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Listening Comprehension (Aural)

aims

- To equip you with the knowledge and skill to tackle the Listening Comprehension.
- To give you comprehensive vocabulary to cover all the relevant topics.

Overview

The **Listening Comprehension (Aural)** is worth 140 marks (44% of the total).

This section **carries more marks** than either the **Reading Comprehension** or the **Written Expression** sections.

This section of the book aims to help you be fully prepared for the Listening test.

It is important to be very **familiar with the common vocabulary** and style of questions typical of the aural exam.



REMEMBER:

- 1** Normally you have **5 minutes to read** the questions and instructions before the CD is played. Make sure that you use the **full 5 minutes** to prepare yourself.
- 2** **Always read the questions before listening to the CD.** That way you will know what to expect. For example, for the question 'What countries did she visit?', expect to hear the standard answers: 'l'Allemagne', 'l'Espagne', 'les États-Unis', 'la Grèce', etc. ...
- 3** **Underline the key question words and instructions:** 'Why?', 'How?', 'Explain', 'Give examples'.

- 4 **Jot down answers** – using abbreviations (e.g. ‘ft’ for ‘football’) – **on a rough sheet** or page while listening to the CD. Don’t write whole sentences that take a long time, because then you will not hear what is being said. Instead of hearing a section played three times, you will only hear it played twice!
- 5 **Use the gaps during playings to write down the answers on your exam paper.**
- 6 **Answer the questions in English** when you are asked in English. If you answer in French, you lose marks.
- 7 If you are stuck for an answer, at least guess intelligently. **Never leave a gap**, especially with an MCQ (Multiple Choice Question) where you have one chance in four of being right.
- 8 **Beware of similar sounds:**
 - ‘deux amis/douze amis’;
 - ‘six/seize’.Listen for the ‘half’: J’ai seize ans *et demi*.
- 9 **Keep up your concentration.** Don’t allow a lapse, and never look around at your classmates to see their reactions. This manoeuvre will only serve to make you more nervous.

Section A

This section covers topics such as **making an apology, making or cancelling an appointment, buying something, booking a hotel room or restaurant table**, and so on.

In this section it is easy to score full marks, giving you a good start.

- There are **18 marks** for this section, i.e. **3 questions** for **6 marks each**.
- You only have to write **one** letter in **three boxes**.
- The content is played **twice**.

Important words and expressions

Making a hotel booking/reservation



Track 9

C'est l'Hôtel de la Paix ? *Is this the Hôtel de la Paix?*

Oui, vous y êtes. Que puis-je faire

pour vous ? *Yes, that's right.*

What can I do for you?

J'aimerais/Je voudrais réserver une chambre double. *I'd like to book a double room.*

Vous avez des chambres de libre ? *Do you have any rooms available?*

Combien êtes-vous ? *How many of you are there?*

Nous sommes/On est trois. *There are three of us.*

Une chambre à deux lits avec douche. *A twin room with a shower.*

Avez-vous un ascenseur ? *Do you have a lift?*

La chambre se trouve au deuxième étage. *The room is on the second floor.*

J'aimerais une table près de la fenêtre. *I'd like a table near the window.*



Borrowing something



Track 10

Allô, c'est Pauline à l'appareil. *Hello, Pauline speaking.*

Est-ce que je peux te demander quelque chose ? *Can I ask you something?*

Puis-je emprunter ton lecteur CD pour ma boum ? *May I borrow your CD player for my party?*

Mon auto est tombée en panne. Peux-tu me prêter ton auto ? *My car has broken down.*

Can you lend me your car?

J'ai besoin d'un vélo. *I need a bike.*

Est-ce que je peux emprunter ton vélo ? *Can I borrow your bike?*

Suggesting doing something

Allô, quoi de neuf, Jean ? *Hi, what's new, Jean?*

Je vais en ville. Ça te dit de venir avec moi ? *I'm going into town. How about coming with me?*

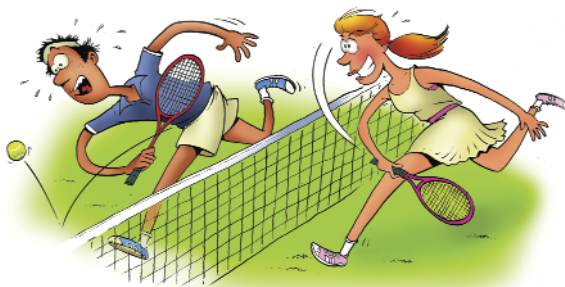
Ah, oui, je veux bien. *Yes, I'd like that.*

D'accord, je passerai chez toi dans une demi-heure. *OK, I'll drop round by your place in half an hour.*

Si on faisait une partie de tennis ? *How about a game of tennis?*

Ça te va ? *Does that suit you?/Is that OK with you? (informal)*

Mais bien sûr. *Yes, sure.*



Track 11

Making an appointment

Je voudrais prendre un rendez-vous avec ... *I'd like to make an appointment with ...*

Pouvez-vous me donner un rendez-vous pour jeudi ? *Can you give me an appointment for Thursday?*

Cela vous convient ? *Does that suit you? (formal)*



Track 12

Cancelling an appointment

Je téléphone pour vous dire que je ne pourrai pas aller au cinéma. *I'm ringing to tell you that I can't go to the cinema.*

Je regrette, mais mon oncle vient d'arriver de Cork. *I'm sorry, but my uncle has just arrived from Cork.*

Je suis désolé, mais ce n'est pas possible. *I'm sorry, but it's not possible.*

C'est dommage. *It's a pity.*

Je dois annuler mon rendez-vous pour 3 heures. *I have to cancel my appointment for 3 o'clock.*



Track 13

Issuing invitations

Je t'invite à venir chez moi. *I'm inviting you to my place.*

Ça te dit d'aller à une boum samedi ? *Do you want to go to a party on Saturday?*



Track 14

The format

The likelihood is that you will be required to write an **informal letter**, i.e. a letter to a friend or member of your family. However, a **formal** letter is part of the Junior Certificate programme and appeared on the 2005, 2007 and 2010 papers as an option with the informal letter.

