conakry	5167-832-0155
Gaborone	8746-221-0302
Johannesburg	5337-298-0132
Kinshasa	5900-231-7621
Libreville	4348-663-980
Lilongwe	11-267-55410
Mogadishu	101-9020-7624
Ouagadougou	413-2567-9011

Typical Listening tasks

Do you remember my promise - no surprises in IELTS? The following table shows you every type of task you may see in the Listening test. Different task types come with different instructions, so if you see and remember them now, it will save you time later.

Of course, you won't get every type I show here in your test and the table may look a bit boring, but anyway - my advice is to get to know them **now**. Don't let them catch you off-guard!

Task Type	What you should do	Paper-based instructions	Computer-delivered instructions
Multiple-choice questions	There is a question and a number of answers, your job is to pick the right one (sometimes more than just one).	'Choose the correct letter' or 'Choose X correct letters', if more than one.	'Choose the correct answer' or 'Choose X correct answers', if more than one.
Matching information	There is a list of items mentioned on the recording, for each item you should choose the correct option from another list in the booklet.	Write the correct letters next to questions.	Choose the correct answer and move it into the gap.
Short-answer questions	Answer in 1, 2 or 3 words and/or a number, as the instructions say.	Answer the questions. Write NO MORE THAN X WORDS for each answer.	Answer the questions. Write NO MORE THAN X WORDS in each gap.
Sentence completion	Complete sentences according to what you hear.	Complete the sentences below. Write NO MORE THAN X WORDS for each answer.	Complete the sentences below. Write NO MORE THAN X WORDS in each gap.
Form/Notes completion	A form/set of notes is given and you need to fill in blanks.	Complete the form/notes. Write NO MORE THAN X WORDS for each answer.	Complete the form/notes. Write NO MORE THAN X WORDS in each gap.
Chart/Table completion	A chart/table with some blank cells is given; your job is to fill them according to the passage you hear.	Complete the chart/table. Write NO MORE THAN X WORDS for each answer.	Complete the chart/table. Write NO MORE THAN X WORDS in each gap.
Gap-fill (Summary completion)	There are several sentences with missing words. You should pick the correct word and write it in the gap. Choose from the list (if there is one), or from what you have heard.	Complete the notes below. Write NO MORE THAN X WORDS for each answer.	Complete the notes below. Write NO MORE THAN X WORDS in each gap.
Plan/Map/Diagram labeling	Choose the correct options from the list or write a description using 1, 2 or 3 words for different parts of a drawing according to what you hear.	Label the plan/map/diagram below. Write the correct letter next to questions X-Z.	You will see a table with locations to label in rows and some labels in columns, to match a location to its label you will need to click on a cell in the table.

Note: instructions in the booklet will indicate the word limit for your answer. In this table I use X to indicate that.

Eliminate wrong answers

When you deal with multiple-choice questions, elimination is a good strategy. Usually only one answer is correct, unless the instructions tell you to choose more than one.

If you hear the speaker **confirm** that one of the answer options is correct, this is the best-case scenario. But what if you don't?

If you hear the speaker **contradict** one of the options, cross it out. It can't be the correct answer and now you only need to decide between the remaining options. This increases your chances of success, even if you have to guess!

If the speaker moved on to talk about question 2 and **didn't mention** one of the options of question 1, it means that option can't be the correct answer and you can cross it out. With some luck you will have just one option left, which is the correct answer.

In the computer-delivered test you can't cross out anything on the screen but you can highlight words – make this your marker for crossed out options.

Keep in mind that there are cases when more than one choice is correct. Read the instructions carefully and you will know what to do in such cases.

Gap-fill strategy

Look at the words around the gap to understand what's missing, a noun (e.g. boy, toy, truck), an adjective (little, pretty, shiny) or a verb (stands, looks, moves).

For instance, if you see a **Noun** before the blank ("The boy is___"), it means that it's an **Adjective** ("The boy is little") or it's a **Verb** ("The boy is smiling") that is missing.

Once you have picked a word, write it above the gap and then read the whole sentence to be sure that it makes sense. In the computer-delivered test you will be typing the answer right in the gap, but still re-read the sentence.

A hint: you do not need to change the word you heard on the recording, it should fit in the gap without changing its form or tense. If you think you must change the word for it to fit in the gap, then this word is likely to be the wrong answer.

