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Individual Component Checklist

for use with ONE task

ENGLISH VERSION



INTRODUCTION

This checklist has been designed for use as a practical tool for describing **ONE TASK** in a test of listening.

Some pages may need to be photocopied to accommodate further items.

General Notes

♦ Component

One subtest in an examination. Usually an examination is made up of subtests in the different skills, and components are commonly called by the names of skills. This checklist concerns the listening component of an examination. Components are also often referred to as 'papers'.

♦ Input

The material provided by the candidate for use in order to produce an appropriate response. In a test of listening it is likely to take the form of a recorded oral text plus written items.

♦ Item

Each testing point which is given a separate mark or marks. It may consist of, for example, one gap in a written text, or one multiple choice question with three or four options.

♦ Response

The candidate's written or spoken response to a task. The term 'answer' is often used in this context. However, for reasons of precision, it is not used here.

♦ Rubric

The instructions given to a candidate on how to respond to a particular input. In a test of listening with multiple choice questions, the rubric might be: *Put a tick in the box you think is the most suitable*.

Section

Parts of the component can be subdivided into. Each may be testing a different area of skill or usage.

Task

A task is defined precisely as a combination of rubric, input and response. For example, a reading text with several multiple choice items, all of which can be answered by referring to a single rubric, can be classified as a task. If another set of items relates to the same text, but requires a different rubric in order for a response to be produced, then that combination of text, rubric and items constitutes a different task. Thus the same text can for part of the same input for one or more tasks.

The term 'question' which is often used when referring to tasks, whether or not they are presented as grammatical questions, is avoided here because of its ambiguity.

Text

In the context of a listening component of an examination, a text is a piece of spoken language, used as input to a task, or the term could be used to refer to a piece of written language which the candidate is asked to produce.

Please note

Some of the questions in this checklist are to be answered with a couple of words or numbers, and some have boxes to tick 'yes' or 'no'. Others, which involve making some qualitative judgement, ask for an assessment on a scale of 1-4, where 1 represents the most negative judgement and 4 the most positive.

Instructions for Individual Questions

1. INPUT TEXT

5 Type of text

Texts for use in tests of listening are sometimes taken from sources such as public announcements and radio broadcasts, or recorded from scripts written specially for the examination. When authentic texts are used, they are often adapted. In this question box 1= an unadapted text, box 2= an adapted text and box 3= specially written for the test.

Many of the possible sources given here are taken from **Threshold level** 1990.

6 Speaker's overall intention

It is often the case that there may be several intentions associated with any text. However, an *overall* intention should be identified.

7 Target listening (to original)

It would, of course, be possible to break this list down much further, but for the purposes of this checklist it has been decided to give only these limited categories, with the possibility of specifying more accurately under category d).

8 Topic of text

The likely extent of the topic areas used in tests of listening is covered by the 'notions' in **Threshold Level 1990.**

2 LANGUAGE ABILITY TESTED

1 Main focus of testing

By this is meant the main focus of what is being tested in language terms, although it may also touch on other areas. It is also taken as understood that there is a great deal of ambiguity in this area.

Some of the categories used here need no explanation, but the following notes on some may be helpful.

a) Demonstrating understanding of text as a whole

This may be done, for example, by writing a summary of the main events or points discussed in the text.

b) Identifying topic of text

A fragment of conversation could be given, during which the topic is not directly referred to. The candidate then has to answer the question 'What are they talking about?'

c) Identifying function of text

An example would be part of a message left on an answer phone. The candidate then has to decide whether the speaker was telephoning to apologise, complain, ask for information or change an arrangement.

d) Retrieving

An example is a text taken from a recorded announcement of the forthcoming programme at a theatre. Items relate to times of performances, ticket prices, etc.

f) Following instructions and directions

An example is a text which gives a description of where a house is situated on a map. The candidate has to draw the house in the correct place on the map.

g) Identifying roles of speakers

An example would be checking the understanding of the degree of formality between speakers, as signalled by their way of addressing each other.

h) Recognising numbers, letters etc.

