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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In English as a second Language
Paper 02R Listening

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Background to the paper

This was the first January examination for the new specification. The listening paper is now composed of 4 sections of increasing complexity and challenge.

Part 1 both sections A and B cover AO3(a), understanding the overall message of a spoken text. Part 1 Section A consisted of 5 short extracts detailing subjects students studied. Section B was a short extract loosely linked to the previous section in which there was a short talk given about school holidays. The section consisted of a multiple choice exercise in section A and a question and answer exercise in Section B

Part 2 covers AO3(b), identifying essential and finer points and AO3(d), identifying a speaker's viewpoint or attitude, whether stated or implied. This part consisted of a talk given by a journalist about fruit and vegetables sold in supermarkets. This part consisted of a cloze exercise and multiple choice questions.

Part 3 covers AO3(c), understanding a conversation where information is being negotiated and exchanged and AO3(d), where a speaker's viewpoint and attitude is identified, stated or implied. In this part candidates listened to a discussion by a school council on school uniform. The responses consisted of questions and answers and a set of multiple choice questions.

Part 4 covered AO3(b), identifying essential and finer points and AO3(d) identifying a speaker's viewpoint and attitude. In this part candidates listened to an extract from a radio programme about the popularity of Nordic Walking. The responses in this section were of the cloze kind.

Candidates' responses

Although the cohort was small there were clear indications of how the candidates responded in general.

Generally, candidates responded fairly well to all sections of the paper. Each section presented challenges for all candidates across the ability range. Most candidates appeared to have attempted all parts of the unit.

Detailed comments

There were three types of responses on this paper: multiple choice, text completion with limited word count and short answers. All three types were attempted, although candidates did not always adhere to the word limit given in the rubric. In a number of instances, especially in the cluster of Q21 -Q25 candidates did not write their answer in the correct space provided and so their response was marked as incorrect.

Text completion and short response questions

A number of issues arose out of the questions which required candidates to provide their own word or words for the answers themselves. Candidates sometimes lost marks by not adhering to the word limit where relevant. Marks were also lost when a correct response was crossed out and an incorrect one substituted.

Spelling and word substitution

Where spelling was concerned, the general rule applied during the marking was that if the answer affected communication, candidates were not awarded a mark. Candidates were not penalised for misspelling a word if it sounded like the target word and candidates suggested by their response that they had understood the text. This applied to all parts of the paper.

Also, some substitutes were accepted. In Q23 which discussed the new style of uniform, the suggested response was: *(the new) uniform was not scruffy or childish*. A number of candidates wrote: *The old (uniform) was childish*. This was accepted. However, candidates who just wrote: *childish or scruffy* were penalised as this did not answer the question about the new uniform, but the old one.

Comments on sections of the paper

The paper had been devised with increasing complexity and challenge with each part being attempted by most of the candidates.

Part 1 (A) and Part (B)

In this section candidates were asked to listen to 5 short passages of people describing subjects studied and respond to a set of multiple choice style questions. The majority of candidates appeared to have answered Part 1 (A) successfully. In part B there was a number of questions, especially Q01, which required more careful listening and not jumping to conclusions.

Part 2

This section, in which a journalist talked about fruit and vegetables sold in supermarkets, required candidates to complete sentences in a cloze exercise about the text they heard, which, as well as answer two multiple choice questions. Generally, candidates performed quite well and many appeared to adhere to the three word limit. However, there were questions, like Q11 in particular which required more careful listening.

Part 3

In this section, which consisted of a school council having a discussion about school uniform, candidates were required to answer questions by providing the correct word or words to show they understood the text. The second part to this section was a set of multiple choice responses. There was no word limit to Q21 -25 and many candidates replied in full sentences, whilst others with just one or two words. Writing full sentences, however short, does show that the candidate has understood the text. A wrongly spelled single word does not always indicate that the text has been understood. Q23 and Q24, in particular, proved to be challenging as they required more careful listening.

Part 4

In this section, which was an extract from a radio programme about the sport Nordic Walking and its health benefits, candidates were required to complete sentences about the text they heard by providing the relevant word or words. Most of the candidates who attempted this part replied within the three word limit. The cluster of Q33 – Q37 and Q40 proved to be challenging as these questions required more careful listening.

Advice to centres

It is recommended that candidates listen to a wide range of different types of texts such as current affairs, TV and radio programmes and podcasts in order to familiarise themselves with a wide range of topics.

Centres should prepare candidates for the listening examination by familiarising them with the style of the paper and with the types of questions they can expect to find on this unit.

Candidates should make good use of the time before the tape is being played to predict possible answers and consider the context when providing their answers.

Candidates should be advised to follow the instructions in the rubric when answering the questions and to strictly adhere to the word limit where necessary.

Candidates should also consider the grammar and punctuation in the cloze responses as these give a clue to the correct word.