



Mid-Year Listening Test

Part 1

You will hear fourteen short conversations. After each conversation, a question is asked about what was heard. The answer choices are shown as pictures. Choose the picture (A, B or C) which answers the question.

1

W Hi Josh, I didn't know you were a member of this sports centre.

M Hi Wendy. Yes, I've been playing badminton here for a couple of years now. I don't usually come on a Tuesday, though. I prefer Saturday or Sunday morning, but I'm going to be away this weekend. What are you doing here?

W I've just started squash lessons. I'm not very good; it's much harder than it looks.

M Don't get discouraged; all sports are hard in the beginning. I remember when I first played cricket – I was terrible! You'll get better.

W Well, I can't get any worse!

N **Which sport has the woman recently taken up?**

2

W How was your 'haunted house' weekend away?

M It was good, the hotel was in a lovely area and the food was really good! There was even a small gym for visitors to use.

W Yes, but did you see any ghosts, or hear anything strange? I mean that was why you went, wasn't it?

M Well, the room I stayed in is supposed to be haunted by a young girl, but I had the best night's sleep ever!

N **What happened to the man at night?**

3

M So what's it like living on your own?

W I'm getting used to it now, thank goodness. Leaving home wasn't easy at first. I felt so lonely and just sat around feeling sorry for myself.

M What changed?

W Well, one day I woke up and said 'That's it. Enough is enough!' Later that day, I joined the local gym and a book club. Since then I've made a few new friends and I'm feeling much happier now. I'm really enjoying the freedom I have.

N **How does the woman feel now?**

4

M OK. Can everybody listen for a minute, please? Don't forget that you all need to be here at 9.30 tomorrow morning. The bus leaves at 10 o'clock sharp, so don't be late.

W But the match doesn't start until 2.30!

M I know that, Jenny, but it's quite a long way and we'll need time to have something to eat and warm up before you play.

5

W Oh gosh. What's happened to you? Have you broken your arm?

M No, it isn't actually broken. I fell over while I was jogging yesterday. Not very clever, was it?

W Well, accidents happen. I fell down some stairs last year. Do you remember? I broke my leg and hit my head. I had to have five stitches.

M Yes, I do. Fortunately, the doctor says it should be better in a few days.

N **What part of his body has the man injured?**

6

M Mum, will you come to the shops with me later. I've got a party to go to at the weekend and I need your help.

W Yes, of course. Do you want me to help you choose something to wear?

M Er ... no, thanks. I'm going to wear my new jeans and a shirt. I want to get a present for Sue – it's her party. She's going to be 18. I'm doing the music with her brother. It's going to be great!

W Oh, I see. Well I'm sure we'll be able to find something for her.

N **What does the boy want to buy?**

7

W That's an unusual watch, Mike.

M Yes, it is. I bought it for myself a couple of years ago. My grandfather died and left me some money

...

W ... and you spent it on the watch. What a good idea!

M Yes, he used to collect clocks and watches and he had one just like this. I always admired it. Now whenever I look to see what the time is, I think of him.

N **What did the man inherit from his grandfather?**

8

W Right, I suggest we split up. I'm going to the 4th floor where the footwear is. I need a new pair of boots. Why don't you go and look for trousers while I do that?

M OK. I think menswear is on the 3rd floor, but don't worry. I'll find it.

W Good. Now what else did we want to buy? Oh yes, a new jacket for Susie – childrenswear. That's here on the 2nd floor, so perhaps we should do that first?

N **Which floor is footwear on?**

9

W So, are you and Jackie coming with us to the cinema tonight?

M Not this time, we saw the film last week with Stella and John.

W Ah, so what have you got planned then – a romantic evening in?

M No such luck! Jackie's going to do the ironing and I get to clean the windows. At least we'll be ordering

10

W Guess what? I've found a Saturday job!

M Congratulations! Doing what?

W Working at Best Books in the shopping centre. I really wanted to get a job at Perfect Pets, but they aren't taking people on at the moment.

M I'm sure you'll enjoy it. By the way, the music shop – I can't remember what it's called – is looking for people. Perhaps I'll apply – I know quite a lot about music.