This is most likely to occur in a test of listening at a low level. A name is spelled out or a telephone number given., and the candidate has to write it correctly.

j) Making use of clues given by use of emphasis, tone of voice, stress and intonation

An example would be a fragment of conversation in which someone agrees to do something, using a reluctant or doubtful tone of voice. The candidate would need to use the understanding of the tone to answer a question on the speaker's attitude towards what he has agreed to do.

3 SPEAKERS

5 Number of spoken turns

A 'turn' refers to each period of speech by one speaker; for example a monologue may consist of only one turn, which a discussion may consist of many.

8 What relationship do the speakers have to one another?

It is more likely to be appropriate that more than one of these boxes will be ticked.

9 Are speakers reading a script, speaking with some preparation or speaking without preparation?

'With some preparation' would refer to a situation where speakers have rehearsed a conversation or are speaking with the aid of notes.

4 QUALITY OF RECORDING

3 Is background noise used to provide context for the recording?

This refers to the use of sounds such as bird-song to provide context for an outdoor scene, or sounds of conversation and office machinery for a workplace situation.

7 EXPECTED RESPONSE

11 To what extent are non-linguistic skills being tested?

This question attempts to gauge the extent to which skills other than language ability are required in order to provide a response. An example of this would be an item which demands some type of mathematical calculation in order to get the correct answer, or an item which involves the candidate reading a map or interpreting a plan or diagram.

12 To what extent is there an overlap with testing another area of linguistic skill?

This question attempts to gauge the extent to which one testing area of language skill involves the candidate's ability in another area of skill. It is difficult to separate skills completely from one another. For example, it is likely that any test of listening will also involve candidates in reading instructions and rubrics, and in writing responses, and tests of structural competence and reading will also involve candidates in writing.

8 MARKING

5 What type of marking is used?

These can be characterised as follows:

- a) **Examiner marking**: marking carried out by experts, who are often referred to as examiners. They are required to make use of their professional judgement in awarding marks.
- b) **Clerical marking**: marking carried out by non-experts, who have to deal with letters, numbers or words. They are generally required to exercise only very limited judgement, of a non-expert type.
- c) **Computerised marking**: marking carried out by a machine such as an optical mark reader. Multiple choice tests are often marked in this way.

The term 'marking' as it is used here refers to the process of assigning a mark to an item, not the way in which the mark is recorded or read. Computerised marking means a candidate's response goes directly to the computer for the mark to be assigned, and no human marker is involved.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

NAME OF EXAMINATION	
NAME OF COMPONENT	
NAME / NUMBER OF TASK	

1. INPUT TEXT

1	Length of text a) in words	a			
	b) in minutes	b			
2	How many times is the text heard?				
3	Do the candidates answer				
	a) while listening	a			
	b) after listening	b			
4	Is text				
7	a) specially scripted for the test	a			
		a b			
	b) unscripted	b			
5	Type of text				
	· ·		1 2	3	*
	a) public announcements	a			
	a) public announcementsb) recorded messages	a b			
	· •				
	b) recorded messages	b			
	b) recorded messagesc) weather forecasts	b c			
	b) recorded messagesc) weather forecastsd) traffic information	b c d			
	b) recorded messagesc) weather forecastsd) traffic informatione) tourist information	b c d e			
	b) recorded messages c) weather forecasts d) traffic information e) tourist information f) publicity texts	b c d e f			
	b) recorded messages c) weather forecasts d) traffic information e) tourist information f) publicity texts g) routine commands / instructions	b c d e f			
	b) recorded messages c) weather forecasts d) traffic information e) tourist information f) publicity texts g) routine commands / instructions h) radio reports	b c d e f g h			
	b) recorded messages c) weather forecasts d) traffic information e) tourist information f) publicity texts g) routine commands / instructions h) radio reports i) radio interviews	b c d e f g h			
	b) recorded messages c) weather forecasts d) traffic information e) tourist information f) publicity texts g) routine commands / instructions h) radio reports i) radio interviews j) vox pop	b c d e f g h i			
	b) recorded messages c) weather forecasts d) traffic information e) tourist information f) publicity texts g) routine commands / instructions h) radio reports i) radio interviews j) vox pop k) conversations	b c d e f g h i j k			
	b) recorded messages c) weather forecasts d) traffic information e) tourist information f) publicity texts g) routine commands / instructions h) radio reports i) radio interviews j) vox pop k) conversations l) unknown	b c d e f g h i j k			
* 1 =	b) recorded messages c) weather forecasts d) traffic information e) tourist information f) publicity texts g) routine commands / instructions h) radio reports i) radio interviews j) vox pop k) conversations l) unknown	b c d e f g h i j k	vritten		

