

# **E8 Listening Test Specifications Version 03**

Claudia Mewald, Otmar Gassner & Guenther Sigott

## **1. Purpose of the test**

The purpose of the listening test is to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in test takers' listening comprehension. This feedback is of interest to the test takers themselves, their parents, teachers and school principals.

## **2. Description of test takers**

The test takers are Austrian pupils in General Secondary School [*Allgemeinbildende Pflichtschule (APS)*] and Academic Secondary School [*Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule (AHS)*] towards the end of grade 8 (8. Schulstufe). Pupils from all three ability groups in APS will be tested. The majority of test takers will be aged 14.

## **3. Test level**

The difficulty level of the test is supposed to encompass levels A2 to B1 in the *Common European Framework of Reference*. However, in order to meet the needs of test takers from 3<sup>rd</sup> ability groups and those of test takers from higher ability groups (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> ability groups, academic secondary school), two forms of the test will be developed. These will contain a set of anchor items, which will enable direct comparisons to be made between learner performances based on the two different test forms.

## **4. Test construct**

Since the purpose of the test is diagnosis, detailed information on what individual items measure is required. The abilities to be measured are described in terms of the strategies listed in Table 4 (see p. 15). The listening input text material which is to be used to construct items is specified in Table 5 (see pp. 16-17).

# **Communicative Listening Strategies**

## **1. Direct Meaning Comprehension**

- 1.1 Listening for gist
- 1.2 Listening for main idea(s) or important information and distinguishing that from supporting detail or examples.  
This includes distinguishing fact from opinion when clearly marked.
- 1.3 Listening for specific information, including recall of important details.  
Understanding directions and instructions

## **2. Inferred Meaning Comprehension**

- 2.1 Making inferences and deductions based on information in the text.  
This can include deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context.
- 2.2 Determining a speaker's attitude or intention towards a listener or a topic
- 2.3 Relating utterances to their social and situational contexts
- 2.4 Recognising the communicative function of utterances

**Table 4: Listening Strategies, based on Weir 1993**

Discourse (Text) forms		Examples (Text types)	Übersetzung und Beispiele aus dem Standardsheft Version 05
Descriptive	- impressionistic descriptions	travel accounts, sports commentaries	Reiseberichte, Sportkommentare, Erzählungen aus dem Alltag
	- technical descriptions	presentation of a product	Einfache Texte über vertraute Themenbereiche (z.B. Präsentation eines vertrauten Gegenstandes)
Narrative	- short narrative texts	stories, jokes, anecdotes	Kurze, einfache Geschichten, Witze, Anekdoten
	- reports	news reports, features, documentaries	Nachrichten, Berichte, Features, Dokumentationen zu vertrauten Themen
Expository	- explications	broader accounts of (especially) abstract phenomena on familiar topics, e.g. simple lectures, talks	Einfache Sachtexte (zu vertrauten Themen)
	- outlines	programme listings on the radio, time-tables	Programme (z.B. TV), Pläne (Fahrpläne, Stundenpläne, Öffnungszeiten etc.),
	- summaries	oral account of the plot of a book	mündliche Zusammenfassungen von Texten
	- interpretations	describing a book, an article etc.	Rezensionen (Bücher, Artikel etc.)
Argumentative	- comments	by any individual(s) in any situation	einfache, persönliche Kommentare
	- informal argumentation		Telefonate, Gespräche zu vertrauten Themen, (Klein-) Gruppengespräch in der Klasse

Discourse (Text) forms		Examples (Text types)	Übersetzung und Beispiele aus dem Standardheft Version 05
Instructive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- personal instructions</li>   <li>- practical instructions</li> </ul>	<p>announcements, ads, routine commands</p> <p>recipes, technical instructions, exercise instructions, paging at an airport</p>	<p>Ankündigungen, Werbung, routinemäßige Anweisungen</p> <p>Einfache Rezepte, Anleitungen für Apparate und Vorgänge, mit denen man im Alltag zu tun hat, Aufrufe (z.B. Flughafen, Bahnhof), Wegbeschreibungen, Übungsanweisungen</p>
Literary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- fiction</li>   <li>- poetry</li> </ul>	<p>short stories, urban legends, simplified readers</p> <p>songs and poems</p>	<p>einfache literarische Texte, Hörspiele, Sketches (z.B. fiktionale Texte)</p> <p>Lieder und Gedichte</p>

**Table 5: Listening input text material.**Based on: The Dialang Partnership, *DIALANG Assessment Specifications for Listening*, 1999, p. 9.