N **What kind of shop did the woman want to work in?**

11

M That documentary last night was really good; did you see it?

W No, I was out last night. What was it about?

M It was about wildfires. They talked about the damage the fire itself does, but also how nature recovers afterwards. It's part of a series called *The Power of Nature* and it looks at how powerful nature is and the damage it can cause. Last week, they looked at earthquakes, what causes them and what safety measure we can take.

W I think I saw one of the early shows in the series. It was about water; not oceans and rivers, but floods and tsunamis. That was really good too.

N **What was last week's documentary about?**

12

M Listen to this! Ronald Baker, who was found guilty of arson ...

W Isn't he the young man who admitted setting fire to the Youth Centre on Draper's Road? He should get at least five years.

M Yes, that's the one. Anyway, it says here that he was only given a two-year sentence because he had been 'very cooperative' with the police. Can you believe it?

W I think people like that who damage property on purpose should get longer sentences. I bet he'll be out of prison in six months for good behaviour too.

N **How long will the criminal go to prison for?**

13

W Did you hear about poor Tom? He was mugged on his way home last night!

M Yes, what a shock for him. He was lucky that he didn't get hurt.

W I know; it's one thing to have your wallet taken, but quite another to get hurt as well.

M At least they didn't take his watch or his mobile.

N **What did the mugger steal?**

14

W Good morning, Sir. Can I help you?

M Yes, I'm looking for a present for my wife. It's her birthday tomorrow ... I know I've left it very late, but I'm not sure what to buy her, to be honest.

W How about some perfume or perhaps a new scarf and some gloves?

M Yes, they're both good ideas, but what if she doesn't like what I choose?

W You could always get her a voucher for £100 and then she can choose something for herself.

M Yes, I think that's what I'll do.

N **What does the man decide to give his wife for her birthday?**

Before the talk, you will have time to read the questions. Listen to the talk about the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and choose the best answer from the answer choices (A, B, C and D).

Floating in the North Pacific Ocean is something no human being can be proud of: the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, otherwise known as the Eastern Garbage Patch or the Pacific Trash Vortex. Whichever name you choose to use, it's shocking.

The garbage patch is made up of rubbish that comes from coastal areas of both North America and Asia, as well as that from vessels that sail through the area. It's a result of ocean currents moving this waste to one location. These ocean currents move in a circular pattern and this movement of the water draws rubbish in towards the centre of the patch, where it becomes trapped and cannot escape.

While rubbish from North America takes five or six years to become part of the garbage patch, waste from Japan and other Asian countries takes closer to a year. Composed mainly of plastic, the garbage patch is estimated to be roughly twice the size of the American state of Texas – in other words: huge.

When people hear the words 'garbage patch', many of them mistakenly believe that it is a huge island of plastic rubbish floating on the surface of the ocean, able to be seen for miles around. This is not the case, however, because in water, plastic breaks down into smaller pieces, very often tiny pieces called microplastics.

Microplastics make up the largest part of the garbage patch and can't be seen by the naked eye. Once the plastic pieces become small enough, they can be eaten by sea creatures, which means they enter the food chain and may even end up on our plates! While larger pieces of plastic do float on the surface, other pieces sink to the middle or the bottom of the ocean. These larger pieces of plastic are also a threat to sea life. For example, sea turtles may mistake plastic bags for jellyfish and eat them, and the plastic rings used to hold four or six soft-drink cans together get stuck around the necks of many marine animals and birds, which kills them.

Interestingly, many climatologists, who study weather patterns and the climate, and other scientists who study the oceans and seas predicted back in 1988 the existence of something like the garbage patch. However, it was actually Charles Moore, an oceanographer, who discovered it in 1997 while he was sailing from Hawaii to California with his crew after competing in a yacht race. The environmental organisation that he had founded in 1994 then turned its attention to raising awareness of this serious environmental problem.

Number 1 **How do ocean currents affect the Great Pacific Garbage Patch?**

Number 2 **Why does the speaker mention Texas?**

Number 3 **What mistake do people often make?**

Number 4 **Why are microplastics a threat to humans?**

Number 5 **What was Charles Moore doing when**

B You will hear a short talk and some questions. Before the talk, you will have time to read the questions. Listen to the talk about crime fiction and choose the best answer from the answer choices (A, B, C and D).

