

# Top Tips for Success in Your Listening Exam

1.

## Make the most of your 5 minutes' reading time at the start of the test:

- Read all instructions and questions carefully.
- Look carefully at the title for each question – this will tell you what it is about.
- Highlight or underline key words in the questions.
- Look out for questions with more than one part - you'll need to answer all questions from the same extract. Make a note about this in the margin of your question paper
- For each question, note down key words in the target language to help you listen out for answers.

2.

## Listen to the *whole* extract

Don't jump to conclusions based on the first thing you hear or single words - keep listening for all the details.

3.

## Remember: In Section A, you'll hear each extract *twice*

It's a good idea to use the first listening to get the general idea and the second to focus on the details.

4.

## Always try to answer every question

Even if you're unsure, have a go - especially on multiple choice questions. A guess is better than a blank!

5.

## Focus on what the question is really asking

Look for specific details and use any examples given to guide your answer - if it says "one reason" or "one detail" – only give one.

6.

## Make any changes to your answers very clear

If you need to change a multiple-choice answer, write your final answer clearly next to the answer box. Don't write over the top of your original answer - it may not be clear enough for the examiner to mark.

7.

## Don't panic if a question feels hard

The paper includes a mix of easier and harder questions - just keep going and try to answer all questions.

8.

## Use your two minutes' checking time wisely

In the dictation task in Section B, check your spellings carefully and make sure the sentences make sense.

# Top Tips for Success in Your Speaking Exam

## Part 1: Role-play

1.

### Read the introduction carefully

It sets the scene and helps you understand what you're being asked to do.

4.

### Remember to answer in full sentences

You must include at least one verb in each response.

2.

### Write down what you're going to say for each bullet point

Writing down your answers in full helps you feel confident in the first part of your test.

5.

### Make sure you know common question words in the target language

Words like **when**, **what**, **how**, and **where** will help you complete the question task.

3.

### Only prepare the required number of details for each bullet point

Adding more details than you are asked for could affect your marks.

# Part 2: Reading aloud and short conversation

## Reading the text aloud:

- 1. Take your time**  
Don't rush! Read the text steadily and pronounce each word carefully. Pause after each sentence. Make sure your voice is clear and loud enough.
- 2. Make notes if you want to**  
You can write the text down during your preparation time. Add little notes to help you remember how to pronounce individual words.
- 3. Mistakes are okay!**  
If you make a mistake, don't panic. You can stop, correct yourself, or start that part again.
- 4. You know these words**  
All the words in the text are from your vocabulary list, so there won't be any words you haven't come across.

## The short follow-up conversation

- 1. Listen carefully**  
Make sure you listen carefully to the questions your teacher asks you. They'll always be in the present tense, so listen out for those familiar question words and phrases.
- 2. Need to hear it again? Just ask!**  
It's fine to ask your teacher to repeat the question. Make sure you know how to say this in the language you're learning.
- 3. Think before you speak**  
You don't have to answer straight away. Take a moment to think about what you want to say.
- 4. Use the text to your advantage**  
You can use individual words and short phrases from your reading aloud text to help you answer the questions.
- 5. Say as much as you can**  
Try to give full answers, not just one-word replies.
- 6. Keep it simple and clear**  
You don't need to use complex language: just focus on communicating what you want to say in a simple way.

# Part 3: Photo card description and unprepared conversation

## Describing the photos

- 1. Use your preparation time effectively**  
Write your notes for **photo 1** and **photo 2** separately. This will help you stay focused and talk about each photo clearly.
- 2. Say something about each photo**  
Make sure you talk about **both** photos. You can say more about one if you prefer.
- 3. Photos are in black and white**  
Even though the photos aren't in colour, you can still **talk about colours** if it helps your description.
- 4. Introduce each photo**  
Start each photo description with:  
"In photo one..."  
"In photo two..."  
This helps the examiner know which photo you're talking about. Remember to say this in the language you are learning!
- 5. Keep it simple and clear**  
You can mention anything you can see in the photo. Use words you know and keep your descriptions simple.

## The unprepared conversation

- 1. Listen carefully**  
Make sure you listen carefully to the questions your teacher asks you. Listen out for familiar question words and phrases.
- 2. Need to hear it again? Just ask!**  
It's fine to ask your teacher to repeat the question. Make sure you know how to say this in the language you're learning.
- 3. Think before you speak**  
You don't have to answer straight away. Take a moment to think about what you want to say.
- 4. Say as much as you can**  
Try to give full answers. The more you say, the better! Practise extending your answers by adding more detail, giving opinions and reasons and justifying what you say.
- 5. Show what you know!**  
Try to use different words and phrases in your answers. Don't say the same thing every time.
- 6. Don't worry if you don't know the answer**  
If you're stuck, that's okay! Your teacher will ask a different question so you can still show what you know.

# Top Tips for Success in Your Reading Exam

- 1. Read the introduction to each question carefully**  
It sets the scene and helps you understand what the question is about.
- 2. Read the whole text before answering**  
For example, if you think the answer is 'P' (positive), keep reading to check it's not actually 'P and N' (positive and negative).
- 3. Read the texts carefully,**  
Look out for negative expressions, different time frames, singular or plural nouns.
- 4. If the question asks for one reason or one detail – only give one**  
Adding more than asked for could affect your marks.
- 5. Avoid lifting large chunks of text**  
You might accidentally include incorrect information along with the right answer.
- 6. Make any changes to your answers very clear.**  
If you want to change a multiple-choice letter, write your final answer clearly next to the box and cross out the original. Don't write over it - it might not be clear to the examiner.
- 7. Always try to answer every question**  
Even if you're unsure, have a go - especially on multiple-choice questions. Leaving a blank means no chance of a mark.
- 8. Inference questions**  
Read the sentence carefully and look for clues to help you to reach the correct answer.
- 9. Manage your time during the exam**  
Leave enough time to complete the translation section carefully.
- 10. Don't give up on the translation if you find some parts hard**  
Other sections will be easier - keep going and do as much as you can.
- 11. Check your translation carefully**  
Make sure you haven't missed out any words or details. Check what you have written for each sentence makes sense.

# Top Tips for Success in Your Writing Exam

1.

## Aim to write around the suggested number of words

This helps you stay focused and plan your time well during the exam. Don't spend too long on one question.

2.

## Plan your answer before you start writing

A quick outline helps you stay focused on the task and makes sure you include all the bullet points.

3.

## Answer Question 3 at Foundation tier carefully

Copy your answer into the space exactly as it appears, including accents. Don't circle your answer - this won't get any marks.

4.

## Spot the bullet points that ask for past, present or future time frames

Make sure you use the correct time frame in your response to each bullet point:

- In the 90-word question, the bullet points always appear in the same order: present, past, future.
- In the 150-word question (Higher tier), the first bullet point will always be present, followed by another in either the past or future.

5.

## Cover all the bullet points

Tick them off in the question paper to make sure nothing is missed.

6.

## Vary the language you use.

Try to:

- Use a range of vocabulary, for example, different adjectives and verbs.
- Use a range of structures to make your sentences more complex, including using linking words.

7.

## Check your written work carefully

- Make sure you haven't missed out any words or details in the translation
- Double check you've covered all the bullet points
- Check that your verb forms are accurate and your sentences make sense.

8.

## Don't give up on the translation if you find some parts hard

Other sections will be easier - keep going and do as much as you can.