6	Speaker's overall intention		
	a) to provide information	a	
	b) to obtain information	b	
	c) to explain	c	
	d) to describe	d	
	e) to narrate	e	
	f) to complain	f	
	g) to persuade / convince	g	
	h) to argue for / against	h	
	i) to instruct / teach	i	
	j) to report back	j	
	k) to express feelings	k	
	l) other (please specify)	1	
	m) unknown	m	
	n) indeterminate	n	
7	Target listener (to original)		
	a) general public	a	
	b) young learners	b	
	c) L2 learners	c	
	d) specialist group (please specify)	d	

8	Topic of text	
	a) personal identification	a
	b) house and home / environment	b
	c) daily life	c
	d) free time / entertainment	d
	e) travel	e
	f) relations with other people	f
	g) health and body care	g
	h) education	h
	i) science and scholarship	i
	j) current affairs	j
	k) shopping	k
	l) food and drink	1
	m) services	m
	n) places	n
	o) language	0
	p) weather	p
	q) other (please specify)	q
	4) cance (prouse specify	4
9	Is text	
	a) complete?	a
	b) extract from longer text?	b
10	What details of source text are given?	
10	That details of source test are given.	
	a) none	a
	b) type of text (e.g. radio programme)	b
	c) title, name of speaker	c
	d) date	d

2 LANGUAGE ABILITY TESTED

1	Main focus of testing		2		2 Item type used		
	a) demonstrating understanding of text as a whole	a			a) multiple choice (discrete)	a	
	b) identifying topic of text	b			b) multiple choice (text based)	b	
	c) identifying function of text	c			c) gap filling	c	
	d) retrieving factual information	d			d) matching	d	
	e) distinguishing fact from opinion	e			e) short answer (word / short phrase)	e 🗌	
	f) following instructions and directions	f			f) short answer $(1 - 3 \text{ sentences})$	f	
	g) recognising roles of speakers	g			g) sentence completion	g	
	h) recognising number / letters etc.	h			h) true / false	h	
	i) recognising and responding to social formulae	i			i) ordering	i	
	j) making use of clues given by use of emphasis, tone of voice, stress and intonation	j			j) other (please specify)	j	
	k) identifying speakers' attitudes						
	l) other (please specify)						

3 SPEAKERS

1	Number of speakers		
2	Type of interaction a) monologue b) interview c) conversation	a b c	
3	Register of interaction a) formal b) informal	a b	
4	What is the first language of the speakers?		
5	Number of spoken turns		
6	Average number of turns for each speaker		
7	Average speed of turn for each speaker		
8	What relationship do the speakers have to each other? a) intimate b) friends c) acquaintances d) strangers e) enemies or competitors f) same age g) different age h) same status i) different status		
9	Are the speakers a) reading a script b) speaking with some preparation c) speaking without preparation		

4 QUALITY OF RECORDING

1	Is the original recording free from distortion / interference?	Yes	No		
2	Is the tape used in the examination distortion / interference?	om	Yes	No	
3	Is background noise used to provid for the recording?	Yes	No		
4	How audible are the speakers?	1	2	3	4
5	How easy is it to identify which person is speaking	1	2	3	4

5 VIDEO

1	How essential is the video to understanding of the text?	1	2	3	4	
2	How essential is the video to the candidate's ability to answer the questions?	1	2	3	4	

6 TASK

1	How many items are there?					
2	How clear and unambiguous are the tasks?	1	2	3	4	
3	Is the language of the text at an appropriate level?	1	2	3	4	
4	Is the language of the rubric(s) at appropriate level?	1	2	3	4	
5	Is the language of the items at an appropriate level?	1	2	3	4	
6	How are items sequenced in relation to the text					
	a) as in textb) in a different order from the textc) apparently random			a b c		
7	Are the items a) written			a [
	b) recorded on the tape			b		
8	Are items read a) before b) after listening to the text			a b		

