

Test 7: Listening, Part 1 (page 152)

I'm going to give you the instructions for this test. I'll introduce each part of the test and give you time to look at the questions. At the start of each piece you will hear this sound. Remember to play each piece twice.

Now open your question paper and look at Part 1.

You'll hear three different extracts. For questions 1–6, choose the answer (A, B or C) which fits best according to what you hear. There are two questions for each extract.

Extract One

You hear two students discussing a part-time design course they are doing.

Now look at questions 1 and 2.

- F:** So is the course living up to your expectations?
- M:** Yes, I have no real issues with it really. I wasn't sure initially whether I'd like the fact that there's this mixture of classes with the group and one-to-one sessions online with the tutors, but actually I've come round to thinking it's the real strength of the course, don't you agree?
- F:** Undoubtedly. I mean, that's why I went for it in the first place. It's nice to meet the staff and other students, but it's the personal attention by email that you want. Although I must say, some of the staff are more helpful than others.
- M:** But the group lessons are useful too.
- F:** Oh yes. Some people complained about the fact that you get face-to-face feedback on project work in them, that it waste's class time, but I have no problem with that. But the sessions are the only chance we get to use some of the more sophisticated software. I mean, they did make it clear in the pre-course information that we'd only have limited access to that, but I still think it's a shame we can't come in and use it out of class time.
- M:** Yes, I agree.

Extract Two

You hear part of an interview with a young man who has been travelling in many remote parts of the world.

Now look at questions 3 and 4.

- F:** So basically, as a seasoned traveller, you must have got packing off to a fine art.
- M:** I'm not that great at travelling light, simply because anything can – and often does – happen, and I like to feel fully prepared. So I'm a complete sucker for gadgets and gizmos, and I have a bag-load of stuff that I take with me. I'm still looking for the ideal rucksack or carry-on actually. And, of course, I've always got my iPod for those long days on the road when you don't know how long you might be hanging around waiting for transport.
- F:** So what have you learnt from travelling?
- M:** Well, I guess it's a cliché, but the more you see of other cultures, the more you come to appreciate your own. I don't mean that I miss the comforts of home or anything like that. More that I've got the opportunity to travel and see the world because I've got folks back home in a wealthy western culture to pick up the tab if things go wrong. I mean, without that – and a lot of people you meet don't have that – would I ever have had the courage to do half the things I've done? I doubt it somehow.

Extract Three

You hear part of an interview with the lead singer in a rock band.

Now look at questions 5 and 6.

- F:** Now, you've come in for a lot of stick, haven't you, in response to your latest album?
- M:** Everyone went nuts about the cover. We knew it might cause some controversy, but I didn't think it was that outrageous. We just had this slogan which read 'No Cover Art;' like the Beatles did the white album all those years ago – the first one with no picture on the cover. But predictably, I guess, we got all these irate bloggers going overboard in dismissing it and one newspaper included it in a list of the worst album covers ever. Actually, I reckon it's quite endearing the way it was done.
- F:** But is this because these people don't like the music?
- M:** Well, there is a certain snobbery out there and I reckon these are people who don't regard us as cool or whatever. But I don't think that's what lies behind it actually. I reckon the problem stemmed from the fact that we were misquoted in the first piece written about it. It said that I wanted to kill album artwork, which is just so far off the mark. What we actually wanted to do was draw people's attention to it. For them to have a look round and see that it's mostly rubbish.

Test 7: Listening, Part 2 (page 154)

You'll hear a student called Kerry giving a class presentation about a type of bird called the swift.

For questions 7–14, complete the sentences with a word or short phrase. In the exam, you have 45 seconds to look at Part 2.

Hi. My name's Kerry, and the topic of my presentation this evening is a bird called the swift. For people living in most of Europe, the swift's a familiar bird. But it only stays in the northern hemisphere for a few weeks each summer. The rest of the year it spends in sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, one of the best known facts about this incredible bird is that it has one of the longest migrations of any living creature.

The other incredible fact is that a swift spends most of its life in the air, where it eats, drinks and sleeps, only landing to build a nest and raise its young. Indeed, the name of the bird in German translates to 'wall-glider' in English, whereas its Latin name means 'without feet', both reflecting the fact that the bird never seems to touch the ground.

