

Basic Comprehension Questions

Basic comprehension questions test your basic understanding of the overall ideas or important details expressed in the passage. Basic comprehension of the listening passage is tested in two ways: with Main Idea and Detail questions.

PART

A

Part A +



Main Idea

Detail

Part B

Function

Attitude

Part C

Organization

Connecting Content

Inference



Main Idea

+ Introduction

- Main Idea questions ask you about the overall topic or main idea of a lecture or conversation.
- The main idea of the passage may be directly stated, or it may be implied.
- For conversations, you may be asked about the purpose of the conversation. (e.g. to talk about a problem, to ask for help, etc.)
- There is usually 1 Main idea question for each passage, and it will be always the first question.

+ Recognizing the Questions

Lecture	Conversation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the lecture mainly about? • What is the main topic of the lecture? • What aspect of X does the professor mainly discuss? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does the student visit the professor? • What problem does the man have? • What are the speakers mainly discussing?

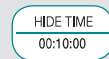
+ Strategies

- 1 Listen carefully to the beginning of the lecture or conversation. The main idea is often found there.
- 2 Pay attention to words and ideas that are frequently repeated or paraphrased. They probably have something to do with the main idea.
- 3 Do not choose any answer that is either too broad or too specific. The correct main idea must cover all the key points.

+ Sample Question

MP3 001

TOEFL Listening



What is the talk mainly about?

- (A) Bad ideas
- (B) Group leaders
- (C) Peer pressure
- (D) Real friends

Script

It is normal for friends to chat and do things together. But sometimes, they can also do bad things, like smoking or stealing things. Although they do not enjoy it, friends in the group force them, not physically but mentally. This is called peer pressure.

Most peer pressure starts with a bad idea from the leader. There is always a leader in groups. If they get a bad idea, then everyone follows. The rest of the group finds it hard to reject the idea. As more and more of the members do it, the rest of the group follows. Everyone knows it is bad, but they do not want to feel left out of the group.

It is not smart to give into peer pressure. Friends don't have to listen to and follow one person, if they are doing something bad. Real friends understand each other, and stop other friends from doing bad things.

Answer & Explanation

The answer is (C). The teacher starts the lecture by explaining what peer pressure is. Then she talks about how peer pressure occurs, and ends the lecture by giving her opinion on peer pressure.



Building Skills

Listening for Keywords

- You don't have to listen to everything. Instead, listen for **keywords** – they will help you understand the general idea of the passage.
- Keywords are mostly **content words** – nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs.
- Keywords are repeated by the speaker(s), or paraphrased with different words that have the same meaning.



Listen carefully and answer the questions.

1. Choose 3 keywords from the lecture, and summarize the main idea in one sentence.  002

ride	public transportation	choose	buses	taxis
popular	subway trains	carry	travel	reason

Keywords : _____, _____, _____

Main Idea : _____

2. Choose the 2 most important keywords from the conversation.  003

English	class	games	funny
jokes	lucky	terrible	teachers

Keywords : _____, _____



9

- 

1. Listen to the beginning of a lecture, and fill in the blank. 004

2. Listen to the beginning of a lecture, and guess what the lecture will be mainly about. 005

1. Main Idea 13



Basic Drills



Listen and choose the correct answer for each question.  006-008



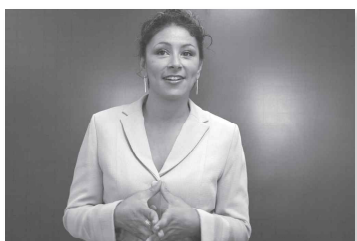
1. What is the conversation mainly about?

- (A) Tomorrow's weather
- (B) Playing football in the rain
- (C) Lucky football teams
- (D) A football match



2. What is the teacher talking about?

- (A) How cavemen hunted
- (B) What food cavemen ate
- (C) The weapons of cavemen
- (D) Distracting big animals



3. What is the talk mainly about?

- (A) Musical instruments
- (B) Yellow paper
- (C) Sheep and goats
- (D) Parchment

+++++



Listen and choose the correct answer for each question.  009-011



4. Why does the man talk to the woman?

- (A) To make her look for Jack
- (B) To ask her to help him move
- (C) To ask if she knows where Jack is
- (D) To break the promise with her



5. What is the talk mainly about?

- (A) The inventions of man
- (B) Types of wheels
- (C) The early days of man
- (D) The importance of wheels



6. Why does the woman talk to the man?

- (A) To ask him if he likes pizza
- (B) To ask him about dinner
- (C) To tell the man about Italian food
- (D) To get the man to buy dinner



 Listen and choose the correct answer for each question.  012-014



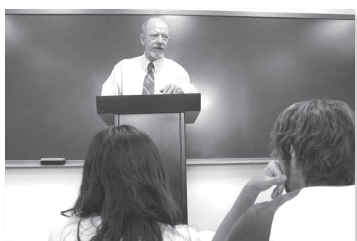
7. What is the talk mainly about?

