

OVERVIEW

Regardless of the themes in each year's listening exam, you are almost always guaranteed to run into questions which require changes in parts of speech, tenses, and pronouns. Hence, it is of paramount importance that you have a comprehensive understanding of the types of listening skills and the strategies. Last but not least, you are highly encouraged to listen to more English audio. Exam recordings are a great place to start!



Basic Listening Skills

There are four basic types of listening skills: Numbers and amount, Proper nouns and their adjective forms, Opinions, attitudes and intentions, and Directions.

1. Numbers and amount

Numbers		Amount	
A solo	1	A quarter	$\frac{1}{4} = 25\%$
A duo / couple	2	Three quarters	$\frac{3}{4} = 75\%$
A trio	3	A half	$\frac{1}{2} = 50\%$
A quad / quadruplet	4	A third	$\frac{1}{3} = 33.33\%$
Half a dozen	6		
A dozen	12		
Zeros		Time	
Ten thousand	10,000	A decade	10 years
One million	1,000,000	Century	100 years
One billion	1,000,000,000	Millennium	1,000 years

2. Proper nouns and their adjective forms

Categories	Proper Nouns	Adjective Forms
Country / Place names	France	French
People's names	Jennifer Lawrence	Jennifer Lawrence's
Holidays	New Year	New Year's
Events	World War II	The X of World War II
Titles	Squid Game	The X of Squid Game

Quick Practice 1 🎧

Write the information in the space below. Please note that you do not need to answer in complete sentences.

1. When was the hotel built?

2. What is the nationality of the female architect?

3. Opinions, attitudes and intentions

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Spoken Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Certainly” • “Nothing to worry about” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Definitely not” • “Bad idea” • “No way” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Possibly” • “I’m not sure” • “I suppose so”
Tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A raising tone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A falling tone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A flat tone
Volume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft
Emotive Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident • Interested • Supportive • Encouraging • Enthusiastic • Sympathetic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afraid • Angry • Bored • Annoyed • Nervous • Worried 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsure • Undecided • No strong opinion

4. Directions

	Examples
Landmarks	MTR stations, bus stops, post offices, roundabouts (迴旋處), traffic lights, crossroads (十字路口), banks, supermarkets, petrol stations (加油站), churches, temples (廟)
Giving Directions	Left / right, go past the ..., go straight on, head north / south, it's just around the corner, take the second left and on your left / right you'll see ...
Compasses	North, south, east, west, north-east, north-west
Prepositions	Between (之間), rear (後面), adjacent / neighbouring (鄰近的)

Quick Practice 2

Write the information in the space below. Please note that you do not need to answer in complete sentences.

1. How did Amy feel about her Science exam?

2. Where did Amy go after her final exam?

Advanced Listening Skills

1. Pre-listening: Making Predictions

For high achievers, try to predict what the answers (e.g. the part of speech) might be. This will focus your mind on what to listen to and how to make inference in the recording.

	Examples
Types Of Information	Surname, place or venue, date, phone number, postcode, percentage, price
Parts Of Speech	Verb, noun, adjective, adverb
Sentence Patterns	Noun phrase, gerund phrase, complete sentence

2. Recognizing The Communicative Strategies In The Recording

For high achievers, try to be familiarized with the commonly used strategies in communication such as using synonyms. This will help you identify what must be included in your answer and what is irrelevant.

	Examples
Synonyms Or Paraphrasing	A quarter (25%), business functions (corporate events)
Inferences	She thought she had nothing to worry about (confident)
Distractors	Contrasting conjunctions (no, however, but), verbal pauses (hold on, when you say, you know)
Repetitions	Repeated words or phrases

3. Identifying The Keywords And Supplementary Phrases

For high achievers, try to identify keywords. Keywords are those which are usually repeated and are usually followed by supplementary phrases which explain the keywords. This will help you locate the answer and save time by not writing down irrelevant words.

Last but not least, READ THE INSTRUCTIONS carefully!