In Europe, swifts are a familiar sight, wheeling around high up on summer evenings, making a lot of noise. But swifts don't produce a song, like some birds, nor do they go tweet tweet. Instead they produce what can only be called a scream. You must have heard it!

Swifts are not large birds, but they have a very characteristic shape in flight. Some people say this reminds them of a new moon, and the bird's certainly crescent shaped with a very noticeable forked tail. But for me, the thing that comes to mind when I see a swift is a boomerang; you know, the thing made and thrown by traditional peoples in Australia.

So, swifts come to Europe to breed and they often make their nests in buildings, especially chimneys and for some reason, ancient monuments. Because they can't land, the swifts' nests need to be in places from which they can launch themselves into the air. Probably cliffs were their original preference, but even out of town, these days they tend to go for man-made places like quarries.

As you'd expect, leaves and grasses are used to build the nests, but even here the link with humans is evident as amazingly paper is often used, together with less surprising things like the feathers of other birds. These materials the swift probably catches in flight.

Because they never land, swifts are very vulnerable to bad weather and, in Europe, retreat to their nest sites during periods of rain or high wind. I was once lucky enough to observe a large group of swifts travelling at great speed to get out of the way of a thunderstorm. It was an awesome sight that I'll never forget.

As I said, swifts only spend a short time in Europe each year, generally June and July, with even the newborn birds making the incredibly long journey to Africa in about 48 hours.

One strange fact I discovered in my research is that once it gets back to Africa, the bird is silent; people there being unaware of that characteristic call.

Swifts have always fascinated people, especially because the birds have always been attracted to towns and buildings. Traditionally in Europe, the bird was used as a symbol by the younger sons of wealthy families who, without land to inherit, were destined to wander the globe. I like that. So before I go onto ...

Test 7: Listening, Part 3 (page 155)

You'll hear an interview in which two professional kayakers called Glenda Beachley and Declan Speight are talking about their sport.

For questions 15–20, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which fits best according to what you hear. In the exam, you have 70 seconds to look at Part 3.

Interviewer: Today I'm talking to two professional kayakers Glenda Beachley and Declan Speight, who's now making a name for himself in the spin-off sport of wild-water racing. Glenda, first of all, why kayaking? What do you get out of the sport?

Glenda: Well I started at six, when my dad let me paddle his boat in the practice pool; we'd do drills. I've been at a professional level for six years, recently going full-time. Kayaking's a very addictive sport. It's something you want to get better at, no matter how good you are. But what really appeals to me about kayaking is that it calls for several different skills to be used simultaneously. It requires not only physical strength, but mental tolerance. You have to train your brain not to panic when you roll over: to think instead of the process needed to roll your boat back up. Then an added bonus is that when you're on the water, it's you and the river. You control the boat and plan your line through.

Interviewer: So what would you say to anyone interested in taking up kayaking?

Glenda: Hopefully, if you join a club, there'll be people to train with and share vital advice gained from years of experience. But, however much training you decide to do, keep it up. I started by going paddling once a week, slowly building up to several times a day over many years. But most importantly, when you first start kayaking, just have fun. Don't make it about racing and being the best kayaker in the world, just learn as much as you can. My friends and I used to keep each other progressing. What I mean by that is, when one of your friends learns a trick that you can't do, that's all the more reason to train harder and learn the trick faster. And it works both ways, so we all advanced in the sport.

Interviewer: So tell us about wild-water racing, Declan.

Declan: It's a race on a predetermined section of river. You set off at sixty-second intervals; it's just you and the river. You don't have to follow a particular route; it's up to you to figure out which line is fastest! Training can be hard, physically and psychologically, especially when the weather's bad and there aren't many competitions coming up, but it's worth it in the summer when the big ones come around. Training for me involves being on the water, gym sessions and running to help maintain aerobic fitness. I have to ensure I eat enough of the right things to keep myself in the best shape possible, but paddling definitely builds up an appetite!

Interviewer: So, is kayaking dangerous?

