

LANGUAGECERT

Academic Test (Listening, Reading)

Audio Script

R: Listening Part One (2 seconds)

R: You will hear some short conversations. You will hear each conversation twice. Choose the correct answer to complete each conversation. (10 seconds)

R: Conversation One (2 seconds)

F: I found a great reading list for our Ancient History course.
M: Where? I looked on the university website and couldn't find one.
F: It's not in a very obvious place – I'll send you the link. (5 seconds)

R: Conversation One (2 seconds)

[REPEAT Conversation One] (5 seconds)

R: Conversation Two (2 seconds)

M: So, what's your college roommate like?
F: She's really nice - we get on great. The only thing is she's quite messy.
M: Oh dear – and you're the tidiest person I know. (5 seconds)

R: Conversation Two (2 seconds)

[REPEAT Conversation Two] (5 seconds)

R: Conversation Three (2 seconds)

M: So... for my field trip next week, it's Doctor Levy who's in charge.
F: Oh yes? It was him who did it last year with me. It was really good.
M: He certainly seems to know what he's talking about. (5 seconds)

R: Conversation Three (2 seconds)

[REPEAT Conversation Three] (5 seconds)

R: Conversation Four

(2 seconds)

F: You haven't got a spare lab coat, have you Jack?

M: I haven't, sorry. What's happened to yours?

F: I haven't a clue. I suspect someone picked it up by accident after the last lab session.

(5 seconds)

R: Conversation Four

(2 seconds)

[REPEAT Conversation Four]

(5 seconds)

R: Conversation Five

(2 seconds)

M: Did you manage to take a look at my graph? Does it make sense?

F: Yeah, it was pretty informative. I just wondered about the colours.

M: Do you think they need to be stronger?

(5 seconds)

R: Conversation Five

(2 seconds)

[REPEAT Conversation Five]

(5 seconds)

R: Conversation Six

(2 seconds)

F: I wonder if I can get an extension on my deadline for my project.

M: Are you not going to finish on time?

F: It doesn't look like it. I still have a third or so left to do.

(5 seconds)

R: Conversation Six

(2 seconds)

[REPEAT Conversation Six]

(5 seconds)

R: Conversation Seven

(2 seconds)

F: I'm suffering from information overload after that lecture.

M: Likewise. It's weird isn't it? Why does he do that?

F: All the other lecturers can present stuff in bite-sized chunks, but not him.

(5 seconds)

R: Conversation Seven

(2 seconds)

[REPEAT Conversation Seven]

(10 seconds)

R: That is the end of Part One.

R: Listening Part Two. (2 seconds)

R: You will hear five conversations. Listen to the conversations and answer the questions.
Choose the correct answer. You will hear each conversation twice. (2 seconds)

R: Conversation One (2 seconds)

R: You hear two business students talking about an opportunity to study abroad. (15 seconds)

F: I'm really looking forward to next year – especially the chance to study abroad.
M: You mean the international exchange programme? We're meant to apply this month, aren't we?
But I'm not sure I'm going to. I know everyone says you have a great time, but in terms of my studies I doubt it'll add anything of value.
F: Oh, I don't know. I think employers would be impressed by it.
M: Because it demonstrates confidence and that sort of thing... willingness to try new things?
F: I was thinking more of how approaches to doing business vary from country to country. Being sensitive to that sort of thing is so important, given how international business is these days.
M: That's a good point - and I guess networking comes into it too. We'd be bound to make friends, and no doubt keep in touch with them long after we've left.
F: True! And don't forget we'll be eligible for a grant, and that means we won't have to pay tuition fees.
M: *[laughs]* OK, OK, I'll give it a bit more thought!

(10 seconds)

[REPEAT Conversation One]

R: Conversation Two (2 seconds)

R: You hear two medical students talking about a course assignment. (15 seconds)

F: I can't understand why I didn't do better on our last assignment – you know, the patient leaflet on heart disease. I spent ages on it and I really thought I'd covered everything in masses of detail.
M: Perhaps that was the problem. Remember, most patients can't cope with medical terminology – it just confuses them. You've got to communicate the main points in simple language.
F: But surely a deeper understanding of their condition would help people manage it better? If it was me, I'd want all the information I could get.
M: Fair enough - and I'm sure you're not the only one. So perhaps for patients like that, the leaflet's not enough. In those cases doctors can direct them to additional sources of information – suitable websites and that sort of thing.
F: That makes sense. You know, I think I'm going to have another go. Would you have a look at it if I do? You seem to get the whole point of the exercise a lot better than I do!
M: No problem.

(10 seconds)

[REPEAT Conversation Two]

R: Conversation Three (2 seconds)

R: You hear a student telling a friend about her new accommodation. (15 seconds)

M: What's your new accommodation like?

F: Well, my housemates are great, we get on really well and, so far, I've got nothing to complain about in that respect. But I was the last to move in....