Crime fiction of various kinds has been around for many years. The genre includes a number of different kinds of novels such as courtroom dramas, legal thrillers, and so on, all to do with crimes, the criminals who commit them, the reasons why, and the people who investigate and solve the crimes. Probably the most popular kind of crime fiction is the subject of my talk today: the detective novel, otherwise known as a *Whodunnit*.

A detective novel is the kind of story where someone, either an amateur investigator or a professional detective, investigates and solves a crime, often murder. The earliest known example of this kind of story is *The Three Apples*, which is one of the stories told in *One Thousand and One Nights (Arabian Nights)*. The dead body of a young girl is discovered inside a chest and the ruler, whom the chest belongs to, tells his advisor to find out who murdered her. Although this character was investigating the crime, the mystery is actually solved when the murderer himself admits his guilt, making it slightly different from your usual *Whodunnit*. Other early examples come from Chinese fiction where a judge is usually the detective in the novel.

Despite these early examples, critics think of Edgar Allen Poe's *The Murders in The Rue Morgue* as the first true detective novel in the English language. It was published in 1841 and featured the first fictional detective C. Auguste Dupin. Just over 45 years later, in 1887, the world's most famous detective was created by Arthur Conan Doyle. Yes, you've guessed it: Sherlock Holmes. Holmes, who appeared in four novels and fifty-six short stories, was able to solve even the most difficult cases.

Between the two world wars, detective fiction really came into its own. The British detective novel increased in popularity and a number of well-loved authors became known, the most famous being Agatha Christie. During this Golden Age of Detective Fiction a set of 'rules' relating to the detective novel became standardised and while some writers chose not to follow them, Christie's books met all the criteria. For example, the reader must care about the victim and the victim should die early on in the story, there must be plenty of clues and the reader should have access to all of them, and the criminal must play an important role in the story and so on. Agatha Christie's stories presented puzzles that readers had to solve at the same time as her detectives. The puzzles are solved by logical deduction and not by accident.

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| Number 1 | Which statement would the speaker agree with? |
| Number 2 | What makes <i>The Three Apples</i> unlike most detective novels? |
| Number 3 | Why is 1887 an important year in the history of detective fiction? |
| Number 4 | What is true of Agatha Christie? |
| Number 5 | What does the speaker mean when |

End-of-Year Listening Test

Part 1

You will hear people talking in six different situations. For questions 1-6, choose the best answer, A, B or C.

1 You hear two students talking about the college e-zine.

- W** Have you heard? We're going to have to stop publishing the college e-zine.
- M** Why? I thought it was successful. I really enjoy it.
- W** Yes, loads of people subscribe, but it's getting harder and harder to find people to contribute to it each month. No one seems to want to write anything for it. It just isn't working.
- M** That's such a shame. I know you were really enthusiastic about it.

2 You hear someone telling their neighbour about a recent holiday they have had.

- M** Anyway, you'll never guess who was staying in the same hotel as we were.
- W** Not the old classmate you met last year in China surely!
- M** No, Melanie and I had just come back from dinner when we saw Jim Banks.
- W** Not *the* Jim Banks, who writes those fantastic features for the Sunday papers.
- M** No, he was just there to interview Madeleine Rivers. You know, the woman who presents the new chat show on Channel 7. She'd just checked in.

3 You hear a careers advisor talking to a student.

- M** So, Sally. What career do you think you want to follow when you're older?
- W** Well, I've always been proud of my mum and for many years I wanted to be like her and go into teaching. Then that changed when I became quite interested in the law. There were so many programmes on TV about crime that, at one stage, I considered becoming a police officer or even a lawyer, but I've realised that I'm actually really good with numbers, so I expect I'll become an accountant like my dad.

