

Listening Strategy 4

Expect to hear natural speech

You will be listening to natural speech in the listening passages on the iBT. Professors and students will interrupt themselves, hesitate, repeat, and say *uh* or *um*, *well* or *you know* to give themselves time to think. All of this is very different from the clear speech that you have probably heard on traditional English tests. In order to succeed on the Listening section, you need to have experience listening to natural speech.

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Red Tides

... so when you see that red color in marine coastal areas, uh, when you see that, you could be seeing the red tide that we have been talking about. But remember, the more correct term is harmful algal bloom or HAB because, uh, the occurrence, of the red tide, I mean, it really doesn't have anything to do with the tides, and of course, not all algal blooms cause that red discoloration of the water. Some are green or brown.

Okay then, we know that typically, HABs occur when algae—single-celled organisms such as, for example, uh, phytoplankton—when they reproduce rapidly. In low concentrations, these organisms are harmless, but in higher concentrations, well, uh ... the toxins that they release ... these toxins ... paralyze the...the central nervous systems of fish in the area and consequently, the fish die and wash up on the shore.

But what causes the increase in the algae in the first place? Well, HABs are ... HABs often result from an increase in nutrients that algae need, especially nitrates and phosphates. And these chemicals—the nitrates and phosphates—we need to think about how they get into the coastal areas. So let's discuss three ways that it might happen. First, let's consider, uh, runoff from farming operations. Pesticides, irrigation water, fertilizer—all of these can, uh, they cause an imbalance in the nitrate and phosphate levels, and they get dumped into the water from agricultural areas. Then there is water pollution from manufacturing which ... I'm not saying that it always contains nitrates and phosphates, but it can. For example, when soaps and detergents are disposed of in the water system, they contain high levels of phosphates. But sometimes natural events such as a ... an increase in water temperature can also affect the concentration of algae because it grows faster in a warm environment. Also changes in the salt content of the water or even a prolonged period of very calm seas can, uh, can cause an HAB cycle to begin ...

EXAMPLES OF NATURAL SPEECH

Interrupts himself

Restarts the sentence

Hesitates

Uses verbal thought pauses—*uh* and *um*

Repeats phrases

Practice 4

Listen to the lecture and take notes. Do not allow your mind to focus on the hesitations and verbal thought pauses. Compare your notes with the example notes in the Answer Key on pages 321–322.



Track 5

Notes

Basic Strategy: Internet iBT Listening

★★Bonus: iBT Speaking, Writing

Learning to listen to natural speech will be helpful not only on the iBT in the sections of the test that include listening passages, but also in the real world when you are having a conversation. The Listening section on the Institutional ITP sounds more like a presentation than a natural lecture or conversation.

Listening Strategy 5

Differentiate between the main idea of a lecture and classroom business

You will usually hear the main idea of a lecture in the narrator's introduction or in the first few sentences, but sometimes the professor will conduct classroom business before beginning the main topic. Examples of classroom business include information about exams, tests, and quizzes, changes in the class schedule, references to the syllabus, classroom policies, and clarification of assignments. You may be asked details about classroom business, but even though you hear this introductory information first, the main idea follows. Transition words and phrases that often signal the introduction of the main idea are listed below.

Signal Words: Classroom Business

Before we begin, let me remind you . . .

Sorry that I don't have the exams graded . . .

Good job on the quizzes . . .

Let's take a look at the syllabus . . .

Let me remind you that . . .

Transition Words: Lecture

Okay . . .

Okay then . . .

So . . .

Now . . .

Good . . .

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

Attitude and the Immune System

There seems to be some confusion about my attendance policy, so before we begin today, I want to refer you to the syllabus where I have it spelled out. It's on page 2, and uh, as you can see, you have one excused absence without explanation, but if you must miss class again, then you need to get in touch with me, and I have to know what the problem is so that we can work it out. If you miss three classes, and uh, that's for whatever reason, then . . . then your grade will be lowered by one letter. Okay then, I hope that clarifies any misunderstanding. Now, let's turn our attention to the immune system, and specifically, to the relationship between attitude and a healthy immune system. Uh, it has been generally recognized for a long time that a positive attitude contributes to general well being, and stress causes at least a subjective feeling of ill health, but those previous studies, they have compared optimists with pessimists with generalities that were interesting, but didn't really answer the question of how the immune system responds in a single person. So, I am talking about immunity in the cell structure, and that is something quite different.

