



Know your enemy!

How to tackle the different types of
GCSE listening questions

To start...

- You have 5 minutes before the exam starts to READ THE PAPER!
- Read each question, look at the task, what is it about, what do you need to do.
- Start thinking about the words you might hear. If there are pictures, what words are they?
- You can make notes on the paper.
- Cross out the example, you won't hear it again.
- Questions and answers are in English.
- If it's obvious, it probably is meant to be...but do check anyway, just in case.

Numbering of questions

- Listen carefully to the question numbers. You may hear the recording all in one go, you may not.
- Look out for lines in between questions as these indicate pauses
- Where there are names, use these to help find your place
- With any of the multi-part questions, they will always be in the order that you hear them in the recording
- One beep = end of first listening, two beeps = end of that question

General Listening tips

- Listen the first time for gist (general meaning)
- Listen the second time for detail
- Use BOTH listenings, even if you are convinced of the answer. It's always best to check
- Check for negatives, tenses, numbers, dates in particular
- Watch out for distractors, read the question very carefully so you know exactly what information you're looking for
- By all means write the answer down after the first time if you are sure, but USE THE SECOND time anyway to double check your answer
- Where there is a conversation between 2 people, there will usually be a male and a female voice so that you can tell which is which

General Listening tips

- You are doing a higher paper, there will be hard questions
- Questions are aimed at a different grade so there will be C grade questions, B grade questions and A/A* questions
- The questions will vary in order of difficulty, they won't necessarily get harder and harder
- Don't panic if you find one question particularly difficult or you don't understand anything, move on and focus on the next one
- If you don't know an answer, then GUESS – but only do this once the question has finished.

Multiple choice

- Where three options are given, usually:
 - one will be very wrong
 - one will be right
 - one will be very close to right or might be mentioned as a distractor ie with a negative or different tense
- If there are lists or options in English then highlight or underline key words
- Try and eliminate the wrong one on the first listening
- Use the second listening to determine which of the remaining two options is the correct one
- If you don't know one of the words then use "process of elimination" – which words did you NOT hear?

Choosing from a list

- Look for any opposites or choices that can't both go together.
- If the list is in English, what words or topic words might you be hearing
- Highlight key words to save re-reading
- Listen and make notes in the space at the bottom, don't try and answer and listen at the same time
- After the first listening, put a little tick next to the ones you think, use the second listening to confirm or to eliminate
- If you have more ticks than you are allowed then you guess
- Don't put more ticks than you are allowed, you'll lose marks

Questions in English

- This is the hardest question
- ANSWER IN ENGLISH!!
- These will often be multiple point questions, check how many points you need to write down
- Where you need to give more than one detail, the speaker will mention more than that, pick out as many as you can understand
- Use the question to think about what sort of information you are listening for before hand
- Use your common sense to think about what the answer might be, or the information from previous questions then have a guess if you don't get the answer.
- Make notes in a space then write up afterwards, use shorthand
- Write clearly, but no need to write full sentences, bullet points are fine