

Prepare for exam success: B1 Preliminary for Schools self-access learning

## Listening

**Exam Tip: Listen to a variety of audio and video recordings in English**

In the B1 Preliminary for Schools Listening paper you could hear:

- conversations at home or between friends (*Parts 1, 2*)
  - radio announcements (*Parts 1, 3*)
  - parts of talks (*Part 3*)
  - exchanges in shops (*Part 1*)
  - talks or radio programmes (*Part 3*)
  - interviews with questions from a radio presenter (*Part 4*)
  - recorded messages (*Parts 1, 3*).<sup>1</sup>

You can hear these types of listening situations in English language TV shows, films, podcasts and on websites such as Ted Ed, Ted Talks and BBC Online. Some useful links are given in the 'Ideas for Further Study' section at the end of this lesson.

Try to make time in your day to listen to something you are interested in, or enjoy for at least ten minutes each day.

Keep a notebook beside you to write down new vocabulary you think is useful.

## Summary

- Build your vocabulary.
  - Develop and practise your listening skills.
  - Learn how to create your own listening practice tasks.
  - Reflect on your progress and make an action plan.

## Getting started

Write the answers to these questions in your notebook.

1. Which apps do you think are the most popular with young people in your country?
  2. Which apps are most popular with your friends?
  3. Which apps do you use?
  4. Which apps do your parents use?
  5. Why do you think these apps are so popular?<sup>2</sup>



app

**app**  
*noun [C]*

UK /æp/ US

**abbreviation for application or application program: a small computer program that you can put onto a mobile phone or other electronic device;**

- There are apps for everything, from learning French to booking cinema tickets.

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<sup>1</sup> B1 Preliminary for Schools Handbook 2020

<sup>2</sup> Photo by William Hook on Unsplash

### Top tip: Try to guess the topic

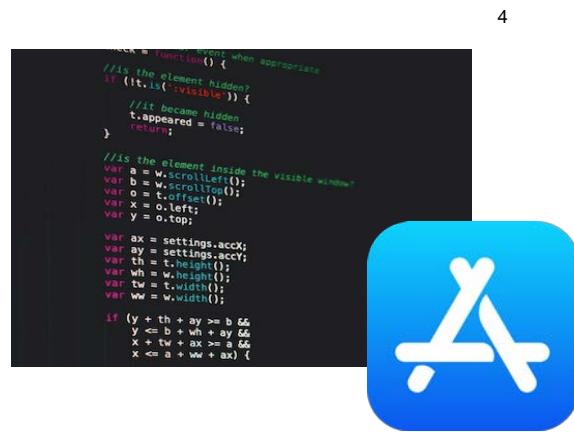
Take a few seconds to think about what you might hear before you listen. You can do this by looking at any pictures or descriptions that go with the video or audio recording. In the B1 Preliminary for Schools exam, read the questions first to help you get an idea of the topic. This helps you understand a recording more easily.

### Prepare 1: Predict the topic

In this lesson you are going to listen to a talk given by a 12-year-old boy called Thomas Suarez.



3



4



5

Look at all the pictures and try to guess what the talk is about. Write 3 possible titles in your notebook:

Title 1:

Title 2:

Title 3:

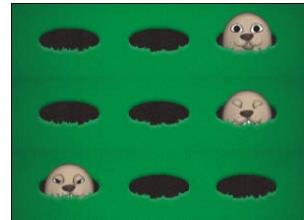
<sup>3</sup> Suarez T. (2011). TEDx Manhattan Beach. **A twelve-year-old app developer**. Licensed under CC by 4.0

<sup>4</sup> Photo by Markus Spiske on Unsplash / This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA

<sup>5</sup> Photo by William Hook on Unsplash

### Prepare 2: Useful vocabulary

Task 1: Before you listen to the recording, look at the list of key words from the talk below. Match as many words as you can to their meanings. The first one has been done for you.<sup>6</sup>



1. whack-a-mole	a) an amount of money paid for a piece of work or service <sup>7</sup>
2. a fortune teller	b) a computer game where players try to hit a cartoon animal before it disappears down a hole
3. to programme	c) to tell a computer to operate in a particular way <sup>8</sup>
4. a software development kit	d) something that can be used to help you <sup>9</sup>
5. a fee	e) a person who tells you what they think will happen to you in the future <sup>10</sup>
6. an inspiration	f) a package to help you write instructions to control what a computer does
7. a resource	g) someone or something that gives you ideas for doing something <sup>11</sup>

Check your answers in the Answer Key

#### Top Tip! Use a dictionary to find out more than the meaning of new words.

Listen and repeat the pronunciation.

Note the syllables and stress:

• • • •

inspiration

**inspiration**

*noun*

UK /ˌɪn.spiˈreɪʃn/ US /ˌɪn.speˈreɪʃn/

inspiration noun (IDEAS)

B2 [C or U]

someone or something that gives you ideas for doing something:

- The golden autumn light provided the inspiration **for** the painting.

