

Test 4: Listening, Part 1 (page 80)

Now open your question paper and look at Part 1.

You will hear people talking in eight different situations.

For questions 1–8, choose the best answer (A, B or C).

Extract one

You hear a man talking about a book.

- M:** It's what I guess is usually termed a historical novel. By which you might expect a novel of history, but here I think we can say it's simply that it's set in the past. Basically, they ride horses instead of getting into cars, that kind of thing. I'd have liked to have had a little more historical material than that in fact, to have learnt a little more about the period. But anyway, the style is excellent, really flowing and there are some great 'word pictures' that definitely captured my imagination. There are even touches of humour here and there.

Extract two

You hear a caller on a radio phone-in programme.

- F:** Yes, I'm calling about the new swimming pool and sports centre complex. Unlike some of the callers I've been hearing, I have actually looked at the plans and visited the site where they're going to build it. I know some people have doubted whether we should have such a building at all, but I can definitely say, as a parent with young children that it is necessary. The old pool is only an outdoor one and it's useless in the winter. But as I say, I've seen the plans and I worry that it's going to look very out of place – like a kind of weird spaceship, so I want to ask if it's too late to change that.

Extract three

You overhear a conversation about families.

- F:** I must say I envy you your knowledge of languages – three, is it?
- M:** Yes, though I don't usually think about it. I mean, you see I grew up with Dutch and English ...
- F:** Your father's Dutch?
- M:** My mother. She always wanted to maintain the two languages with us children.
- F:** But your wife speaks Spanish? And you live in London?
- M:** Yes, and she's determined that *our* kids will be bilingual, so we speak 'her' language in the house, and English for outside – and of course the kids at school. And then I get to chat in Dutch in the holidays.
- F:** Impressive.

Extract four

You hear a woman talking about learning how to make jewellery.

- F:** I've come to really enjoy my jewellery-making classes. I wasn't at all sure at first, and my friend had to talk me into going with her. But it's great – I always thought I was so hopeless at anything involving actually doing or making things with my hands, but it turns out I'm not so rubbish after all. But it is quite a battle – there are so many techniques to learn, and one silly mistake can mean you've ruined a whole piece you've just spent hours on! Anyway, I hope it will eventually lead to the chance to use what I'm learning – maybe even earn some money from it!

Extract five

You hear a man talking about a new car he's just bought.

- M:** I'm pleased with my new car so far. Mind you – I spent ages deciding which model to go for, reading magazines, checking specifications on websites and stuff. There's so much to consider, and of course the running costs are a major issue. But let's not kid ourselves that a car's ever going to be actually cheap – it costs money even when you're not using it – though I think this one's perfectly reasonable. It came down to parking for me in the end, and with this one being so small, I can get it into pretty much any space I find. So let's just hope it was the right choice.

Extract six

You overhear two sales assistants talking about their new manager.

- M:** What do you make of the new manager?
- F:** I'm not sure yet, really. But he seems less than completely charming, doesn't he? I mean, he just gives you orders, doesn't make an effort to be pleasant at the same time.
- M:** I guess he doesn't see that as a vital part of the job ...
- F:** Hmm, he might be more into efficiency, perhaps, though we don't have any evidence of whether he'll be successful yet. But he's got all the certificates and he clearly knows all about management theory. That's why he got the job. It'll be interesting to see how it works out in practice.

Extract seven

You hear a man talking about a tennis competition.

- M:** I'd say that was a great first attempt, and that everyone involved should feel very proud of what they achieved, whether playing or organising in some way. The competitors definitely had a good time. It went well, and was more popular than the local paper described – we had a lot more people there than they said. I hope that next year there'll be even more people watching, as the event gets better known. Everyone will tell a few others about it, and we can do more posters and things next time. Meantime, I think I better get some practice in!

Extract eight

You hear a cycle mechanic talking to a customer.

- F:** I'm worried you won't be able to fix it this time.
- M:** Well, there will come a day when we can't repair it, but I don't think we're there yet. But it's going to take a while to do it, because we'll have to wait for the replacement parts to be delivered – there's only one place left now that supplies them.
- F:** And expensive?
- M:** I'm afraid so, relatively. But if you love your old bike, then it's not about price, is it? But I can work it out for you first, so you can decide for yourself.
- F:** No, let's do it.