New studies published in reputable journals like *Psychological Science* suggest that when optimism increases in a subject, the immune system also improves; conversely, when a subject begins to engage in pessimistic thoughts and feelings, the immune system responds. And it's important to mention here that the immune system is now recognized as being closely integrated with the nervous system and other bodily functions. To put that a different way, the immune system is very important to many other systems in the body, and for optimal health, the immune system must be functioning at optimal levels.

With modern methods, we can actually track the cellular efficiency of the immune system, we can . . . we can compare the rise and fall of optimism in a subject, and confirm the fact that a positive attitude at any one time in an individual can significantly affect the functioning of that person's immune system . . .

Practice 5

First, listen for the signal words and identify the topic of the classroom business. Then, listen for the transition words and identify the topic of this lecture. What is the main idea? Check your answers in the Answer Key on pages 322–323.



Track 6

Notes

Signal words: _____

Topic for classroom business: _____

Transition words: _____

Topic for this lecture: _____

Listening Strategy 6

Distinguish between the main idea of a lecture and a review

Professors typically begin a lecture or discussion by introducing the main idea, but sometimes they will refer to the topic of the previous lecture before introducing the topic of the current lecture. Occasionally, the lecturer will also present a brief review of the previous lecture in order to provide background for new information. Be sure to listen carefully to hear the references to the times for each topic. Be careful not to confuse the main idea of the previous lecture with the main idea of the current lecture. Some typical phrases that signal times for topics include those listed below.

Signal Words: Previous Lecture

As you will recall . . .

You will remember that . . .

In the last class . . .

In the previous lecture . . .

We were discussing . . .

Transition Words: Current Lecture

Today we are going to . . .

Today we will discuss . . .

Now let's turn our attention to . . .

Today's lecture will . . .

With that in mind, let's talk about . . .

EXAMPLE SCRIPT

The Trickster as a Universal Character

As you will recall from last week's lecture, the oral tradition is found in all cultures in spite of the relatively recent reliance on written traditions by literate societies. To review a little bit, oral traditions are important to the archiving of historical records and the education of the younger generations as well as to the preservation of religious practices. We talked about the fact that oral traditions often require that the persons relating the information repeat it without altering the record. Of course, variations may occur, but the oral account may be corrected or criticized in the same way that a written account is subject to, uh, review and criticism. I think I also mentioned that some of the stories or other information can be related only at certain times, within specific contexts by elders or members of society who are considered worthy of being entrusted with special knowledge, and occasionally, a gift is expected for a story to be told or . . . or a religious ceremony to be performed.

Okay. That brings us to today's topic. Although it's true that stories are specific to the cultures that they represent, a relatively small number of themes and characters figure in the oral traditions of . . . well, virtually all world cultures. An example of a universal character that comes to mind, uh, that I want to talk about. . . . The example is the trickster, and I want to spend some time discussing it because the trickster is such an iconic character . . . a comic character who breaks the rules of society, often by playing practical jokes or by petty theft. So the role of the trickster is to play tricks and engage in games or mischief that's usually viewed as humorous rather than malicious. Coyote and Raven are obvious examples of tricksters that appear in the oral traditions of Native American tribes in North America. The classical Greek and Roman myths include tricksters like Prometheus who steals fire from the gods. And, uh, how about the Monkey King in Chinese traditions? I think he also qualifies as a trickster. So, we see that many examples of tricksters are found around the world . . .

Practice 6

First, listen for the signal words and identify the topic of the previous lecture. Then, listen for the transition words and identify the topic of this lecture. What is the main idea? Check your answers in the Answer Key on page 323.



Track 7

Notes

Signal words: _____

Topic for previous lecture: _____

Transition words: _____

Topic for this lecture: _____

Basic Strategy: Internet iBT Listening and Institutional ITP Listening