GENERAL ENGLISH 3 – HANDOUT - SESSION 18

VSTEP LISTENING PART 2: SHORT CONVERSATIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

Vstep listening part 2 consists of 3 conversations. Each conversation is about 2-3 minutes long and there will be 4 questions for each conversation. Each question has 4 options.
The conversations in part 2 will have clear topic and longer than short conversations in Part 1. VSTEP learners and test-takers may find it difficult to answer the questions in this part due to a large amount of information and long questions. You are also very likely to get confused with the voices and the conversation going on, which may become troubles for you to catch up well, when you try to relate the audio with the question. The conversation may consist of up to 3 people discussing one topic. **Most topics in this part are not academic, so you're not expecting academic lectures or conversations.**

II. SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

Part 2 Listening checks various skills: Listening for main ideas, Listening for specific information in longer conversations and Listening for Inference.

1. General steps:

It's suggested that you follow some steps to do this part better:

Step 1: Read the questions first and identify what TYPE of question it is. (the types of question are below). (*Take the time the instruction being read aloud to do this).*
Step 2: Underline the **key words** in the questions.
Make **good guess** and try to see the **general picture** of the conversation rather than specific words.
Step 3: Stay focused and answer all questions as you hear, especially the DETAIL questions. **Don't leave any question unanswered.**

Notes:

- Remember: the questions check your understanding of the RECORDING, not your knowledge, so DON'T answer questions based on what you KNOW, answer them by what you HEAR.
- If there are new words, try to make a good prediction of the meaning in the context you're dealing with.
- The answer options can be confusing, they may contain similar ideas and words. Don't get confused between ideas. You need to choose the MOST suitable answer.
- Mark you answer on the answer sheet carefully using PENCIL only.

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2. Common Types of questions:

a. Main idea questions:

Examples:

- *What are the speakers discussing?*
- *What is the topic of the conversation?*
- *What is the conversation mainly about?*

This kind of question may appear at the beginning or the end of the conversation that you hear. There will be at about 1 MAIN IDEA question for each conversation. Main idea questions assess the understanding of the overall topic or basic idea of a lecture. The test taker is supposed to understand the speaker's general purpose of having a conversation and should listen for keywords that are emphasized or repeated.

Exam tip: Grasp the general ideas, reading the questions first may help you connect ideas and predict what the conversation is about. (but try to make educated guess, not lucky guess!)

b. Detail questions: Who – What – Where – When – Why – How (much/ many)

Examples:

- *How has the man mainly learnt English?*
- *Why did the woman travel to Spain?*
- *Why do young people learn languages more quickly?*

This is the most popular type of question. There will be about 2-3 detail questions for each conversation. The order of the question will follow what you hear in the recording.

Although this kind of question refer to specific facts and number that you hear in the recording, it may contain a lot of **tricks** to mislead you into listening for incorrect words or information. To answer well, you may need to:

- stay focused on what is being asked.
- take notes of major points and important details of conversation to solve detail questions.
- listen for signal expressions that identify details, such as **for example, the reason is, on the other hand, however, I would say, etc.**
- choose what speakers actually say because the detail questions do not require inference.
- Since answers to questions are found in order in the passage, you're suggested to take notes in order of what you hear.
- Test-taker has to be cautious enough about the incorrect choices which may repeat within some of the speaker's words, but they are unable to reflect correct information from the lecture or conversation.

Exam tips:

- ***Don't** look for the **exact words** in the recording and the questions. Look for **paraphrases** and **synonyms**.*

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c. Inference questions:

Examples:

- What do the speakers mean by mentioning "more rights"? -> Inference
- What is the man/woman most likely do to save the environment? -> Prediction

➔ There will be about 1-2 questions of this kind.

- Inference questions assess the ability to guess the implied meaning or to draw a conclusion based on the main points of a lecture or conversation.
- Inference questions include words, e.g. **infer, imply or suggest**.
- One needs to give attention to the **tone, stress, and intonation of the audio clips** and speakers to guess the meaning in a proper way.
- Read the questions carefully and make sure you understand the words correctly.
- Try to match the words in the questions with what is spoken. Remember to look for synonyms and paraphrases instead of correct words.

