

Answer-Trap Checklist

Catch the small details that can turn a correct idea into a lost mark.

In Listening, many mistakes happen **after you have understood the audio**. Use this checklist to protect the answer you already earned.

Six traps to check

1. WORD LIMIT Follow the instruction exactly: ONE WORD ONLY, NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS, etc. <i>Writing extra words can make an answer wrong.</i>	2. SINGULAR / PLURAL Listen for endings such as -s and check what the sentence needs. <i>chair and chairs are different answers.</i>
3. SPELLING A correct word with incorrect spelling can lose the mark. <i>Pay extra attention to names, places and unfamiliar words.</i>	4. NUMBERS & DATES Watch for corrections, similar sounds and changed information. <i>thirteen / thirty, 15 / 50, Tuesday / Thursday.</i>
5. DISTRACTORS Speakers often mention one option, then correct or replace it. <i>The first answer you hear may not be the final answer.</i>	6. GRAMMAR FIT Use the words around the gap to predict the answer type. <i>Article, preposition, verb form or plural clues can help.</i>

Use the checklist at three moments

BEFORE	DURING	AFTER
Predict the answer type from the question and surrounding words. <i>noun? number? place? singular or plural?</i>	Keep listening when the speaker hesitates, corrects or changes direction. <i>especially after but, actually, rather, no, sorry</i>	Check spelling, grammar fit and the instruction word limit. <i>Do not add words that are not needed.</i>

Worked examples

The fee is £___ per month.	"It used to be thirty, but it's thirty-five now."	35
Bring a pair of ___ .	"You'll need gloves because the room is cold."	gloves
Meet at the ___ entrance.	"Not the side entrance - use the main entrance."	main

Exam habit: always follow the exact instruction printed above the question. A correct idea can still be marked wrong if the answer breaks the word limit.

Run the final answer check

Use this page after a practice section until the habit becomes automatic.

The 20-second final check

☐	Have I followed the word limit exactly?
☐	Does the answer fit grammatically in the sentence?
☐	Should the answer be singular or plural?
☐	Is every word spelled correctly?
☐	Did the speaker correct or change the first information I heard?
☐	Have I copied numbers, dates and times accurately?
☐	Have I added any unnecessary word that could make the answer wrong?

Mini practice: spot the trap

ONE WORD ONLY The course starts in ____.	"We first planned October, but we've moved it to November."	November
NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS Students should meet at ____.	"Please meet at the bus station, not the train station."	bus station
ONE WORD ONLY The room has 40 ____.	"There are forty chairs in the main room."	chairs
ONE WORD AND/OR A NUMBER Meet at ____.	"Let's meet at 6.30 outside reception."	6.30

What should you predict before the audio starts?

The meeting is on ____.	day / date
The hotel has a large ____.	singular noun
The journey takes ____ minutes.	number
The office is beside the ____.	noun / place

Reflect

☐ Which trap costs me marks most often?	☐ Do I keep listening after I hear a possible answer?
☐ Do I use grammar to predict the answer form?	☐ Do I leave time to check spelling and word limits?

Build the habit: after every practice test, label each mistake: understanding, distractor, spelling, grammar, number or word limit. Patterns become easier to fix when you can see them.