

LISTENING

GENERAL STRATEGIES



PART A: SHORT CONVERSATION

In Listening Part A you will hear a short conversation involving two people; this conversation is followed by a question. It is important to understand that the answer to this type of question is more often (but not always) found in the second line of the conversation.

Example:

On the recording, you hear:

(Man) : Billy really made a big mistake this time.

(Woman) : Yes, he forgot to turn in his research paper.

(Man) : What does the woman say about Billy?

In your test book, you read:

(A) It was the first time he made a mistake

(B) He forgot to write his paper.

(C) He turned in the paper in the wrong place.

(D) He didn't remember to submit his assignment.

Analysis:

The second line of the conversation indicates that Billy forgot to turn in his paper, and this means that he did not remember to submit his assignment. Therefore, the best answer is (B)

The following information outlines the most important strategy for Listening Part A.



General Strategies for part A

- Focus on the second line
- The correct answer is probably: restatement/synonyms
- Certain structures and expressions are tested regularly
Structures, functional, idiomatic
- Easy to difficult
- Choose the best answer
- If you do not understand the complete conversation: Find the restatement of what you hear
- If you do not understand at all, choose the most different from what you hear.



PART B: LONGER CONVERSATIONS

Part B of the Listening Comprehension section of the TOEFL test consists of **two long conversations**, each followed by **a number of questions**. You will hear the conversations and the questions on a recording; they are not written in your test book. You must choose the best answer to each question from the four choices that are written in your test book.

The conversations are often about **some aspects of school** (how difficult a class is, how to write a research paper, how to register for a course) or **about general living** (renting an apartment, playing sports, going to the bank). The conversations can also be about **topics currently in the news in the United States** (desalinization of the water supply, recycling of used products, damage from a storm or some other type of natural phenomenon)

Example

On the recording, you hear:

(narrator) Questions 1 through 4. Listen to a conversation between two people who are decorating an apartment.

(woman) : Hey, Walt. Do you think you could help me hang these pictures on the wall? There are only two of them.

(man) : Sure, Monica. Where do you want them to go?

(woman) : I'd like the picture of the mountains over the fireplace, and I'd like the picture of my family over the sofa. What do you think?

(man) : I think they'll look fine there. How about if you hold the pictures while I hammer the nails into the wall?

(woman) : Okay. Let's start with the picture of my family.

Questions:

1. On the recording, you hear:

(narrator) What are the man and woman discussing?

In your test book, you read:

(A) Taking some pictures.

(B) Hanging some plants.

(C) Taking a trip to the mountains.

(D) Putting some pictures on the wall

2. On the recording, you hear:
(narrator) How many pictures are there?

In your test book, you read:

- (A) One.
- (B) Two.
- (C) Three.
- (D) Four.

3. On the recording, you hear:
(narrator) Where is the picture of the woman's family going?

In your test book, you read:

- (A) In the fireplace.
- (B) Above the sofa
- (C) Home with Walt.
- (D) To the top of the mountain.

4. On the recording, you hear:
(narrator) What is Walt probably going to do next?

In your test book, you read:

- (A) Sit on the sofa.
- (B) Photograph Monica's family.
- (C) Hammer the nails into the wall
- (D) Climb the walls.

Analysis:

- The first question asks what the man and woman are discussing. Since the woman asks the man to help hang these pictures on the wall, the best answer to this question is answer (D), putting some pictures on the wall.
- The second question asks how many pictures there are, and the woman clearly says that there are two, so the best answer is answer (B).
- The third question asks where the family picture is going. The woman says that she would like the family picture over the sofa, so the best answer to this question is answer (B), above the sofa.
- The last question asks what Walt is probably going to do. Walt has suggested that he should hammer the nails into the wall, so the best answer is answer (C).



PART C: LONG TALKS

In this part, you will hear long talks. After the talks, you will hear several different questions related to the talk. The format is similar to part B. What makes it distinctive from part B is that in Part C, the talk will be dominated by one person only.



General Strategies for part B & C

- Preview the answers
Anticipate the topics and questions
- Listen carefully to the first line of the conversation
Main idea, subject, topic
- As you listen, draw conclusions
Who is talking?
Where and when it takes place?
- Listen, and follow along with the answer in your text book, and if you are not sure, just guess.

STRATEGY FOR LISTENING PART B & C

LISTENING TO DETERMINE TOPIC



STRATEGY 1: FOCUS ON THE SECOND LINE

The second line of the conversation probably contains the answer to the questions. Listen to the first line of the conversation. If you understand, that's good. If you don't understand it, don't worry because it probably does not contain the answer.

Be focus on the second line of the conversation because it probably contains the answer. Repeat the second line in your mind as you read through the answer in the text.

TRANSCRIPTED EXERCISES

In this exercise, you should focus on the second line of the conversation, read the question, and then choose the answer to that question. Remember that you can probably answer easily with only the second line.

- (Man) : Can you tell me if today's matinee is comedy, romantic or western?
(Woman) : I have no idea.
(Man) : What does the woman mean?
(A) She has strong ideas about the movies
(B) She prefers comedies over romantics and westerns
(C) She doesn't like today's matinees
(D) She doesn't know.
- (Woman) : Was anyone at home at Barb's house when you went there to deliver the package?
(Man) : I rang the bell, but no one answered.
(Woman) : What does the man imply?
(A) Barb answered the bell
(B) The house was probably empty.

- (C) The bell wasn't in the house.
- (D) The house doesn't have a bell



EXERCISES:

In this exercise, listen carefully to each short dialogue and question on the recording, and then choose the best answer to the question. You should focus carefully on the last line.

1. (A) He is leaving now.
(B) He has to go out of his way.
(C) He will not be leaving soon.
(D) He will do it his own way.
2. (A) He locked the door.
(B) He tried unsuccessfully to get into the house.
(C) He was able to open the door.
(D) He left the house without locking the door.
3. (A) She doesn't like to listen to turkeys.
(B) She thinks the dinner sounds special.
(C) She especially likes the roast turkey.
(D) She'd prefer a different dinner.
4. (A) He'll be busy with her homework tonight.
(B) He can't help her tonight.
(C) He's sorry he can't ever help her.
(D) He'll help her with her physics.
5. (A) Her eyes hurt.
(B) She thought the lecture was great.
(C) The class was boring.
(D) She didn't want to watch Professor Martin.
6. (A) Not all the bills have been paid.
(B) They don't have enough credit to pay the bills.
(C) What she said on the phone was not credible.
(D) He used a credit card to pay some of the bills.
7. (A) She'll call back quickly.
(B) She'll definitely be back by 4:00.
(C) She'll give it back by 4:00.
(D) She'll try to return fast.
8. (A) She hasn't seen Tim.
(B) Tim was there only for a moment.
(C) Tim was around a short time ago.
(D) Tim will return in a minute.

9. (A) She doesn't like the place he chose.
(B) She doesn't want to get into the car.
(C) She's glad the spot is reserved.
(D) They can't park the car there.
10. (A) There's plenty to eat.
(B) The refrigerator's broken.
(C) The food isn't in the refrigerator.
(D) He's not sure if there's enough.

(from Longman TOEFL Preparation Book)