

IELTS Listening lesson: multiple choice

Multiple choice questions commonly occur in parts 2, 3 and 4 of **IELTS Listening** test. In such questions you are given three (rarely four) answer choices, only one of which is correct.

In this lesson you will learn **useful strategies** and **advice** to answer multiple choice questions in IELTS Listening test most effectively. You will also practice gained skills by answering tricky **exercises with multiple choice questions**.

The transcript is provided for each audio. The correct answers are underlined in the transcripts. For the examples the transcript is shown, and for the exercises it is hidden. You can hide/show the transcripts as you wish.

First, let's learn some basic answering strategies and look at the examples below.

Strategy 1: don't immediately pick up the first answer choice you hear.

You will often hear all of the answer choices in the audio. And only one of them is correct, the other two are meant to confuse you! So don't straightaway choose the answer you hear the first as it may be incorrect. So listen carefully and wait until the speaker finishes giving information about the current question.

Let's try to use this strategy in the first example.

Example 1.

Your browser doesn't support audio teg!

Only rescue birds that are

1. all alone
2. sitting on the ground
3. obviously injured

Check ??

Hide transcript

1st man: Right, okay. I think we should start by talking about how to rescue a bird.

Probably, first we should help people understand which birds need rescuing.

2nd man: Yeah, that's really important! Because a lot of times people see a baby bird that's all alone or they find a bird sitting on a ground and they think it needs to be rescued.

1st man: And usually those are just baby birds learning to fly. So we should emphasize that people should only attempt to rescue a bird that's clearly injured.

As you can hear, all three answer choices were mentioned. However, the first two of them (“*all alone*” and “*sitting on the ground*”) are clearly incorrect, because the speakers say that people often think that if a bird is all alone or sitting on the ground it needs to be rescued, but it’s just learning to fly. The last sentence the speaker says gives us the correct answer: “*So we should emphasize that people should only attempt to rescue a bird that's clearly injured*”. So the correct answer is **C**.

Strategy 2: know that answers may come in a different order.

Unlike other questions types in IELTS Listening, multiple choice questions don’t necessarily have their answer choices coming in the same order as you hear them in the audio. So don’t worry if you first hear the third answer choice – it doesn’t mean you’ve missed the previous two, as answers often come in a different order.

Strategy 3: mind that answers are often paraphrased.

You shouldn’t be waiting for a 100% match – the answer choice can differ from what you hear as it can be paraphrased. To approach multiple choice questions effectively, look through the answer choices while listening to the question being discussed. Do it to get a general idea of answer choices.

Now let’s use strategies 2 and 3 in the second example.

Example 2.

What is the best way of protection from harmful bacteria?

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1. following hygiene rules
2. using antibiotics
3. visiting doctor regularly

Check

We all know that some bacteria can be dangerous and cause diseases. But how can we protect ourselves from harmful bacteria? Well, a lot of people would answer that using antibiotics will kill the pathogenic microbes. However, antibiotic abuse can be dangerous to people's health as well! In fact, the best way of protection is preventing the disease by keeping yourself clean and washing hands before you eat.

You have probably noticed that answer choices come in a different order than they are mentioned by the speaker. This often happens in IELTS Listening multiple choice questions, so read all answer choices for the question at once.

Moreover, the synonyms are used! The speaker gives the correct answer when she says, "*In fact, the best way of protection is preventing the disease by keeping yourself clean and washing hands before you eat*". But instead of *keeping yourself clean* or *washing hands* we have a paraphrased answer choice – *following hygiene rules*. So, the right answer is **A**. Beware that paraphrase is often used in such questions, so you shouldn't always look for an exact match.

Practice

Now use the skills you've learnt in practice. Listen to the audio and answer the questions below.

For each audio the transcript is provided. The correct answer is underlined in each transcript.

Exercise 1.

Your browser doesn't support audio teg!

The tomato originally came from

1. Mexico
2. Spain
3. Peru

The tomato is a popular vegetable, which figures in a cuisine of many countries around the world. It is particularly prominent in Italian cooking. But it was unknown in Europe until Spanish explorers brought it back from the Americas. The tomato originated in the highlands of Peru. From there it eventually found its way to Mexico, where it was cultivated by the Aztecs.

Exercise 2.

Your browser doesn't support audio teg!

The speaker recommends to put the bird in a

1. cage
2. box
3. bag

Check ??

Exercise 3.

Your browser doesn't support audio teg!

Which organ helps parrots to imitate different sounds?

1. tongue
2. trachea
3. vocal cords

Check ??

Parrots, along with ravens, crows, and magpies, are among the most intelligent birds.

Their ability to imitate human voices has captivated people for centuries. You may wonder how twisty their vocal cords should be, to reproduce such a broad range of sounds. But, in fact, parrots don't have vocal cords! Nor does their ability relate with their surprisingly powerful tongues. Different sounds are produced by changing the depth and shape of their trachea.

Exercise 4.

Your browser doesn't support audio teg!

What is the major question about fungi nowadays?

1. their organs of perception
2. their life cycles
3. their ability to be harvested in a hothouse

Check ??Show transcript

Probably everyone knows what a mushroom is. However, a few people know that what we call a mushroom is only a tiny, overground part of a large organism called fungus. Fungi were first discovered in the Medieval ages. Then an important scientific problem arose, to understand their unusual life cycles. Nowadays the life cycles of fungi are studied thoroughly, but there are still a lot of questions concerning these organisms. The major



ones concern fungal perception organs. Others are less global, for instance, how to harvest rare mushrooms in a hothouse.

Congratulations with completion of this lesson! Now you know *tips & strategies* to answer *IELTS Listening multiple choice questions* to get a high score. To sum up, the **main tips** for answering **IELTS Listening multiple choice questions** are:

- Don't pick up the first answer choice you hear; wait for others to come
- Read the answer choices while you're listening for the current question
- Don't forget that answers may come in a different order
- Look for paraphrased answers and synonyms

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