The beginning and ending of a letter are really simple when it comes to earning marks, because you know beforehand that you are going to use them.

At the **top right hand corner** you write the name of the town you are writing from, plus the date. There are only four items written here: **town + the + number + month**.

Dublin, le 8 mai
Cork, le 3 juillet
Sligo, le 8 avril

Some beginnings

Cher Maurice (*to a boy*)
Chère Isabelle (*to a girl*)
Mes chers parents (*to parents*)
Mon cher Pierre/Ma chère Nicole (*to a friend*)
Chère tante, cher oncle, cher cousin (*to a relative*)

...

Always **sign off**! Learn a number of ways of doing so.

Bien à toi (*Yours*)
Affectueusement (*never from a boy to a boy*)
Meilleures pensées (*Best wishes*)
Amitiés (*Friendly yours*)
À bientôt (*See you soon*)
Je t'embrasse (*Lots of love*)

Don't ever write 'le 4^e, le 8^e', etc. There is, however, one exception, **the 1st** (*le premier* or *le 1^{er}*) (NB: 21st – *le vingt et un*; 31st – *le trente et un*).

Don't include 'of' in the date. The '10th of August' becomes 'the 10 August' (*le 10 août*).

Months, days and seasons all have **small letters**: le premier mars, le vingt et un février.

Sample letters

1. You and your class are in France on an exchange arranged by your school. You are staying with a French family and attending school. Write a letter to your friend in France.

- (i) Tell him/her about your journey from Ireland to France.
- (ii) Describe the family with whom you are staying.
- (iii) Say what you think of the French school.
- (iv) Say what you will do next weekend.
- (v) Tell a funny or frightening thing that happened after you arrived in France.

Paris, le 5 juin

Cher Jean,

'Grave' accent on 'j'espère' – frequently omitted by students.

Salut ! Comment ça **va** ? J'**espère** que tu **vas** bien. Je **vais** bien.
Me voici dans un lycée français à Paris. Je **suis** ici pour un mois.
Je **veux** perfectionner ma connaissance du français. Je **fais** un
échange avec ce lycée. Mon prof de français a organisé
l'échange.

Verbs: when discussing general health use 'aller' (to go). Thus: Je **vais** bien (I'm **going** well). 'Je vais' is an obvious trap. It's completely wrong to translate 'I am well' literally. So, in one line, 'aller' appears 3 times: Comment ça **va** ? J'**espère** que tu **vas** bien. Je **vais** bien. (How is it **going**? I hope you're **going** well. I'm **going** fine.)

Tense: past – what happened.

Tense: present – what's happening.

- (i) Je **suis arrivé** ici hier. Je **suis parti** de Shannon vendredi en avion. Le vol a été agréable. J'**aime prendre** l'avion.

Verb: je loge (I am staying)

'I like doing' becomes 'I like to do' (j'aime faire); 'he likes swimming' – 'he likes to swim' (il aime nager). Similarly: 'I enjoy doing' – 'I enjoy/like flying' (j'aime prendre l'avion).

- (ii) Les gens d'ici **sont** très gentils. Je **loge** chez la famille Leclerc. Dans la famille, il y a une fille **qui** s'appelle Marie, et deux garçons. Le père **est** ingénieur et la mère est femme au foyer. Elle **fait** de bons repas. Je **m'entends** bien avec les jeunes de la famille.

'Qui' is used when linking **two** phrases within one sentence: j'ai un frère **qui** a vingt-deux ans (I have a brother **who** is 22 years old).

Tense: present to describe family

- (iii) L'école, ici, ce n'**est** pas comme en Irlande. C'**est** plus **détendu** ; en Irlande, c'**est** plus stressant. Dans ce lycée les cours **commencent** à huit heures et finissent à deux heures et quart. Chaque cours **dure** une heure. C'est assez long.

Tense: present to describe school.

Always have a repertoire of adjectives like 'détendu'. Instead of just 'bon', which is overexploited, use: sympa, gentil, agréable, moche, barbant, ennuyeux, intéressant. Lots of variety helps!

- (iv) Le week-end approche. Je vais aller en boîte avec mes nouveaux camarades de classe.

- (v) Quand je **suis arrivé** en France, j'**ai perdu** ma valise, qui **contenait** tous mes vêtements. Imagine. Heureusement, quelqu'un **a trouvé** la valise. J'**ai eu** de la chance.

Note the use of the '**passé composé**' throughout the letter to describe what happened, especially in the last point. Here, you are asked to describe an event. Only 'contenait' stands out because it is in the **imperfect** tense, describing what the case was *continuously* 'holding'.

C'est tout pour l'instant.

Amitiés,

Eamonn

(environ 216 mots)