III. SKILL PRACTICE

1. Underline the key words in the questions
2. What types of question is it?
3. Follow the suggested steps in **(I)** and do the following tasks:

PRACTICE 1: You will hear a radio interview with Jack Williams, who is talking about a town called Swanton

9. Where is the town of Swanton located?

A. near the sea B. By a lake
C. on a hill D. Near a mountain

10. What does Jack like most about the town?

A. there are opportunities for climbing nearby
B. There is plenty of activity in the town
C. there is interesting wildlife near the town
D. There are friendly and helpful neighbours

11. What does Jack say about entertainment in Swanton?

A. a music festival takes place in the town
B. its football club has done well this year
C. an arts center has recently opened.
D. a theatre is going to hold a musical concert next month.

12. Why is Jack worried about the enviroment of Swanton?

A. the water in the river is dirty
B. there are few wild birds around today
C. pollution has destroyed the plants in one area
D. there is too much gabbage.

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PRACTICE 2:

Listen to the conversation between a student and a professor

13. What is the topic of the conversation?

A. how much the professor enjoys student participation
B. how to highlight key passages from the text book
C. how to get in touch with the teaching assisstant
D. how the student can improve his grade

14. What is one suggestion the professor makes to the student?

A. get plenty of sleep and eat a good breakfast for the exam
B. ask the teaching assisstant for old exams to practice
C. memorize Piaget's stages of development
D. study long and hard for the exam

15. What is the professor's favorite part of his job?

A. referring students to his teaching assisstant
B. teaching students about interesting things
C. having students participate in class
D. helping students get better grades

16. Why is one thing the student did to study for this exam?

A. visited the professor during office hours to ask questions
B. formed a study group to go over lecture notes
C. memorized Piaget's stages of development
D. took a practice test with the TA.

IV. EXAM PRACTICE

PART 2-Questions 9 -20

In this part you will hear THREE conversations. The conversations will not be repeated. There are four questions for each conversation. For each question, choose the right answer A, B, C or D. …

Question from 9 to 12: Listen to the conversation between 2 STUDENTS

9. What is the conversation mainly about?

A. Grades for a recent assignment

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B. Job prospects for students doing their course
C. The advantages and disadvantages of going to college
D. The quality of the teaching on their course

10. Why is the woman concerned?

A. She feels she is not learning anything useful.
B. She has been receiving poor grades.
C. She is not enjoying her course.
D. She is finding the course very difficult.

11. What does the man appreciate most about studying at university?

A. Meeting people with diverse interests
B. Getting involved in discussions
C. Studying a subject in depth
D. Teaching others about what he has learnt

12. The man says that employers will appreciate the woman's __

A. transferable skills
B. ability to train others
C. enthusiasm
D. knowledge of history

Questions 13 – 16: Listen to Li, Paul and Kitty discussing a project.

13. How long does the report have to be?

A. 1000 words
B. 1000 – 1500 words
C. 1500 words
D. 1500 – 2000 words

14. What of the following will the team do as a group?

A. Write the report
B. Do the presentation
C. Talk to the professor
D. Carry out the questionnaire

15. Which of the following aspects of university life will NOT be investigated by any of the group?

A. The library
B. Sport centre
C. Transport
D. The dormitory

16. What can be inferred about cycling at the university?

A. More students cycle than use the bus
B. Bicycles are often stolen from the bikes sheds
C. There is not enough shelters for bikes at the university
D. Students have to pay for the bikes sheds

Question 17 – 20: Listen to Amir asking for advice at the library

17. Which of the following has Amir done already?

A. Used the library search engine
B. Reserved some books
C. Used the e-journals
D. Been on a library induction tour

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18. On how many days per week are library inductions currently available?

A. 7 days per week

B. 5 days per week

C. 2 days per week

D. 1 day per week

19. What can Amir do on level two?

A. use the computers

B. sign up for a library tour

C. find the electrical engineering books

D. Meet Mark Taylor

20. What time foes the librarian recommend that Amir returns to meet the subject librarian?

A. at around 12.15

B. at around 12.30

C. at around 1.00

D. at around 2.00

V. **Further practice** : http://tienganhdodo.com/category/b1-vstep-listening-part-2/

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