Check the grammar

If the answer you give is grammatically incorrect - it cannot be the right one. Checking the grammar of your answers will give you an idea whether your answer is correct or not, especially in tasks such as:

- Gap-fills
- Sentence completion

Use your time wisely

During the test you have a little time between Listening parts. Use it to check and complete your answers. Check your grammar (where applicable) and spelling, because any incorrectly spelled answer will get 0 marks.

Leave no question unanswered – look at the options you crossed out, and select an answer from the remaining ones. Even if you have to guess, wrong guesses can't harm your score, but right guesses can improve it.

If you are confident in your answers for Part 1, when they give you time to check answers, skip ahead and start reading the questions in Part 2. You can do it between any two Parts. It will give you some extra time to finish reading all the questions, which is especially important in Parts 3 and 4, the more challenging ones.

"Chameleon" questions

They might use different words with the same meaning to confuse you. It could be expressions or synonyms.

For example, the recording might say "Kathrin was angry with her friends because..." and the question in the booklet might be "Choose two reasons why Kathrin was furious at her friends". The two words "angry" and "furious" describe the same emotion, but you can miss the answers if you try to hear the exact same word on the recording as that in the question booklet.

Watch out for traps

Trap Number One - unexpected turn

You might hear a speaker starting to say one thing and then, suddenly, continuing to something completely different. This is a trap, so make sure you don't fall into it. The rule here is "*It is the last word that counts*". For example, if the speaker says "I want to visit that gallery on Monday. No, wait, I've just remembered that it is closed on Monday, so I will go on Wednesday.", and the question is "When...?" - the correct answer here is Wednesday, and 'Monday' is a trap.

Trap Number Two - generalizations

You might hear a speaker first give a list of things and then summarize them **all in one word or expression**. For example: "Well, I like to swim, hike, and camp - to be involved in outdoor activities." If the question is "What kind of activities..." the correct answer is "outdoor" and not "swimming", "hiking" or "camping".

Strategy for maps

Often in IELTS Listening you will get a map or a plan and you will need to label locations on it, according to what you hear. This can be challenging, but here how to make it easier.

Be prepared in advance – learn all the possible directions and terms. In addition to the most common directions such as "to the right", "to the left", you may hear words like "across", "opposite to", "diagonally", and more. Learn not only the main compass points (North, South, East, West), but also North-East, South-East, North-West, etc.

As soon as the speaker starts talking, identify the starting point correctly on the map, and don't let anything break your concentration. Don't lose the sequence of directions, keep following the speaker and label **all the places** on the map. Quickly label all the buildings or rooms (for example) the speaker is talking about, not just the buildings/rooms you are asked about in questions. Sometimes this helps to keep following the directions, and if you end up guessing some of the answers, what you wrote on the map could also be useful to you.

In the computer-delivered test the map is on the screen, so you can't write on it, but you have some draft paper you can use for that. Even if you can't fill in the missing labels right away, when they give you time to check your answers, you can look at the locations you wrote down and then fill in the correct answers.

Shortcuts (computer-delivered only)

When taking the Listening test on a computer, you can do almost the entire test using just keyboard keys, without touching the mouse. Use the **Tab** key to move to the next answer space and **Shift+Tab** to move back to the previous answer space. Use the **Spacebar** to select multiple-choice options and tick boxes. You only need the mouse to click on the very first answer gap, and to move between Listening Parts 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Some questions have a list of answers, where you need to move the right answer into the gap. To change an answer most people will move it *out of the gap* first, then move the right answer into the gap. The **quick way** is to move the new answer straight into the gap (even if there's another answer in it). The old answer will get pushed out and the new answer will take its place.

Copy answers smartly (paper-based only)

This tip applies only to the paper-based test. After 30 minutes or so of the Listening test, there are 10 additional minutes. During the test you would have written all of the answers in the Listening test booklet. These 10 minutes are given to you to copy your answers onto the Answer Sheet, and you should use them **smartly**.