4 You hear someone making an announcement.

- Good morning. Please accept our apologies for the delay in getting you all on board, but as you know, today's snow storm has caused chaos. Flight time is expected to be 2 hours and 50 minutes, so we should be landing at Heathrow at 10.20 am local time. Fortunately the weather in London is better than it is here. It's cold but sunny and a high of 7 degrees Celsius is expected later this afternoon. Please make sure your seat belts are fastened and your seat back is in the upright position. On behalf of Go Fly, we wish you a pleasant flight.

5 You hear someone talking about problems faced by the local community.

- The town just isn't the same any more. I remember when I moved here 40 years ago, it was smaller and there was community spirit, a feeling that you belonged. People were much friendlier than they are now. Perhaps we had more time back then, and of course we used to walk everywhere, which

the shortest journeys, which has led to a lot more cars on the roads. The town centre is a nightmare sometimes; you can't move! But what I think is worse is the number of young people that can't find a job. In my day, youngsters would leave school and then either study or start work, but nowadays, whether they have finished school or university, there just don't seem to be enough jobs available.

6 You hear a talk about the British Museum.

The British Museum in London is dedicated to human history and culture. Permanent exhibits, which today number approximately 8 million, come from all continents of the world. The museum, which was founded in June 1753, first opened its doors to visitors in January 1759. However, it wasn't until the early 19th century that the number of exhibits began to increase rapidly. By the latter part of that century, the original museum building was no longer large enough to house all the exhibits and so in the 1880s, the natural history collections were moved to a building in South Kensington, which later became the Natural History Museum.

Part 2

You will hear Penny talking about a recent trip she took with her family. For questions 1-8, complete the sentences with a word or short phrase.

Do you like travelling to unusual places? I do, and recently, I was lucky enough to go to Sri Lanka with my parents. We stayed there for about ten days and spent most of our time either sightseeing or relaxing on the wonderful beaches. A lot of the tours we went on were organised, but the one we all enjoyed most, although we went on our own, was the trip to Sigiriya. It was declared a World Heritage Site in 1982 and is the country's most popular attraction.

Sigiriya is famous for its palace ruins on top of a huge rock, which is surrounded by gardens, rivers and other smaller buildings. Translated into English, the monument's name is Lion Rock and in ancient times, visitors would enter through the open mouth of a lion. Unfortunately, all that is left of this huge lion now are its enormous paws carved into the rock. What surprised me was that the rock is actually made of lava from an ancient volcanic eruption.

As we weren't staying in Sigiriya and had to travel about 25 kilometres from Dambulla, we got up early in the morning and caught the local bus. We could have taken a tuk-tuk, which is a kind of taxi, but we decided not to. When we arrived, we walked up to the top of the rock, which meant climbing 1200 steps! The muscles in my legs by the time we got there really hurt! Still, it was worth it as the view from the top was spectacular!

We knew it would get hot there, so we wore sunscreen and sunhats, and some people staying at our hotel had told us to take water with us. Thank goodness they did because you can't buy water or other drinks once you're inside the main area.

Another piece of good advice is to visit the museum before you enter the main site. It's just outside the main entrance and nowhere near the tourist car park,

I'm glad we didn't stay there overnight. Those who do stay are advised to be back at their hotels by about 6.30 pm because of the wild elephants in the area. Apparently they can be very dangerous and there have been incidents involving these elephants where people have actually died! Fortunately we caught the last bus back to Dambulla at 6 pm and avoided any danger.

Part 3

You will hear five short extracts in which people are talking about the news. For questions 1-5, choose from the list (A-H) what each speaker says about it. Use the letters only once. There are three extra letters which you do not need to use.

Speaker One

Gosh, I haven't read a newspaper for years! I can't remember the last time I did. It was probably while I was still living at home. You see, my parents had and still have a daily newspaper delivered and two at the weekend. I much prefer to read books – the news is so miserable; all those stories of unemployment, natural disasters, crime rates rising and so on make me feel terrible. I travel to work by train every day, so I usually have a novel in my bag and, fortunately, I can escape the real world for a while.

Speaker Two

I've always kept up-to-date with the news. I read a newspaper every day, listen to the news while I'm driving and I watch the news and current affairs programmes on the television in the evening. I really can't live without it – it's my passion. When I was younger and would travel abroad on holiday, I had no access to the news. I used to feel quite odd, sort of cut off from the world really. Things are much better now, though. I have a subscription to an online newspaper and as long as my tablet is charged, I can keep up with what's going on quite easily wherever I am.