7 EXPECTED RESPONSE

	Item		Item	Item	Item	Item
1	What type of response is required? a) choice from a list b) one or two word answer c) longer answer	a b c	a b c	a b c	a b c	a b c
2	Is the type and length of response required indicated to the candidate?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	YesNo
3	How limited is the acceptable range of answers?	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
4	How often is it possible to respond correctly without reference to the text? a) always b) sometimes	a b	a b	a b	a b	a b
5	c) never To what extent is specialist knowledge assumed?	1 2 1 3 4 1	1 2 1 3 4 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	1 2 1 3 4 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	1 2 1 3 4 1	c

7 EXPECTED RESPONSE (cont'd)

	Item		Item	Item	Item	Item
1	What type of response is required? a) choice from a list b) one or two word answer c) longer answer	a b c	a b c	a b c	a b c	a b c
2	Is the type and length of response required indicated to the candidate?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	YesNo	Yes No
3	How limited is the acceptable range of answers?	1 2 3	1 2 2	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3
4	How often is it possible to respond correctly without reference to the text?					
	a) alwaysb) sometimesc) never	a b c	a b c	a b c	a b c	a b c
5	To what extent is specialist knowledge assumed?	1 2 3	1 2 4	1 2 3	1 2 4	1 2 4

7 EXPECTED RESPONSE (cont'd)

Task		Item	Item	Item	Item
6	To what extent is cultural knowledge assumed?	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 4	1 2 2
7	Is information required to answer a particular item? a) localised in only one area of the test b) in several areas of the text c) spread throughout the whole test	a b c	a b	a b	a
8	Are candidates referred to specific areas of the text?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
9	Do the words in the item repeat exactly the words in the text?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
10	Can items be answered by a) by taking words or phrases directly from the text b) modifying words in the text slightly c) rephrasing text to a major extent	a b c	a	a	a b c
11	To what extent are non-linguistic skills being tested?	1 2 3	1 2 4	1 2 3	1 2 3
12	To what extent is there an overlap with testing another area of linguistic skill?	1 2 3 4	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 4

7 EXPECTED RESPONSE (cont'd)

Task		Item	Item	Item	Item
6	To what extent is cultural knowledge assumed?	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 2	1 2 4
7	Is information required to answer a particular item? a) localised in only one area of the test b) in several areas of the text c) spread throughout the whole test	a b c	a b c	a b c	a b c
8	Are candidates referred to specific areas of the text?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
9	Do the words in the item repeat exactly the words in the text?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
10	Can items be answered by a) by taking words or phrases directly from the text b) modifying words in the text slightly c) rephrasing text to a major extent	a b c	a b c	a b c	a b c
11	To what extent are non-linguistic skills being tested?	1 2 3	1 2 4	1 2 3	1 2 2
12	To what extent is there an overlap with testing another area of linguistic skill?	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3	1 2 3

8 MARKING

Task		Item	Item	Item	Item	Item
1	How many marks are available?					
2	Is the number of marks available indicated to the candidate?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
3	What are the criteria for marking?					
	a) correct meaningb) correct choice of optionc) accurate reproduction of phrases numbers etc.d) accurate spellinge) other (please specify)	a	a	a	a b c d e	a
4	Are marking criteria indicated to the candidate?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
5	What type of marking is used? a) examiner marking b) clerical marking c) computerised marking	a b c	a b c	a b c	a b c	a b c

8 MARKING (cont'd)

Task		Item	Item	Item	Item	Item
1	How many marks are available?					
2	Is the number of marks available indicated to the candidate?	Yes No	YesNo	Yes	Yes No	Yes No
3	What are the criteria for marking?					
	a) correct meaningb) correct choice of optionc) accurate reproduction of phrases numbers etc.d) accurate spellinge) other (please specify)	a	a	a	a	a
4	Are marking criteria indicated to the candidate?	Yes No				
5	What type of marking is used? a) examiner marking b) clerical marking c) computerised marking	a b c	a b c	a b c	a b c	a b c