The Answer Sheet has 2 sides, one for the Reading test and one for the Listening test, so make sure you are writing on the Listening side. I include here an example of an Answer Sheet so you can get familiar with it and use it for practicing. First, copy all the answers from the booklet onto the Answer Sheet, and pay attention to the following guidelines. As simple as they sound - they are BIG time savers:

- For multiple-choice questions and matching information questions - just copy the letter of the correct answer, don't circle it.
- For sentence completion - just copy your answer, not the whole sentence.
- For gap-fills - just copy the word(s) you have chosen for the gap.
- For answers you have written in short (like prof. advice) - write the full version (professional advice).
- Check that all the answers are easy to read (legible) and spelled correctly.
- If you have a bad handwriting, write in all capitals.

Now, if you missed some questions - it is a good time to guess.

The Answer Sheet looks like this (paper-based only):

1		21	
2		22	
3		23	
4		24	
5		25	
6		26	
7		27	
8		28	
9		29	
10		30	
11		31	
12		32	
13		33	
14		34	
15		35	
16		36	
17		37	
18		38	
19		39	
20		40	

For those of you who wonder why all the answers have to consist of a **maximum of 3 words** - here is the answer: there is not enough space on the Answer Sheet for anything longer than that!

Analyze wrong answers

When you practice at home in Listening, the first thing you do after the recording stops is check your answers. A very common mistake many people make is to **only** count the number of answers they got correct. Yes, it shows their progress, and if they had more correct answers in this test than in the previous one, it would mean they are doing better – but that's all they get out of it.

You can do much better than that! When you look at the wrong answers, not only at how many there are, but also at **what you got wrong** and **why**, you discover your **weaknesses**. You may see that there is a pattern to your mistakes, some things that are typically hard for you. That gives you a chance to focus on those exact things, instead of taking Listening tests one after another, wasting your valuable time.

Here is a way to self-diagnose your issues:

If you missed a few answers in a row, a possible reason could be that you got distracted while listening – you'll know if that was the case! The solution would be to actively keep your focus on the recording. Another reason could be not having enough time to read the questions, and then you can practice in scanning the questions faster, looking for keywords, predicting or guessing the kind of answer you will hear. You can do all that separately, without listening to the recording, to improve that particular skill.

A few consecutive missing answers could also happen because you missed the first answer and got lost. You didn't know what question to look at next, and because of that you didn't know what answer to listen for. This is a separate issue, and it can be solved by looking two questions ahead. Instead of listening for one answer, think of two answers – the current one and the one after, and that will be your remedy for getting lost and losing a whole group of questions. You may miss one but you will catch up to the recording once you hear the second one. This skill can be developed quickly, if you purposely work on it.

When you misspell an answer, that could indicate a problem with spelling in general, or some particular words that you always tend to misspell. In that case concentrate on learning those 'tricky' words. Spelling is important in Listening, Reading and Writing, so it is worth your time to work on it.

When you got an answer wrong because you answered too soon, and there was an 'unexpected turn' with the speaker changing their mind and changing the answer, being aware of that and noticing when they do that in the Listening test will help.

Most importantly, always think about why you answered incorrectly – you will find the reason and then you will come up with a way to deal with it. This will give you the fastest progress in Listening.

Practice, practice, practice!

I strongly recommend that you use all the tips while practicing. In order to practice you are going to need samples of the Listening test, which can be found on the following internet sites (good quality, free of charge):

<https://ielts-blog.com/online-practice/>

<https://www.ieltsgym.com/>

<https://www.esl-lab.com/>

https://www.ieltsontrack.com/mini_test.php?module=1

Play the Listening samples and start using the tips while searching for answers. This is the only way to really understand how these tips work. You may have to play the same Listening file more than once, to practice different techniques.

From the Author

Thank you for downloading and reading the free trial chapter of 'Target Band 7'.

I am sure that your IELTS preparation would benefit a great deal from the full version and all the complementary resources and bonuses it comes with.

To download the full version of 'Target Band 7' please click below

[Download the Full Version of Target Band 7](#)

Recommended Resources

If you are running out of practice tests to do, or need some feedback from a teacher on your writing or speaking, or perhaps you need some advice that will enable you - personally - do better, check the resources listed below. You will find good quality, tried and proven preparation materials, and friendly experienced teachers who can help you prepare for the exam.

[IELTS Practice Tests for download, Package 1 - click here](#)

[IELTS Practice tests for download, Package 2 - click here](#)

[Writing Correction Service - click here](#)

[Speaking Assessment Service - click here](#)

[Complete Online IELTS Preparation course - click here](#)