

Integrated Skills in English - Level IV (C2)

Sample listening tasks - ISE IV

The following document contains some sample listening tasks for ISE IV.
Please note these are example tasks and will not be used in a real examination.



Disclaimer: The sample exam materials in this document have been provided to assist teachers with the preparation of learners for the Trinity's ISE IV exam. Please make sure you fully consult the ISE IV Exam Information Booklet for the requirements of the exam. Trinity will not consider complaints which cite the use of sample exam materials.

ISE IV – Sample listening tasks

The examiner will introduce the Listening phase by saying:

'I'm going to read you three short passages and after I've finished each one, I'd like you to either suggest a suitable ending or answer a question. I'll then move on to the next passage. Are you ready?'

ISE IV Type 1

1. I made up my mind I wanted to be an astronomer when I was very young. I found the night sky and the idea of space fascinating. I read as much as I could about it – I thought 'this is it!' It was mind-blowing. But when I went to university, this was turned upside-down. I couldn't bear listening to the lecturers droning on and on. And above all, I hated having to memorise all those facts for exams. It put paid to my enthusiasm. Before long, all the wonder I'd felt in astronomy was...

Expected response: gone/lost/dead (or equivalent)

2. Some fascinating research was carried out about the effects that birth order among brothers and sisters has on our lives. According to statistics, the oldest child is the most conscientious, has a higher IQ and even higher earnings than his or her siblings. Whereas the youngest child supposedly ends up having greater wit, charm and the ability to get on with people. This seems to hold true for a number of people I know, but I suppose these sorts of statistics should always be taken with a pinch of salt. For example, in my family it's the youngest whose salary is...

Expected response: higher/the best/the largest (or equivalent)

3. I'm concerned that we're placing too much trust in experts. In a world where there is a deluge of information, we believe that experts are more up to the task of assessing it than we are. We rely on them unthinkingly, forgetting our own sense of responsibility. When we have to weigh up different courses of action, we should abandon our over-reliance on expert advice and start making our own decisions. The consequences of not doing this are alarming. A recent experiment showed that people would accept the advice of experts whether or not...

Expected response: it was right/correct/good (or equivalent)

4. I'd never done it before and was shaking like a leaf. I had to do this if I wanted to prove myself in my new job. I stayed up till late making copious notes and I practised it in front of the mirror countless times. Despite an initial wobble in my voice, it seemed to go down pretty well. I got my points across and managed to crack a joke at the end! There were a few laughs and applause. So I breathed again and realised that in future, I won't mind...

Expected response: giving a presentation/talking in public/public speaking (or equivalent)

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5. The press has had a field day reporting recent experiments with drugs that appear to be unravelling the mechanisms of sleep. According to scientists, these drugs would make sleep unnecessary. Imagine a 24-hour society, one in which people would never need to sleep. They could work all day and party all night. Sound like a nightmare? But then nightmares would be a thing of the past. However, a doctor from a sleep research centre argues that sleep enables the brain to store memories and recuperate from work. He therefore believes these drugs...

Expected response: are dangerous/should be banned/are a bad idea (or equivalent)

ISE IV Type 2

1. I keep hearing new theories which support the idea that music can help you to study more efficiently. For example, some research claims that listening to the right kind of music when you study can help relax your mind, cut down on other distractions and enable you to concentrate better. Some people even say that listening to music with 60 beats per minute puts you in an alert state of mind which can help you focus more easily. I suppose this is possible, but surely anything that competes for your attention when you're trying to concentrate is a distraction.

Q: What is the speaker's attitude to the idea that listening to music helps you study?

A: Sceptical/questioning/dubious (or equivalent).

2. One of the mysteries that perplexed zoologists for a long time is why zebras have stripes. The most common theory up to now has been that the stripes make it more difficult for predators to single out an individual zebra from the herd. But it turns out that's not it. And they're not for decoration either. Like all members of the horse family, zebras are plagued by flies, which can make their lives a misery. So experiments were devised to see whether the stripes had any effect. Results have shown that plain black and plain white horses attract far more insects than two-tone zebras.

Q: According to the passage, why do zebras have stripes?

A: To repel/keep away flies (or equivalent).

3. The hardest part of my job is at international conferences or diplomatic events when I have to do it simultaneously. I need to make sure I represent what the speaker's just said in the same tone and register, so that their exact intention and meaning is conveyed to the audience quickly and accurately. It's not just a case of communicating their message word for word as that could result in confusion. The mental acuity required in this profession is very challenging, but I take pride in the fact that others are dependent on my skills.

Q: Who is the speaker?

A: An interpreter/a translator.

4. Many governments strive to eradicate all risk from the lives of the people they serve. But this desire is counter-productive. If we never encounter danger, surely we'll never learn to cope with it. Some safety warnings are laughable. On the packaging of one brand of an electric iron appeared the caveat, 'Do not iron clothes on body'; on a child's Superman costume it stated, 'Wearing of this garment does not enable you to fly'. It's simply not possible to prevent all accidents. By definition, an accident is something unpredictable and out of our control.

Q: What is the speaker's attitude to government attempts to prevent accidents?

A: Critical/that they are ridiculous or pointless (or equivalent).

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5. Our planet has always been in a state of continuous change, causing the habitats of various animal species to be altered and modified. Such natural change to animal habitats tends to occur at a gradual pace, usually having only a slight impact on individual species, which isn't a major concern. However, a greater problem is when changes occur in such a way that there is little or no time for individual species to react and adjust to new circumstances. This can have a disastrous effect and lead to habitat destruction, which in turn can result in some species becoming endangered.

Q: What kind of change to animal habitats is the speaker worried about?

A: Fast/rapid change (or equivalent).

Sample

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