Practice 1

Sylvia Cheung and Raymond Kim are now looking for some information about the Urban University. You will hear a promotional video “Urban University at a Glance”. After you hear the promotional video, Sylvia and Raymond will give their opinion. Please note that you do not need to answer in complete sentences. You now have 30 seconds to study the task. At the end of the task, you will have one minute to tidy up your answers.

On preparation: Highlight the cue words

Information about Urban University

As Hong Kong’s first university, founded in (1) _____, the Urban University has earned an international reputation for excellence in research and teaching. It is ranked as the top 1% of universities in the world and offers over 300 undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across Business, Health Science, (2) _____, and Science subjects.

Urban University at a Glance

- 5-star ranking, reflecting quality and excellence across teaching, (3) _____, internationalisation, and research.
- (4) _____ students, with (5) _____ of its students coming from outside of Hong Kong.
- Apart from academic excellence, students join a number of sporting, cultural and (6) _____ activities.

Raymond Kim’s Opinion

What attracts Raymond to consider choosing Urban University?

(7) _____

Why does Raymond think that he may not be choosing Urban University?

(8) _____

Information about Urban University

Raymond Kim's Opinion

What attracts Raymond to consider choosing Urban University?

(7) _____

Why does Raymond think that he may not be choosing Urban University?

(8) _____

Tapescript_Practice 1

Raymond: ... I like their effort in promoting cultural diversity and awareness among the campus community. Most importantly, the university has a reputation for producing well-rounded graduates, who are highly sought-after by employers.

Sylvia: Indeed. **(7)The university has a high employment rate**, with many graduates occupying influential positions in the private industry, government and education.

...

Raymond: Actually, I would like to pursue an undergraduate study in music-related subjects such as Ethnomusicology or Historical Musicology. But, seems like there are no relevant offerings in Urban University.

Sylvia: Oh... True. **(8) It does not offer any music courses** here.

Practice 2 (難度：★★★★★)

Edgar Wan and Melody Yu are listening to a podcast about the discovery of planetary movements. You will first hear the podcast “Natural Science”. After the podcast, Edgar and Melody will briefly give their opinion on certain aspects of the podcast. You now have 30 seconds to study the task. At the end of the task, you will have one minute to tidy up your answer.

On preparation: Highlight the cue words

Notes about the discovery of planetary movement

Aristotelian cosmology

Aristotle was convinced that planets move in (1) _____, as opposed to today’s understanding that their orbit is elliptical. He also believed that the centre of the universe is the Earth.

Why was Aristotle obsessed with circularity?

(2) _____

Heliocentrism

Copernicus in his book *De revolutionibus*, which was published (3) _____, challenged Aristotle’s planetary framework. He raised the possibility of Heliocentrism, i.e. the centre of the universe being the Sun.

According to the speaker, is the planetary model proposed by Copernicus useful? Why?

(4) _____

From Kepler to Newton

Kepler put forth three laws of planetary motion in which he suggested movement of planets should be elliptical, but did not explain well the cause for such motion.

Hooke decided to build on Kepler's work by working out

(5) _____ for planetary movement. Hooke suggested that the attractive force between any planet and the Sun is inversely proportional to the square of their distance but was never able to mathematize this statement.

Based on Hooke's intuition, Newton provided calculations and a formula, which would be the predecessor to the three famous Newtonian laws of Physics.

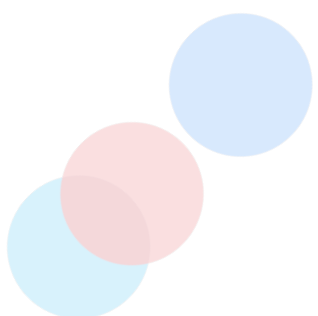
Why did Newton refuse to give Hooke much credit?

(6) _____

Melody was (7) _____ by past scientists' work.

What is Edgar's opinion towards Newton?

(8) _____



Notes about the discovery of planetary movement

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Why was Aristotle obsessed with circularity?