M: *[interrupts]* don't tell me..... all the other rooms had been taken and you ended up with the one nobody else wanted.

F: That sums it up – nobody's fault but mine of course! Anyway, I'm at the top of the house, so at least I don't have to put up with too much noise in the mornings – you know, people going in and out of the kitchen – that sort of thing. But it's pretty small and the ceiling's sloped...

M:right, not great for someone tall like you. Have you asked your housemates if any of them might like to change rooms?

F: Yeah, nobody does.

M: Too much to ask, isn't it? Well look, you just need to fill it up with lovely things and give it that cosy feeling. Then see how you feel next year and possibly move to a bigger place then.

M: Yeah, that's what I think too.

(10 seconds)

[REPEAT Conversation Three]

(2 seconds)

R: Conversation Four

(2 seconds)

R: You hear a sports-science student telling a friend about his next research project.

(15 seconds)

M: I'm going to do my research project on yoga - the psychological benefits. There's been quite a few studies recently that suggest it can have a profound impact on mental health and I really want to look into it further.

F: Doesn't all sport help with depression and low mood though? Isn't it just about being more active and releasing all those feel-good hormones?

M: That's part of it, but yoga involves learning to connect your movements and your breath in a very conscious way. It might be that people are integrating that into their non-sporting activities and interactions as a way of dealing with stress – that's the bit I'm going to explore.

F: So how will you collect your data? I guess an online questionnaire would be easiest.

M: It would. But it's inflexible and the results might lack depth. Ideally, I'd interview all my participants personally, as that way I'd be able to really explore their experiences and responses.

F: That sounds time-consuming to me. And I think the data analysis stage would be very tricky.

M: Yeah. And from what I've read, there's a lot more to conducting proper research interviews than you might imagine. I doubt I'm up to it, to be honest.

(10 seconds)

[REPEAT Conversation Four]

(2 seconds)

R: Conversation Five

(2 seconds)

R: You hear a university teacher talking to a student about her research.

(15 seconds)

M: So, what's happening with your research proposal, Anne-Marie?

F: I don't feel I'm getting anywhere I'm afraid – and I can't put my finger on what's holding me up. I mean, I've narrowed the topic area down to inner-city renewal, but coming up with an idea for my research question feels some way off.

M: Well, look, you're moving in the right direction. I'd say your next step is to conduct the literature review – go ahead and read the relevant studies that have been published on your topic and outline the key findings. What you're on the lookout for is a gap in the current research. That'll lead you to the focus of your project.

F: Ah! I thought I had to have the question in place before starting the review. This makes perfect sense though. Oh, and while you're here professor – I've got no idea how to set out a literature review. Have you got any tips?

M: There are no rules on how to set it out – let the topic and your findings guide you, that's the best approach. But what's crucial is that you avoid the temptation to simply summarise each study you look at. Be critical – assess it for bias and look for flaws in the study methods. That's what I'll be looking for.

F: I understand. Thanks.

(10 seconds)

[REPEAT Conversation Five]

(2 seconds.)

R: That is the end of Part Two.

R: Listening Part Three. (2 seconds)

R: You will hear a student giving a presentation about an archaeological excavation at an Ancient Roman villa. (2 seconds)

R: Complete the information on the notepad. Write short answers of one to three words. You will hear the person twice. (30 seconds)

[beep]

M: In my presentation today I'm going to talk about an excavation project at the site of a large Ancient Roman villa built during the second century CE. Together with a number of other archaeology students, I was lucky enough to be involved in this dig last September. This villa, which is near Folkestone on the south coast of England, was first excavated back in the nineteen twenties, and at that time had been turned into a tourist attraction. However, by 1957 the site had deteriorated and so the villa was re-buried by the local town council who lacked the money to maintain it. Since 2010, the Canterbury Archaeological Trust has been re-excavating the site and recording what remains.

The villa was built on the top of a cliff overlooking the sea, the English Channel to be precise, so the original Roman owners would've enjoyed fine views from their home. However, the clay cliffs are not stable and continuing coastal erosion means that this important site is in danger of slowly falling into the sea over the course of the next one-hundred years. Human intervention is unlikely to be able to prevent this from happening and, in fact, several rooms have already been lost since they were first excavated.

The villa complex as a whole had more than fifty rooms including areas for food preparation, bedrooms and servants' quarters. And, unusually even for a villa of these proportions, not one but two entire bathing suites, each consisting of several rooms. However, our aim in September was to focus on re-exposing a mosaic floor in the villa's dining area.

This floor, made from tiny cubes of cut tile and coloured stones set into a mortar bedding, was first uncovered in 1924. Such mosaics readily degrade when left outdoors, exposed to the elements, so at that time the Council erected a shelter over it to keep it safe from the weather. A visitor centre was also built nearby. Unfortunately, both were destroyed in the Second World War, and by 1957, when the mosaic was re-buried, it was in a rather sorry state. But our excavations showed that a significant amount of the mosaic still remains. It would seem that at some point, post-war repairs were carried out and these helped stabilise what was left of the Roman design.