Write down the part of speech. We can see that this word can be countable or uncountable (C or U). Words that end with 'tion' often have a verb form too. See Task 2 below.

+≡

Example sentences show how the word is used in a sentence. For example, which preposition to use with a word.

<sup>6</sup> This photo by Unknown Author is licensed under **CC BY-SA**

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus © Cambridge University Press

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary © Cambridge University Press

<sup>10</sup> Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus © Cambridge University Press

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

### Top Tip! Recording vocabulary in your notebook

You can use new vocabulary from your listening practice in the speaking and writing parts of the exam too, so it is important to include enough information when you record new words in your notebook. Try making a table like this for each word that could be useful in your speaking or writing:

inspiration	
<b>Meaning</b>	Definition: someone or something that gives you ideas for doing something <sup>12</sup>
<b>Form</b>	 Stress: inspiration. Noun – countable and uncountable
<b>Use</b>	Common combinations with other words: give inspiration <u>for</u> something My sentences: 1. 2. 3.

Task 2: Look up the word ‘*inspiration*’ in the **Cambridge Dictionary** online. Note down more information about it in a table like the one above:

1. What is the verb form of this word?
2. Listen to the pronunciation of the noun and verb forms and repeat. Record yourself and compare your pronunciation with the dictionary.
3. Look at the different example sentences given and make a note of other prepositions or verb forms that can come after the noun or verb.
4. Who is your inspiration? What inspires you?
  - a. Write one sentence using the noun form.
  - b. Write one sentence using the verb form.



Take a short break if you need one.

<sup>12</sup> Adapted from the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus © Cambridge University Press

## Listening 1 - Check your predictions about the topic in the listening

Click **here** to open the TED Talk. Now listen and see if your ideas about the listening and the titles you wrote in Prepare 1 are correct.

You can also read a summary of the talk by clicking on the 'Details' tab under the video.

Details  
About the talk

**Exam tip: Get to know the different question types in the B1 Preliminary for Schools Listening paper**

In the B1 Preliminary for Schools Listening paper the question types are multiple-choice and gap-fill.

In the exam you have time to look at the questions before you listen. You should underline key words and think about possible answers. The recording is played twice in the exam.

## Listening 2 - Listen for detail

**Do you need extra help? Is the listening too difficult or too fast to understand?**

Check out these icons



- You can listen with **sub-titles** so you can listen and read.
- You can **slow down** the listening, so that Thomas speaks more slowly.
- Scroll down the page and you can listen and read the transcript

Task 1: Before you listen again, look at questions 1 to 4. Underline the key words in the questions and answers. Think about what you need to listen for. The first one has been done for you.

1. Thomas Suarez created his app “Bustin Bieber” because:

- Justin Bieber is very popular at his school.
- Justin Bieber paid him to make the app.
- Justin Bieber is not very popular at his school.

2. Thomas says that most children’s parents:

- could write apps.
- have never written an app.
- play the violin.

3. Thomas started an app club at school:

- a) to make money from designing apps.
- b) to teach others how to design apps.
- c) because his teacher told him to.

4. In the future, Thomas would like to:

- a) make more apps and games and continue to share his knowledge.
- b) start his own company.
- c) become a teacher.

### **Top tip! Don't worry if you don't understand everything the first time.**

Your target in the exam is to answer the questions by listening twice without subtitles and at normal speed.

### **But this takes practice!**

When you first start to practise you can listen as many times as you need to. After you try to answer the questions, listen while you read the subtitles or transcript to help you understand any answers you missed. Use the ideas in the Get Ready to Reflect section below to help you.

Write down your results in your notebook like this so you can see your progress:

- Title of listening:
- Date:
- Percentage of correct answers:
- Number of times I listened:

Task 2: Listen and write the best answer (a, b or c) to the questions in Task 1 in your notebook.

Task 3: Look at questions 5 to 8. These are gap-fill questions. Read and underline the key words in the questions.

- a. Which questions do you answer with a number?
- b. Which questions do you answer with one or two words?

The first one has been completed for you.

5. He released his game “Bustin Jieber” in                 .  Maybe a year or a place???
6. Thomas had to ask his parents for the \_\_\_\_\_ dollar fee to put his app on the App store.
7. Steve Jobs inspired him to start an \_\_\_\_\_ at school.
8. Thomas thinks that students know a little bit more about \_\_\_\_\_ than their teachers do.

Task 4: Listen again, without the subtitles or transcript this time. Write the missing word/s or numbers in questions 5 to 8 in your notebook.

When you have answered as many questions as you can, check the Answer Key.



Take a short break if you need one.

## Your ideas

Write the answers to these questions in your notebook.

1. Would you like to try one of Thomas's apps? Why/why not?
2. Imagine you can make apps. Look at the list below. What kind of app would you make?
  - a. a game
  - b. a social media app (like WhatsApp or Instagram)
  - c. an app for work or study
3. Write a short description of your app in your notebook. Think about:
  - a. what the app can do
  - b. who the app is useful for
  - c. the colours, design and layout of your app (draw some pictures to go with your ideas)

## Get ready to reflect: Common problems and solutions

In order to *improve* your listening skills, it is important to understand why you missed a correct answer.