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Heliocentrism

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According to the speaker, is the planetary model proposed by Copernicus useful? Why?

(4) _____

Tapescript_Practice 2

... But this knowledge should not be taken for granted. At Aristotle's time, the Greeks used to believe that planets move in **(1) a perfect circular pathway**, orbiting the Earth. This obsession with circularity was only natural for people then, as **(2) they deemed the circle to be a shape of regularity, perfection and smoothness. This trait of circle was important as philosophers back in the day thought it could help them extract something stable from a chaotic, unknown environment.**

It was far later until the **(3) 16th century**, when Copernicus published his book *De revolutionibus*, that the Earth as the centre of the universe was reasonably challenged. Copernicus in his work argued the notion of Heliocentrism, which means that the universe is centred at the Sun, not the Earth.

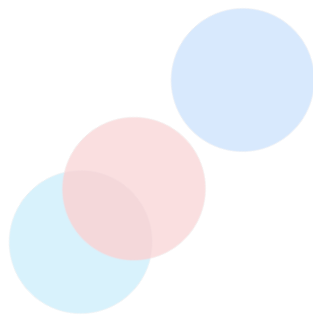
Copernicus's model isn't necessarily more accurate to the planetary system which we are familiar with today, though **(4) it indeed trimmed a good amount of unnecessary explanations in Aristotelian cosmology.**

Suggested Answers For Practice 1

- (1) 1941
- (2) Humanities
- (3) employability
- (4) twenty-five thousand // 25000
- (5) a quarter // 25%
- (6) community-based

Suggested Answers For Practice 2

- (5) the mathematical formula
- (6) Hooke only tossed off general statements without mathematical proof // Hooke did not do the calculations
- (7) impressed
- (8) disappointed // disheartened // discouraged



Self-Learning Zone (1): Commonly Confused Words

accept/except	knew/new
access/assess	know/no
advice/advise	later/latter
affect/effect	lay/lie
all ready/already	lead/led
allot/a lot	loose/lose
allusion/illusion	meter/metre
along/a long	passed/past
altogether/all together	peace/piece
apart/a part	plain/plane
ascent/assent	pole/poll
assure/ensure	practice/practise
belief/believe	precede/proceed
beside/besides	presence/presents
brake/break	principal/principle
breath/breathe	quiet/quite
chord/cord	raise/rise
cite/site	sea/see
clothes/cloths	sight/site
complement/compliment	sit/set
comprise/consist	session/section
conscience/conscious	staff/stuff
council/counsel	stationary/stationery
cue/queue	storey/story
desert/dessert	than/then
device/devise	their/there/they're
discreet/discrete	through/threw
dragon/jargon	to/too/two
emigrant/immigrant	vain/vein
farther/further	weak/week
formerly/formally	wear/where
forth/fourth	weather/whether/rather
hear/here	who/whom
hole/whole	whose/who's
insure/ensure	you're/your
its/it's	

Self-Learning Zone (2): Commonly Misspelled Words

✘	✔
auther / offer	author
bussiness	business
expension / expansion	expansion
embarassed	embarrassed
harrassment	harassment
musculeline	masculine
madictation	meditation
mostache	mustache
musquitoes	mosquitoes
stationary	stationery
violant	violent
universial	universal

Free Recommended Websites / YouTube Channels For “Training Ears”

Websites and Media	YouTube Channels
<p>Hong Kong Free Press (audio may be attached in some news)</p>	<p>TED TED-Ed Recommended episode - What’s the connection between sleep and Alzheimer’s disease?</p>
<p>RTHK English News - Video Gallery Recommended video - Ban on plastic tableware should be quicker</p>	<p>The National Gallery Recommended episode - Vincent van Gogh: The colour and vitality of his works</p>
<p>Guardian News - Today in Focus Recommended podcast - A Paralympian’s long journey to Tokyo</p>	<p>Pursuit of Wonder Recommended video - A Reason to Stop Worrying What Others Think</p>