## 5. Structure of the test

The test consists of two sections. Section 1 consists of 10 independent items each of which is based on short text input no longer than 100 words. Section 2 consists of two tasks based on text input between 200 to 500 words long. The total length of text input in Section 2 should not exceed 500 words. The total number of items in Section 2 is 10. All items will be weighted equally.

## 6. Time allocation

Total testing time available: 45 minutes

Time for administration at the beginning (handing out test booklets): 5 minutes

Time for administration at the end (collecting test booklets): 5 minutes

Working time: 35 minutes

## 7. Item formats

All items must be machine-scoreable and for answering them ticking the correct option must be sufficient. Responding to items must not require test takers to write individual letters, words or longer stretches of language by hand. The format for all items is four-option multiple choice with only one option correct.

## 8. Rubrics

All rubrics are in English. However, they must be formulated in language that is easily understandable for all test takers. Test takers must not be put at a disadvantage because they have difficulty understanding the rubrics.

### Rubric used for part 1 (short one-item tasks)

#### Part 1

In this part of the test you will hear ten short recordings. You will have to answer questions. **You must give your answers on the ANSWER SHEET. Put a tick ✓ (01-10) in the correct place on the ANSWER SHEET.** Before you hear each recording you have time to read the question.

You will hear the recordings twice.

**Read the first question now.**

### Rubric used for parts 2 and 3 (five-item tasks)

#### Part 2

In this part of the test you will hear a longer recording. There are five questions after the recording. **You must give your answers on the ANSWER SHEET. Put a tick ✓ (11-15) in the correct place on the ANSWER SHEET.**

Before you hear the recording you have time to read **questions 11 - 15 on pages 4 and 5.**

You will hear the recording twice.

**Read questions 11 – 15 now.**

## **9. Item exemplars**

The item prototypes listed below were written in the first phase of the project by different item writers in 2005 and 2006 and comply with the listening test specifications designed for the Austrian E8 Standards Project.

The following section exemplifies the strategies as they are listed in the test specifications on the basis of one five-item task and several one-item tasks.

## Item Exemplars

### Item Exemplars for Direct Meaning Comprehension

Input text – transcript for examples 1- 4:

#### Talking about a party

Tom: Well, you are going to have a party on Saturday afternoon, are you? I have heard that a lot of people won't be able to come.

Alan: Yes, it's a pity!

Tom: Have you asked Mary?

Alan: Yes, I have, but she cannot come either.

Tom: Oh, really! What is she doing on Saturday?

Alan: She's going to visit an uncle in hospital in Brighton.

Tom: Have you asked George to come?

Alan: Yes, I have but he's only coming after five.

Tom: Why so late?

Alan: He is playing in a football match.

Tom: You haven't forgotten Sue, have you?

Alan: No, I haven't, but she's somewhere in Spain.

Tom: Can I bring Richard?

Alan: Well. Who is Richard? What does he do?

Tom: He's a cousin of mine from Vienna. He teaches German at our school.

Alan: Okay. Then I'll ask my sister, Diana, to come.

Tom: Diana? I thought she is in Switzerland.

Alan: She was, but she got back yesterday.

Alan: And she could bring her friend Karin from Zurich, too.

Tom: Do you know her?

Alan: No, I don't, but I think Diana shared a flat with her in Zurich. The only problem is: Karin doesn't speak English.

Tom: Well, you haven't answered my question. Do you want my Austrian cousin Richard at the party, or not?

Alan: Yes, bring him along. Then Karin from Zurich will have someone to talk to in her own language.

## Strategy 1.1

### Listening for gist

*Example 1 (Input text - transcript see p. 20)*

**What is the dialogue about?**

- A Going to Spain
- B Planning a holiday in Vienna
- C A visit to Brighton
- D Planning a party

Solution: D

## Strategy 1.2

**Listening for main idea(s) or important information and distinguishing that from supporting detail or examples. This includes distinguishing fact from opinion when clearly marked.**

*Example 2 (Input text - transcript see p. 20)*

**What is the main reason why Tom and Alan are talking about the party?**

- A They want more friends to come to the party.
- B There are so many coming and they have problems with the room.
- C They would like to have only boys at the party.
- D They want to find a partner for the girl from Zurich.