Glenda: White-water kayaking can be, often a small mistake can push you off the right line and you end up paying for it! When I first started out, I felt intimidated by certain stretches of river. I'd weigh up the risks and only have a go once I felt up to the challenge. And I'm still doing that. Sure, you feel exhilarated by that challenge, but you shouldn't actually be scared. Later, when you start progressing and trying new

things, you still get that rush of adrenalin. But you do need to avoid taking unnecessary chances. Things can still go wrong, of course. I've had a few nasty spills where I got beaten about a bit, but I've been lucky enough not to sustain a serious injury.

Interviewer: What about equipment, Declan?

Glenda: I always go back to the gear I didn't have to replace over the course of a full year on the water. A good many bits of costly equipment didn't make it to any reasonable expectation of a useful lifespan. Kit's a very personal thing, though; what suits one person might not suit the next. It's great that there's a huge range on offer but it's tough doing the research yourself. As a beginner, I'd say get some insider tips from someone in the know. Don't just follow your instinct, because whatever you do choose, make sure it's fitted out nicely for you. A comfortable boat and set of paddles that you can rely on makes the world of difference.

Interviewer: So, both of you, what's your best memory of kayaking?

Glenda: One of the best things is that it's a very social sport – it's all about interacting with other people. So although the first time I was selected for the national team and winning my first medal in an international competition are great memories, probably my most valued are those when I'm on a great trip, getting to know new rivers and their surroundings in the company of fellow kayakers I trust and get on with.

Declan: This year, the high spot for me was landing in Tasmania with my training partner Sam, to find that all the rivers were in flood, making each one flow. Over the space of a few weeks we paddled lots of them, some of which hadn't flowed in over twenty years! And I've met kayakers from all over the world. I mean, I've had experiences I wouldn't have missed for the world, on and off the river.

Test 7: Listening, Part 4 (page 156)

Part 4 consists of two tasks. You'll hear five short extracts in which people are talking about leaving their own country to study abroad.

Look at task 1. For questions 21–25, choose from the list A–H why each speaker decided to study in another country. Now look at task 2. For questions 26–30, choose from the list A–H what each speaker says they gained from the experience.

While you listen you must complete both tasks. In the exam, you have 45 seconds to look at Part 4.

Speaker one

I wanted to study medieval culture at university, but needed to earn some cash first, so I thought working as a plumber might help me achieve that. However, the idea of a short plumbing course in my own country didn't appeal, so when I discovered one in an old European town I jumped at it. I'm bilingual so I knew language wouldn't be an issue. But what made it perfect was all the ancient ruins in the area, which I was just itching to explore! Once there, I felt really driven to do well – there was just this new sense of optimism. I even went on to be the college's best apprentice!

Speaker two

My brother and I had always played a lot of tennis, and I was about to take it up professionally but then injured my leg quite badly and had to drop the idea. So I upped sticks and got on a plane to do a sports science degree at a really old and prestigious university. It gave me a real sense of helping the next generation of top athletes to achieve their dream even if mine had somehow changed direction. And they were really grateful for that, so their recommendations opened a number of doors for me once my studies had finished. That was incredibly valuable.

Speaker three

I'd always been a great fan of detective stories and I suppose I'd always imagined myself being the one who solves the crime and catches the bad guy. Then quite by chance, I happened to read about a forensic science course in the States and realised it was my big chance as it would get me exactly where I'd always wanted to go. My family couldn't get over it when I announced my plans. But the great bonus has been that loads of films are made in the area where I'm living, so I've got into that art form now. I'd never really seen myself as a movie buff before!

Speaker four

I'd lived in the city all my life and had plenty of friends there but we were all rushing around frantically as city-dwellers do. Anyway, I'd been reading about problems with the environment and felt increasingly I wanted to do something; but what? Then I discovered a course where I could train in agriculture and rural development, so off we went – me *and* my family. The area also offered perfect opportunities for me to apply my new-found knowledge, and I realised I no longer needed to rely on anyone to give me a job. We could go anywhere where I could set up by myself. It was exactly what we all needed.

Speaker five

I'd just qualified as a dentist and knew I could earn good money locally but the kind of jobs that were available just didn't appeal, somehow. And the only courses that tempted me, if I wanted to top up my qualifications, meant going abroad; so off I went. In fact, even though the course I chose was in English, we were strongly encouraged to learn the local language as part of our studies. And that turned out to be the best thing I ever did, because knowing the language made me feel I really belonged in the place. I ended up settling there, and I haven't looked back since.