

Listening skills

IGCSE English

Listening for facts

A speaker mentions Thursday, Friday and Tuesday. Which is the answer? You need the question and the meaning of each mention, not a rule that the first or last word must be correct.

In Cambridge 0510 listening, each recorded text is heard twice. Both the 2024–2026 syllabus (page 19) and 2027–2029 syllabus (page 20) say this. The paper has 40 multiple-choice questions; select one option per question. The June 2025 0510/21 paper gives six minutes to transfer answers to the separate answer sheet. Follow the actual paper and recording instructions, not a memorised routine.

■ Predict before you listen

Read what the question asks: a current arrangement, a reason, a preference or a speaker's feeling? **Predict** the kind of information needed, not an answer without evidence. A **recording** may mention several plausible options. Compare the full meaning with the question.

How to use this lesson. The original scripts below are transcript-reasoning practice, not embedded audio or official exam recordings. For optional teacher-read rehearsal, keep scripts and solutions hidden: a teacher reads each script twice while students see only its question and options. Reveal the text afterwards for evidence discussion. Without a reader, use them as reading-based analysis; that does not test listening speed or pronunciation recognition.

■ Catch the specific detail

Listen for **specific** information, including names, places, times and **directions**. Check whether a detail is current, an earlier arrangement or a different event. The relevant information may be paraphrased. Do not choose an option merely because you heard its words.

Original task 1: current meeting. Where and when is this week's club meeting?
A: Thursday at 15:00 in Room 8. B: Friday at 15:00 in Room 12. C: Friday at 15:30 in Room 12. Choose before reading the script and reasoning.

Teacher script / transcript 1. "The poster says Thursday at three in Room 8, but that's last week's notice. This week's meeting is on Friday at half past three in Room 12. Bring your club form. Book collection is on Tuesday."

Worked reasoning. C matches all three details of this week's meeting. A describes the old notice. B gets the day and room right but changes half past three to three. Tuesday concerns book collection, not the meeting. This is why the last day mentioned need not answer the question.

■ Use both playings

Compare the demand and options before listening. Follow the whole text on the first playing; check doubtful details and connections on the second. Revise with new evidence, not because a letter looks unusual. Your first choice is not automatically correct.

Prepare

Read the demand; compare options

First playing

Follow meaning; make supported choices

Second playing

Check doubts; revise with evidence

Use both playings to build and check evidence, rather than defend a first guess



A studio illustrates recorded speech; the photograph supplies no answers to our tasks

Hearing opinions and attitudes

An **opinion** evaluates something; **feelings** and **attitude** concern the speaker's response. Strong words may describe earlier worries or someone else's view. "The food was fine" alone does not prove a complaint; consider context and delivery.

■ Follow the connections

Ideas **connect** through contrast, reasons, results and changes over time. Follow content as well as "but", "because" and "so"; a signal word alone does not identify an answer or earn a mark.

Original task 2: response to a workshop. How does the speaker feel by the end? A: sorry they attended. B: more confident about the skill. C: disappointed that everything was too easy.

Teacher script / transcript 2. “I thought the workshop would be too advanced. The first task was hard, but the tutor showed each step, and by the end I could do it myself. I’d sign up again.”

Worked reasoning. B is supported by completing the task independently and wanting to return. The earlier worry is not the final response. A conflicts with signing up again; C conflicts with the first task being hard. Do not treat “hard” as automatic evidence of an overall negative attitude.



Listening can involve several speakers; use the actual words and context to identify whose view is tested

Listening between the lines

■ Implied meaning

A speaker **suggests** an idea when it is supported without being stated directly. Infer the smallest conclusion justified by the context. Do not invent motives, promises or extreme feelings. Tone and emphasis can add evidence in real audio, but a written transcript does not establish a particular delivery.

Original task 3: an invitation. A friend asks whether the speaker can attend a film tonight. What does the reply suggest? A: they cannot commit until checking a responsibility. B: they have bought a ticket. C: they dislike films.

Teacher script / transcript 3. “I’d like to come, but I’m looking after my little brother. If my aunt can arrive early, I might make it. I’ll message you when I know.”

Worked reasoning. A follows from the condition and promise to confirm later. “I’d like to come” does not mean attendance is certain. No ticket is mentioned, and wanting to come contradicts the claim that the speaker dislikes films. The reply supports uncertainty about availability, not dislike or a confirmed booking.

■ Watch the distractors

In **multiple-choice** tasks, wrong options are **distractors**. They may describe an earlier plan, another person's view, a partly correct detail or a claim that is too strong. Not every distractor is mentioned first and then corrected. Identify why each alternative fails to answer this particular question.

Saturday

Original plan for the match

Sunday

Current match day after the change

Monday

Training, a different event

Match the detail to the event asked about; the last day mentioned is not automatically the answer

Original contrast check. “The match was planned for Saturday, but it has moved to Sunday. Training is on Monday.” When is the match now? Explain why Saturday and Monday do not answer that question. If asked when it was originally planned, which day would answer?

Worked check. Sunday is the current match day; Saturday answers the original-plan question. Monday is training. The question determines which detail matters. Correction words can redirect meaning, but “but” does not erase every earlier fact.

Exam tips

Verified exam connection. June 2025 0510/21 Q3 asks where a girl suggests meeting today: the bridge, not the earlier café arrangement or later swimming plan. The official scheme gives C; inspect the paper's visual options. The latest mention is not the answer.

Read the question and options in the preparation time given. Follow content and connections; select an option, not a name or number in a gap. Eliminate alternatives using evidence, then choose one rather than leave it unanswered. Each correct answer earns one mark. Transfer by question number and shade one letter only.

Original independent task 4. Why does the speaker prefer the later train? A: it is cheaper. B: it leaves time to finish a class. C: it arrives earlier.

Teacher script / transcript 4. “The early train costs less, and it reaches the city before lunch. I still want the later one because my class finishes at ten, and I don't want to leave halfway through.”

Worked answer and review. B matches finishing the class. A and C describe the early train, not the chosen one. Explain your evidence and what you would check on a second reading. These scripts do not replace real-audio sound-recognition practice.

Vocabulary card meanings

recording: Captured sound of speech or of a scene. directions: Instructions about which way to go or what to do. feelings: Emotions a speaker or a character has.

connect: To join one idea to the next. suggests: Points toward a meaning without stating it outright. distractors: Wrong options designed around a likely error.