- (A) Exercising for health
(B) Eating healthy foods
(C) Becoming healthy
(D) Caring for our body



8. Why does the woman talk to the man?

- (A) To ask him to look for Mr. Adams
(B) To tell him what subjects she has chosen
(C) To ask if he has chosen all his subjects
(D) To get a booklet from the man

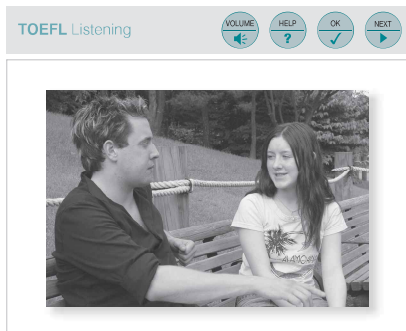


9. What is the speaker mainly talking about?

- (A) The instinct of carnivorous animals
(B) The foods of carnivorous animals
(C) The homes of wild animals
(D) The safety of feeding carnivorous animals

Listening Practice ¹

 Listen and choose the correct answer for each question.  015



- 1** What is the man's problem?
 - (A) His neighbor is too quiet.
 - (B) He wants the woman to move upstairs.
 - (C) His neighbor is too loud at night.
 - (D) He wants to become a resident assistant.

- 2** What is the role of resident assistants?
 - (A) They clean up the dorm rooms.
 - (B) They make sure everyone is comfortable in the dorm.
 - (C) They help students in the dorm with their studies.
 - (D) They turn up the music in the rooms.

- 3** What will the man probably do?
 - (A) He will apply for an RA position.
 - (B) He will talk to the RA.
 - (C) He will tell the man to be quiet.
 - (D) He will not sleep in his room.



Dictation



Listen again and fill in the blanks.  015

W: You look very tired. _____ ?

M: No, I only slept for three hours last night.

W: What did you do?

M: Well, it's _____ upstairs. He turns up his music _____ every night. I know it's a school dorm, but it's still too loud. It's like he has a party every night.

W: Oh, did you tell him _____ ?
He _____ after midnight. That's part of the dorm rules.

M: Yes, I told him to be quiet, but he _____ . He says that he will be quiet, but he _____ the music 10 minutes later.

W: I think you should talk to the RAs. They will _____ .

M: What is an RA?

W: An RA is a resident assistant. RAs are actually students, too. They _____ in the dorm. They have to make sure that everyone is _____ .



M: Oh, why didn't I know about this RA? I will talk to the RA when I go back to my room tonight. I really need _____ .

W: Don't worry. I'm sure the RA will _____ .

Vocabulary

- ☐ **dorm** (dormitory) a building at a college or university where students live ☐ **resident** someone who lives in a particular place
☐ **assistant** someone who helps someone else in their work

Listening Practice 2

 Listen and choose the correct answer for each question.  016



1 What is the talk mainly about?

- (A) Supermarkets in Germany
- (B) Barcodes in microchip scanners
- (C) Technology in supermarkets
- (D) Scanners in cashier counters



2 What is RFID?

- (A) It is the name of the bars on the codes.
- (B) It is a new technology overtaking barcodes.
- (C) It is the name of a supermarket in Germany.
- (D) It is the way barcode scanners read microchips.

3 According to the lecture, how do barcodes work?

- (A) The cashiers type barcodes into the computer.
- (B) The RFID detects the barcodes.
- (C) The barcode displays the total price.
- (D) The barcode is scanned into the computer.



Dictation



Listen again and fill in the blanks.  016

Many people visit supermarkets. Supermarkets have so many things that it is hard _____ everything. This is why supermarkets use a lot of _____. They use technology to make shopping quicker and easier.

Barcodes are _____ in the supermarket. The barcode system shortens cashier lines because fewer mistakes are made. The cashier _____ barcodes through a scanner. The scanner reads the code and adds the total amount. When all the items are scanned, the computer _____ the total price.

Although barcodes have been very popular, there is _____ overtaking barcodes. The system is called RFID. _____, every item in the supermarket will have very small microchips. Large microchip scanners in the checkout lanes _____ the microchips _____ inside the shopping carts. This allows shoppers to walk through the cashier _____ each item. This _____ a lot of time. There are already large supermarkets in Germany that have this system.