Test 4: Listening, Part 2 (page 81)

You will hear a woman called Britt Foxton talking about women's basketball.

For questions 9–18, complete the sentences with a word or short phrase.

You now have 45 seconds to look at Part 2.

Hi my name's Britt Foxton, and I'm the founder of a website devoted to women's basketball, and I've also just written a book on the same subject. But first up, let me tell you how I got started with the site.

Although it really got going once I was at university, it actually started out as a high-school project – you know a 'design a website' kind of thing – but it wasn't like anyone expected it to become real or anything. I designed a site about girls' basketball, which I was passionate about, and called it femalebasket.com – I knew the name wasn't right, and before it got really successful I changed it to matchgirl.com – and that was a really good move.

And although it started with basketball, the site's kind of evolved to include other games as well. It features a variety of articles, reviews and editorials on everything ranging from basketball to computer games, plus a smattering of more traditionally 'girly' material as well. But the coverage of team sports is at the heart of it – anything about make-up or fashion is just peripheral.

Then there's my book – that was a quite different sort of challenge. It's on the subject of girls' basketball and overall took about three months to do. I knew I wanted to write it late last year and started to loosely plan it out in January of this year. It wasn't until May that I had enough time to get down to doing everything I'd envisioned. But it was all done by the end of July.

And in researching the book I came across some pretty interesting facts. Like, women actually began playing basketball less than a year after the men's game was invented, back in 1892. It didn't become an Olympic sport until 1976, however, whereas the men's game was in there from 1936. And that tells you a lot about how it developed.

People ask me whether we'd recognise the game the way it started, or if it's changed. Well, the biggest difference is in clothing. Back then in the USA, women were required to play in full-length dresses. The only body parts that could be exposed were fingers, necks and heads. And it wasn't only the discomfort they suffered, it led to a quite a few broken bones because players tended to trip over their skirts and stuff. Of course no way did the men have these problems!

Then, at the end of a woman's game, there'd be like handkerchiefs and hairpins scattered all over the court, which of course wasn't the case with the men either! So you can see how the two developed in quite different ways – even with a differently sized court for many years.

Of course, things did change – but quite slowly really. Appropriate clothing came in gradually, but even well into the twentieth century some other rules applied to women, but not to men. Not so much the equipment, but silly things like chewing gum was specifically prohibited in the women's game because it was considered unfeminine, not because it was dangerous or anything!

And I've got some good stories from those years in the book, I think. Like when in 1936, a team of women basketball players called The Red Heads toured the country playing exhibitions against men's teams. Strange thing was though, these girls not only had to wear the same clothes, they all had to have red hair – most of them had to dye it specially! Isn't that unbelievable!

But looking back on the writing of the book – If I did it again, I'd do it all differently. I know I ought to be proud of what I've done, but I'm such a perfectionist. Given the chance, I'd add significantly more information on the cultural traditions and really address the growing basketball fan base. But who knows – maybe there's another book in there somewhere!

Now before I show you some ...

Test 4: Listening, Part 3 (page 82)

You will hear five short extracts in which people are talking about holiday jobs they have done.

For questions 19–23, choose from the list (A–H) what each speaker says about the job they did. Use the letters only once. There are three extra letters which you do not need to use.

You now have 30 seconds to look at Part 3.

Speaker one

I'm glad I took the job – if nothing else, it's taught me that I never want to do it again! It was just what I had expected, really, although maybe a bit harder. Packing things into boxes and boxes into crates – it's never going to be fascinating, is it? But actually, it wasn't the actual tasks themselves that got to me – because you can just go into a sort of dream world, do it on automatic while thinking about other, nicer things – but the way everyone went for breaks and lunch at exactly the same time every day. The others were OK, you know, I mean, not rude or anything, so I shouldn't moan.

Speaker two

It wasn't at all easy, you know, but I'd thought it would be a breeze. I guess the thing with being on the reception desk in a hotel – even a budget hotel ... or maybe especially a budget hotel – is you never really know what's going to happen next. You might find yourself dealing with an incredibly rude guest – tell yourself he's very stressed – or someone who's locked out of their room, or anything. Some days were so busy you couldn't catch your breath, and others dragged by. My manager was great, really positive, but some of the other staff were just, well, dull.

