



IELTS Listening Distractors

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In lesson one we looked at a form of **IELTS listening distractors**.

This was when you do multiple choice type questions and you hear all of the possible choices but only one is correct.

In this lesson we look at another form of distractor which is very common in part one of the IELTS listening test.

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This is when you hear a **speaker correct him/herself**, or the other speaker will correct them.

Basically, the speaker will give you a piece of information and you will **think** that is the right answer.

But the speaker will then **correct what they have said**, and the new corrected piece of information will in fact be the right answer.

Examples of Correction Distractors

These two examples of distractors are taken from a real IELTS listening test. The distractor is in *red / italics* and the correct answer is in blue / underlined.

Example 1

In this situation, a woman is booking a journey into town for when she arrives at Toronto Airport. You have to note down the distance of the town, Milton, from the airport.



Take a look at the information you have to find in the question. Below that is a copy of the listening script that you would hear.

Question: Distance miles

MAN: Hello, this is Land Transport Information at Toronto Airport. How may I help you?

WOMAN: Oh, good morning. I'm flying to Toronto Airport next week, and I need to get to a town called Milton. Could you tell me how I can get there?

MAN: Milton, did you say? Let me see. *I think that's about 150 miles* south-west of here. In fact it's 147 miles to be exact, so it will take you at least – say, three to four hours by road.

As you can see, you will likely at first think that the answer is 150 miles, but it is actually 147 miles.

Example 2

Here is another example, further on in the same listening when the woman is arranging to book a hire car to make the journey when she arrives.

Question: Date of booking _____

MAN: OK, I just have to fill out this form for you. So what date do you want to book this for?

WOMAN: The *16th of October* – oh, no, sorry, that's my departure date. I arrive on the 17th, so book it for then, please.

Again, you will likely at first think the answer is the 16th and start to write that down, but she corrects her mistake and confirms the date she needs the car for is the 17th.



Example 3

Here is another example taken from another real IELTS test. Here, a careers advisor is trying to help a student to find a part-time job.

Question:

Position available	Where	Problem
Clerical Assistant		Evening Lectures

*******ADVISOR:** But you'd need to be there at 6am. Does that appeal?

STUDENT: Six o'clock in the morning! Oh, that's far too early for me, I'm afraid. I'd never make it that early in the morning.

ADVISOR: Mmm...Well – there was a position going *in the Computer Lab.* for three days a week that might be OK. Ah, here it is! No, it's in the Library, not the Lab. Clerical Assistant required – I think it mostly involves putting the books back on the shelves. Oh no – hang on. It's for Wednesday and Friday evening instead.

STUDENT: No, I can't manage that because of the lectures.

In the above example, you think the position is the Computer Lab., but it turns out it is in the Library.

Example 4

This final example is part of the same test as above.

The advisor is trying to find out the student's room number.

Question: Room number _____



STUDENT: I'm in one of the Halls of Residence for post-graduate students, you know, International House.

ADVISOR: OK – that's easy. What's your room number there?

STUDENT: Room B569 – no sorry B659. I always get that wrong. I haven't been living there very long.

ADVISOR: Do you have any other skills? Typing , languages, that sort of thing?

So the room number is 659, not 569.

Tips for Distractors

The most important tip is really just to make sure that you are **aware** of correction distractors (which you now are!). They also emphasise the importance of **listening very carefully**.

Here are some general tips

- Be aware of possible distractors, particularly in Part One where they are common
- Don't assume the first thing you hear as the answer is the actual answer – listen carefully to what comes after that
- Words such as '**no**' and '**sorry**' tell you that there may be another answer coming up to correct the first. Take a look at the examples above – you'll see those words appear in several of the examples after the first incorrect answer
- Distractors often involve some kind of number, so take particular care when you hear numbers (though it is not always numbers, as we saw in *example 3*)
- Always listen very carefully!



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