1. Watch the video again but this time turn on the English subtitles or read the Transcript in English (the link is under the video).
2. As you read and listen, pause the recording to write down any examples of:
  - a. new vocabulary
  - b. words or sentences you didn't understand because of the speaker's pronunciation
3. Think about your incorrect answers. Look at the list of common problems learners have with listening shown in **Table 1** below. Which of these problems did you have?
4. Now look at the possible solutions to these problems in **Table 2**. There are two solutions to each problem. Match the solutions to the problems and write them in the Possible Solutions column in Table 1 (or in your notebook).
5. Check your answers in the Answer Key. Can you think of any other solutions to these problems?

**Table 1**

Problem	Possible Solutions
1. I missed the answer because I feel stressed when I try to listen and it is difficult to focus.	
2. There is a word I don't know in the question or answer.	
3. I know the word, but I didn't understand the speaker's pronunciation.	

**Table 2**

a) Take regular breaks.	b) Write sentences about yourself with the new words to help you remember them	c) Listen and repeat the pronunciation of the word using the <b>Cambridge Dictionary</b> .
d) Write down the stress pattern  e.g.  inspiration	e) Do lots of listening practice including listening for fun e.g. watching a film or YouTube clip.	f) Look up new words in the <b>Cambridge Dictionary</b> and record them in your notebook

## Action Plan

You are going to create an Action Plan for further study based on your answers in the previous section and using the ideas in the Ideas for Further Study box below.

1. Copy this table in your notebook.

I need to work on...	I will...	By [date]
Example:  Building my confidence when I listen.	I will watch a film in English that I have already seen in my own language. I will try to follow the story without subtitles.	By the end of this week.

2. Now look at the list of study ideas below and **choose at least 2** that would help you improve your listening skills and vocabulary. Add them to your Action Plan.

### Ideas for Further Study

- Ted talks** and **TedEd** – these websites have videos of presentations and talks. The videos have transcripts and subtitles. TedEd includes multiple-choice questions about the talk.
- Podcasts for native speakers can be quite difficult to understand so try some for English

## English Qualifications

language learners first:

- BBC – **The English we Speak**
- **British Council Learn English podcast**
- BBC – **Learning English Drama** – stories in simple English

- **VOA Learning English** for American English – news videos and more with transcripts and subtitles
- Practise listening to different dialogues with this **activity**
- Try these activities to help you with similar but different sounds in English:
  - **Do you hear the difference?**
  - **Long and short i**
- Try listening for fun too – watch YouTube clips or a TV show in English. Use the subtitles in your own language first then when you are more familiar with the story, change to English subtitles, then no subtitles.

**Top tip! Work with a study partner and create your own listening practice questions to test each other.**

- Choose an audio or video recording that you think your partner will find interesting (see the list of suggestions in the Ideas for Further Study box or use your own ideas).
- A recording with a transcript or subtitles makes it easier to write the questions.
- Choose a question type and look at the examples below to help you make your own questions.
  - For multiple-choice questions:

Thomas Suarez created his app “Bustin Bieber” because:

- a) Justin Bieber is very popular at his school.
- b) Justin Bieber paid him to make the app.
- c) Justin Bieber is not very popular at his school.

Include at least two answers that are quite similar.

- For gap-fill questions:

Find numbers and dates in the text to help you make simple gap-fill questions.

Thomas had to ask his parents for the 99 dollar fee to put his app on the App store.

- Don't forget to make an Answer Key for your partner, so they can check their answers.

### Answer Key

#### Prepare 2 Task 1

1. whack-a-mole	a) an amount of money paid for a piece of work or service <sup>13</sup>
2. a fortune teller	b) a computer game where players try to hit a cartoon animal before it disappears down a hole
3. to programme	c) to tell a computer to operate in a particular way <sup>14</sup>
4. a software development kit	d) something that can be used to help you <sup>15</sup>
5. a fee	e) a person who tells you what they think will happen to you in the future <sup>16</sup>
6. an inspiration	f) a package to help you write instructions to control what a computer does
7. a resource	g) someone or something that gives you ideas for doing something <sup>17</sup>

#### Listening 2 Task 1

- 1. c
- 2. b
- 3. b
- 4. a

#### Listening 2 Task 2

- 5. 2010
- 6. 99
- 7. app club
- 8. technology

#### Get ready to reflect: Common problems and solutions

Problem	Possible Solutions
1. I missed the answer because I feel stressed when I try to listen and it is difficult to focus.	a) and e)
2. There is a word I don't know in the question or answer.	b) and f)
3. I know the word, but I didn't understand the speaker's pronunciation.	c) and d)

<sup>13</sup> Adapted from the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus © Cambridge University Press

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary © Cambridge University Press

<sup>16</sup> Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus © Cambridge University Press

<sup>17</sup> Ibid