Speaker Three

I find it very disappointing that today's generation seems to be more interested in celebrities and their private lives than in important political and social events in the world. There's a huge number of gossip magazines on sale and e-zines online with so-called 'news' about who's seeing who and what famous people are wearing and where they've been. Do people really care about all this? I suppose they do, but it's sad that they don't show an interest in the real world around them. Times change I guess.

Speaker Four

I used to come downstairs in the morning and enjoy reading a newspaper over a leisurely breakfast before going back upstairs to my office and starting work for the day. That was before I stopped working at home and got a 'proper' job as my mother says. I now work in an office in town, so mornings are a bit of a rush for me. Get up, get dressed, get something to eat and get out of the house on time! I just don't have time for a newspaper anymore, so I tend to go online once I get to work and catch up on the headlines there. It's not the same of course, but what can I do?

Speaker Five

It makes sense, doesn't it? The news affects all of us in

to do with the country we live in. Just being able to join in a conversation about something in the news is important and then, of course, there are the sporting events, cutting-edge technology and even the weather. The news really is so varied there's bound to be something of interest for everyone.

Part 4

You will hear an interview about a phenomenon called information overload. For questions 1-6, choose the best answer, A, B or C.

Int On *Our World of Work* today is someone who is going to tell us about information overload. Clare Bennett, who is a research psychologist, became interested in information overload in 2005 and has been studying it since then. She has some interesting things to tell us. Welcome Clare.

Clare Thank you, Greg. It's nice to be here.

Int Clare, just to clarify, what exactly is information overload?

Clare Well, in simple terms, it refers to the difficulty someone can experience when they're trying to understand a situation and perhaps make a decision related to it because there is too much information available. Alvin Toffler first talked about 'Information Overload' back in 1970 in his book *Future Shock*. He claimed that the increasing amounts of information available to us would eventually create problems.

Int But we've had access to large amounts of information ever since the 1400s when the printing press was invented, haven't we?

Clare You're right, of course, but computers have allowed us to create, copy and send out information much more quickly than ever before. We also have access to huge amounts of information online via the Internet. It's becoming a common problem for people at work nowadays to get so many emails and reports, for example, that they cannot deal with them effectively. Modern technology moves faster and faster all the time, but the human brain that needs to process the information doesn't. That's when we get information overload. There is even an Information Overload Awareness Day, the first of which took place in August 2009, that

encourages organisations to find solutions to the problem.

Int
Clare

I see. Once it's present in an office situation, it spreads like wildfire. Let me explain. Imagine an employee is experiencing information overload and, therefore, is unable to understand and process any information effectively. Instead of summarising a report, for example, and selecting specific individuals to send it to, they may send the whole report to everyone in the office. The result is that now everyone else in the office must go through the whole report to find the main points, or the part of it that is relevant to their job. In a similar way, the fact that information *can* be passed on so easily and for free, means that people are likely to send information to everyone who *might* need to know, rather than just to those people who *definitely* need to know.

Int And so the pattern repeats itself.

Clare Exactly. It means that these people either delay making decisions or make bad decisions simply because they don't have the time necessary to process information properly.

Int That all sounds pretty depressing. Is there anything that can be done? Do you have any advice for listeners who may be experiencing information overload themselves, either at work or in fact in any area of their life?

Clare Well, it isn't something that can be solved easily. However, we can do a few things to reduce the effects of it. Firstly, and most importantly, we should focus on doing one thing at a time and avoid multi-tasking. Secondly, we can learn how to select information that we *need* to know while ignoring information that is simply *nice* to know. We should also remember to be clear when we are dealing with other people as well. A short report with quality information is much better than a long report that includes irrelevant information. Finally, it's not a bad thing to turn off your email when you are doing something important that requires your concentration. You can always get back to people later in the day.

Int Well, Clare, I think it's time to let our listeners ask you some questions. Our first caller is Janet from Birmingham ...