The southern half of the mosaic is the best preserved overall, which we knew before beginning work. But what was wonderful to see was that far more of the central design is left intact than we had dared hope.

For most of us archaeology students there, this was the first time that we'd been on a dig- and it was very exciting. Between us, we unearthed numerous finds including animal bone, shells, roof tiles and painted walls. This latter find was important, as it helped confirm that the owner of the house was a high-status individual.

The mosaic will be reburied again at the end of the year, pending discussions on whether it should be lifted and moved to a museum for permanent preservation and display to the general public. In the meantime, organised visits will be arranged to give local school groups a chance to see the remains before the site is backfilled.

Work will continue elsewhere on the site. Underneath the Roman villa, traces of earlier buildings relating to the late Iron Age have been discovered. In many ways, these pre-Roman remains are of even more importance than the villa – but these early structures are much harder to identify, and

were missed by the excavators of the nineteen-twenties. Having mostly been made of timber rather than the more durable stone, plaster and brick of later years, most have long since decayed.

(10 seconds)

[REPEAT Part 3]

(10 seconds.)

R: That is the end of Part Three.

R: Listening Part Four.

(2 seconds)

R: You will hear part of a podcast discussion about how the findings of scientific research are reported in the media.

(2 seconds)

R: You will hear the discussion twice. Choose the correct answers. You have one minute to read through the questions below.

(1 minute)

[beep]

Pres: On the podcast today, we're examining the issue of how the findings of scientific research get reported in the media, namely the problem of exaggeration and hype – what are the causes and what can be done about it? With me are Dr Peter Summer, a psychologist with a special interest in the representation of science in the media, and Dr Marion Grayson, professor of science communication at Redbridge University.

M/F: Hello /Hi [overlapping]

Pres: Peter, let's start with the role of the university press officer. They put out a press release when scientists at the university publish a study with the hope that journalists pick this up and write a story on it. Would you say that there's an intrinsic motivation for press officers to overstate study findings?

M: It's inevitable there'll be some exaggerations because there's pressure to get publicity for the institution. That's their job after all! But having said that, there's also a very strong, competing desire to present the institution as trustworthy. Ultimately for the university it's more important to keep that stamp of authority than for any individual science story to get splashed across the press.

Pres: So which elements of a press release are most critical to get right?

M: The first few lines – the bit that's there to hook the reader. Some press officers assume that, as long as they explain the study's findings accurately in the body of the press release, it doesn't matter if the first few lines are simplistic. I would strongly disagree with that. We know from psychology that what you read first affects how you interpret the rest. That's why getting it right matters.

Pres: Marion, do you agree?

F: Absolutely. I've recently been looking at the use of buzzwords in press releases and there's been a big rise recently. The kind of words I'm talking about are 'ground-breaking', 'world first' and 'landmark study' – you get the idea. What the public doesn't understand is that most scientific results don't qualify as 'ground-breaking'. A single study will almost never revolutionise an entire scientific discipline. What counts is the broader body of knowledge to which that single publication adds, and what we can learn from that addition to further build on it. We need the complete picture, and that's not something press releases deliver.

Pres: So are press officers ultimately to blame for overhyped science stories getting into the press?

F: Scientists, press officers and journalists are all involved and often shift the blame onto each other. Of course, press officers are responsible for misinformation in press releases, but at the same time journalists are responsible if inaccuracies get to the public via their articles. Crucially though, if the press office publishes hyped-up press releases, then it's the job of the scientist to notice this and protest.

Pres: Peter, what do you think?

M: The thing is, if it all goes wrong, it's the scientist who'll be held accountable, not the press officer-, so scientists have to keep an eye on what's being said about their work. At the same time, universities need to make sure they train press officers to do their job properly in the first place so that they're consistently releasing correct information.

Pres: And what about the role of journalists, Marion?

F: You know, very few newspapers have dedicated science journalists these days – most science news is written by general journalists who don't have a science background. So they take university press releases at face value, something they'd never do with press releases from a company or political party. Any hype then feeds into the articles that journalists write, and then you have the risk of the public being misinformed.

Pres: So, what are the solutions? Peter let me ask you first.

M: Well, one would be the journalistic 'quote code.' This mandates that whenever a journalist writes about a study, they have to call an independent expert, ask for an assessment of the research and then quote them in the final article.

F: And in the meantime, until that's taken up widely, science media centres can bridge the gap. These exist in a number of countries and act as intermediaries between scientists and journalists. They collect independent comments on new studies for the benefit of journalists. My intuition tells me that their approach really works, but as a science-communication researcher, I'm itching to investigate and quantify the difference they make. But anyway, yes, the upshot is that journalists should always quote an independent expert to show readers that they've done their job properly.

(5 seconds)

[beep]

[REPEAT Part Four]

(10 seconds.)

R: That is the end of Part Four.