Speaker three

When I first finished the job, I thought I'll never do that again, no way. But now that I've recovered a bit, I think I might well try to do it again next summer. With tips, the money turned out to be quite good, and some of the other waiters were quite funny, so it kept me amused. Every day was pretty similar to the last, and the next, and I found that quite reassuring. It was tiring, being on your feet all the time, and having to smile and be nice and show an interest in everyone and laugh at some pretty terrible jokes – all that was what took the energy ... but, yeah, I'd do it again.

Speaker four

Well, I was working in this shop. It sold small craft things, you know, models and little pictures and things, mainly to tourists really. I didn't exactly have a lot of responsibility – if anything interesting happened, like a delivery, or a customer spending a lot of money – then I had to get the manager to come and deal with it. She was rather a cold person, actually, though very polite. But it wasn't very good weather and there weren't very many tourists, so most of the time I just sat about, to be honest, or did a bit of gentle tidying of the stuff on sale.

Speaker five

I didn't understand what was involved when I got the job. I thought working on a campsite meant helping people put up their tents, stuff like that, but I found I had to do cleaning, and also serving in the little shop they had there. There were a couple of other guys working there, but they kept

themselves to themselves and the boss was nowhere to be seen, ever. So problems landed on my plate, and I got shouted at or treated badly by families turning up late and finding we didn't have any spaces, or that their tent had a hole in it or something – but nothing was my fault so why blame me like that?

Test 4: Listening, Part 4 (page 83)

You will hear an interview with a novelist called Greg Field.

For questions 24–30, choose the best answer (A, B or C).

You now have one minute to look at Part 4.

Int: My guest today is the novelist Greg Field! Greg, you started writing quite young. Were you into books and reading as a kid?

G: Well, funnily enough, my parents were always on at me to read, they couldn't understand why I didn't like it much. But if we went to a library, it was all serious and silent and slow and not lively at all. One summer, though, I was in my grandma's sitting room and she had this whole pile of books, which she let me play with because I liked the covers. And I started leafing through, and then maybe reading a word or two, and then a page, and then that was it.

Int: And what about at school?

G: Well, in fact school added another dimension. We'd got schoolbooks, of course, history books and maths books that we'd work through, though I much preferred finding out about stuff online. But there was one particular teacher we had, who at the end of every day would get out a book, maybe poems or a story and read them to us. It was like music, like a film – these great pictures his voice summoned up in my mind: and that's when I knew I had to be a writer, so I could make that happen too.

Int: So how did it feel when you eventually achieved that?

G: Well I was so scared when I was writing my first novel – scared that nobody would read it, that I'd never finish it, or I'd lose it, or that the publisher would change her mind, etcetera, etcetera ... I can't tell you what a relief it was to see it on the shelves in a bookshop. Then the next one was, by comparison, a bit of a disappointment – the reviews were pretty bad, and it never sold as well. But these days, I just have this nice, calm feeling about the whole business.

Int: Tell us about where and how you write.

G: I write in a small room at the top of my house. There's no sound, no music, no traffic, and that's what I need to get a sense that my words are filling something. I've tried writing in other rooms in the house, but I find it harder to settle down to work. I don't use a computer, just a pen, any kind of pen, I don't have a special one anymore – losing it was too traumatic – and I do look out of the window a lot. And I drink cup after cup of tea. And, yes, it's a special cup!

Int: So tell us about your next novel?

G: Next is a book for teenagers – at least, I hope they'll like it – I've never tried writing one before. It's set about a hundred years ago, and it's about school-age children in the country, who are sent off from their farms to work in a factory at a young age, and the hard times they have. Like all my historical novels, it has a serious message, but there are lighter moments too.

Int: Any advice for budding young writers out there, Greg?

- G:** Well, if it's your first book, does that mean first person? People often write their first book about themselves and from the 'I' perspective. Of course, you're likely to write best about what you know, to be most convincing, but bear in mind that if you do that there might be a lot of stuff you can't include. And your readers may want to know about other things that you don't see.
- Int:** Anything to avoid?
- G:** Well, it's very dull if you set everything in the same place, of course, or always have them wearing the same clothes. Their choice of clothes can tell you about a character's personality. And an important aspect of writing fiction is the use of symbols, for example, the weather representing how people are feeling. But resist the urge to spell everything out. 'The sky was grey', fine, not 'the sky was grey and John felt as grey inside as the sky was', etcetera.
- Int:** That sounds like good advice – thanks Greg ...