Solution: A

### Strategy 1.3

**Listening for specific information, including recall of important details.  
Understanding directions and instructions.**

*Example 3 (Input text - transcript see p. 20)*

**What is Mary doing in Brighton on the day of the party?**

- A Watching a football match
- B Having German lessons
- C Meeting a friend
- D Visiting her uncle

Solution: D

## Item Exemplars for Inferred Meaning Comprehension

### Strategy 2.1

**Making inferences and deductions based on information in the text. This can include deducing meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context.**

*Example 4 (Input text - transcript see p. 20)*

**Why does Alan finally think it is a good idea to invite Tom's cousin Richard?**

- A Because Richard can tell them about Vienna
- B Because Richard speaks German
- C Because Diana from Zurich wants to learn German from Richard
- D Because they need more boys for the girls at the party

Solution: B

## Strategy 2.2

### Determining a speaker's attitude or intention towards a listener or a topic

*Example 5 (Input text - transcript)*

Woman: Well, I mean, I know almost everybody in Austria goes skiing in their winter holidays but I don't. True, it's the favourite sport of most Austrians but it is not cheap – think of all the equipment you need, and ski lift passes, and hotel costs and and and .... So there's no fun in skiing for me.

#### The woman thinks skiing is

- A everybody's favourite sport
- B dangerous
- C great fun
- D expensive

Solution: D

## Strategy 2.3

### Relating utterances to their social and situational contexts

*Example 6 (Input text – transcript)*

Mr. Lundgren: You see, I was coming out of the station and this young man just grabbed my camera and ran away!

Police-officer: Okay. Can you describe your camera?

Mr. Lundgren: Yes, it's a CANON A380, silver. In a black bag. It was expensive, you know!

Police-officer: I see. Well, can I have your name and address now, sir?

Mr. Lundgren: Yes, of course. My name is Sven Lundgren. I'm staying at the Radisson Hotel.

**Mr. Lundgren is talking to**

- A an assistant in a camera shop.
- B a friend at home.
- C a police officer at the police station.
- D a camera service technician.

Solution: C

**Strategy 2.4**

**Recognising the communicative function of utterances**

*Example 7 (Input text – transcript)*

- Student: Yes, please?
- Neighbour: Good evening, sorry to disturb you. I really like rock music, but this music is so loud that I can't work!
- Student: Oh, I'm really sorry. I didn't notice it was that loud.
- Neighbour: In fact, it is so loud that my furniture is vibrating and my dog is freaking out!
- Student: OK, I'll turn it down. Sorry again!

**Why does the neighbour talk to the student?**

- A to complain because she wants to sleep
- B to tell her that her dog likes the music
- C to say that she likes rock music
- D to complain about the noise

Solution: D

## Strategy 1.1

### Listening for gist

*Example 8 (Input text – transcript)*

Pat: Hi, Sandy. You look a bit depressed. What's the matter?

Sandy: Nothing special. It's just one thing after the other. Everything in my life seems to go wrong. Last week I poured some orange juice over my mobile by accident. I have only just got my bike fixed. And now the computer won't work at all. I've tried to fix it and my brother, who is good at computers, can't fix it either. I think I'll have to take it back to the shop and so I must wait for my mum or dad to take me there by car.

**What's Sandy's problem at the moment?**

- A the car
- B the computer
- C the mobile phone
- D the bike

**Solution: B**

Sound files of the input texts can be downloaded from:

<http://www.uni-klu.ac.at/ltc>

**Sample Answer Sheet**

# LISTENING

## PART 1

Tick ✓ the correct answer.

	A	B	C	D
01				
02				
03				
04				
05				
06				
07				
08				
09				
10				

## PART 2

Tick ✓ the correct answer.

	A	B	C	D
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				

## PART 3

Tick ✓ the correct answer.

	A	B	C	D
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

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## ***Appendix***

### **Communicative Functions**

to agree/accept	to express feelings/attitudes
to announce	to express preference/opinions
to apologize	to express pride
to ask for confirmation	to express understanding
to ask for advice	to get/reject attention
to ask for attention	to get/reject help
to ask for/offer help	to give information/directions/instructions
to ask for information	to give advice
to ask for something/directions/instructions	to give reasons/explanations
to ask for preference	to greet
to argue	to inform
to compare	to invite
to complain	to keep in touch
to compliment	to offer help
to convince	to persuade
to declare/inquire ownership	to question certainty
to declare/inquire position	to reject
to depart	to reply
to describe	to report
to disagree	to request action
to entertain/delight/please	to request to join
to establish/maintain personal connections	to state don't know
to express appreciation	to suggest
to express hope	to sympathize
to express interest	to tell/retell something
to express confusion	to thank