

9.2 Opinions, attitudes and connections in listening

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **opinions, attitudes and connections in listening** 观点、态度与联系 — hearing what a speaker thinks, not only what they say.

You must be able to:

- identify a speaker's opinion and distinguish it from a fact they report
- hear agreement and disagreement between two speakers
- follow a speaker who changes their mind

1 Worked examples

■ Fact or opinion

"The new timetable adds twenty minutes to the day. Personally, I think that's twenty minutes too many."

The first sentence is a fact; the second is the opinion. A question asking what the speaker **thinks** must be answered from the second.

■ Signals of opinion

I think, in my view, personally, to be honest, if you ask me, what worries me is, the trouble is

■ Signals of attitude

- **Enthusiasm:** *absolutely, definitely, I'd jump at it*
- **Doubt:** *I suppose, in theory, up to a point, we'll see*
- **Disagreement, politely:** *I take your point, but... / That's true, although... / I'm not so sure*
- **Reluctant agreement:** *I suppose so, if we have to*

Note that *I take your point, but* is a **disagreement**. Students often hear the first half and record agreement.

■ Changing position

“At first I thought it was a waste of money. Having seen it in use, though, I’ve changed my mind completely.”

If a question asks the speaker’s opinion, it wants the **final** position. Listen for *though*, *however*, *having said that*, *actually*, *in the end*.

2 Practice

Read this transcript extract, then answer as though you had heard it.

Amina: They’re putting cameras in the corridors next term.

Ben: I’d heard. Honestly, I think it’s a good thing — the bag thefts last year were awful.

Amina: I take your point about the thefts. I’m just not sure a camera stops anything; it only tells you who did it afterwards.

Ben: That’s fair. I suppose I was assuming they’d act as a deterrent, and I don’t actually know that they do.

Amina: They might. I’d rather the money went on lockers, that’s all.

2.1 What is Ben’s opinion at the start? [1]

2.2 Does Amina agree with him? Quote the words that show it. [2]

2.3 How does Ben’s position change, and which words show the change? [2]

2.4 What does Amina think the money should be spent on? [1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 For each phrase, say whether it signals agreement, disagreement or doubt. [4]

(a) “I take your point, but...”

(b) “Absolutely — I’d jump at it.”

(c) “In theory, I suppose.”

(d) “That’s fair.”

3.2 A student answers “Ben thinks cameras are a good thing” to a question asking for Ben’s opinion at the end of the conversation. Explain why this is wrong. [2]

Solutions

2.1 He thinks the cameras are a good thing, because of last year's bag thefts.

2.2 No, she does not fully agree. "I take your point about the thefts. I'm just not sure a camera stops anything" — the phrase "I take your point, but" concedes before disagreeing.

2.3 He becomes less certain; the words "That's fair. I suppose I was assuming... and I don't actually know that they do" show him giving up the assumption his opinion rested on.

2.4 Lockers.

3.1 (a) disagreement. (b) agreement / enthusiasm. (c) doubt. (d) agreement, or at least concession.

3.2 That was his opinion at the START. By the end he has accepted Amina's objection and admits he does not know whether cameras deter anything, so his final position is uncertain rather than positive — and a question about the end of a conversation wants the final position.