Vocabulary

- ☐ **keep track of** to know; to stay informed ☐ **overtake** to become more successful than someone or something else
- ☐ **checkout** a counter in a supermarket where you pay for your purchases ☐ **lane** a narrow way; road ☐ **detect** to find; to discover

Listening Practice ³

Part A
1

 Listen and choose the correct answer for each question.  017



1 What are they mainly discussing?

- (A) The number of fossils found in the Grand Canyon
- (B) How to tell the age of dinosaurs from fossils
- (C) What fossils are and what they can tell us
- (D) Differences between plant and animal fossils



2 What are mammoths?

- (A) They are animals trapped inside stones.
- (B) They are dinosaur bones in the ground.
- (C) They are animals in the zoo.
- (D) They are large elephants from the stone age.

3 What can we learn from fossils?

Click on 2 answers.

- (A) The number of dinosaurs in the world
- (B) The minerals and fuels in the area
- (C) The changes in the Grand Canyon
- (D) The development of animals and plants



Dictation

 Listen again and fill in the blanks.  017

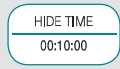
- T: Today, we _____ fossils.
Does anyone know _____?
- M: They are dinosaur bones in the ground.
- T: Close, but not really. Fossils are _____
_____ of bones or plants. Fossils give us _____ about the Earth's
history.
- M: Can _____ of animals become fossils?
- T: Not usually. They are usually made by _____,
like bones and shells. However, _____ have been preserved in
stones. Mammoths have been found _____ in ice. Mammoths are large elephants
that lived during the stone age.
- M: Oh, when I visited the Grand Canyon, the guide said that there were _____
_____ there. Is this true?
- T: Yes. There are many _____ of fossils in the Grand Canyon. Each layer is older than
the layer above it.
- W: So, can fossils tell us _____ besides how old an animal or plant
is?
- T: Yes, we can learn other things from fossils: _____ of animals and
plants, as well as _____ of each layer.
- M: And I think fossils tell us information _____ in
that area.
- T: Right! We can also find out information about minerals and fuels. Well, that's all for today's class.

Vocabulary

- ☐ **fossil** the remains of a plant or animal from a long time ago ☐ **shell** a hard outer covering of an egg, nut, etc.
☐ **preserved** kept in a particular condition ☐ **layer** a single thickness of a material covering a surface

iBT Practice

TOEFL Listening

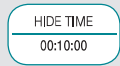


Part A
1



Note-Taking

iBT Practice CONTINUED



1 What is the discussion mainly about?

- ☐ (A) The history of the US and the world
- ☐ (B) The value of American money
- ☐ (C) Cotton and fruits in California
- ☐ (D) Life during the Great Depression

2 According to the discussion, why did people go west?

- ☐ (A) They thought that the west only had cotton and fruits.
- ☐ (B) They thought that there were more jobs in the west.
- ☐ (C) They thought that the value of money was higher in the west.
- ☐ (D) They thought that nobody traveled west to work.

3 When was the Big Boom?

- ☐ (A) Just before the Great Depression
- ☐ (B) When people went to California
- ☐ (C) After picking cotton and fruits
- ☐ (D) After the Great Depression

4 According to the lecture, why did the Great Depression occur?

- ☐ (A) There were too many people looking for jobs.
- ☐ (B) There were too many people moving to the western states.
- ☐ (C) There weren't enough people selling goods.
- ☐ (D) There was a huge drop in the value of money.

Further Study

Note-Taking: Keyword

The key to effective note-taking is being quick and concise. Do not try to write down everything you hear, but take notes using keywords or key phrases.

e.g. There will be a class about sea plants on Monday.

⇒ class, sea plants, Monday



Listen again and fill in the blanks using keywords. (MP3) 018

Topic: Great _____

- Actual state – during _____
 - whole world was affected including _____
 - just after _____ in the US
 - no jobs & _____
- Reaction – people _____ to find jobs
 - e.g. _____ : most _____ to death
 - because too many people came

Word Review

Choose the best word to replace the underlined word.

- 1 For safety reasons, airports use special machines that detect metal.
(A) alert (B) choose (C) find (D) produce
- 2 Many Egyptian mummies have been preserved in excellent condition.
(A) cleaned (B) preferred (C) kept (D) served
- 3 Many people were affected by the government's decision to increase taxes.
(A) effected (B) influenced (C) injured (D) worried
- 4 The stock market experienced a huge drop in prices because of the economic recession.
(A) cost (B) fall (C) gain (D) product

Choose and write the correct word to complete the sentence.

assistant
fossils

layer
resident

for nothing
instinct

rough
literally

- 5 Ancient _____ of Homo sapiens show that humans may have evolved from apes.
- 6 The ice was too _____ to skate on, so we had no choice but to give up on our plans for ice skating.
- 7 Don't try to understand the poem _____ – try to make your own interpretation of it instead.
- 8 In dangerous situations, the best thing you can do is follow your _____.
- 9 I am a(n) _____ of the United States, but I haven't been granted full citizenship yet.
- 10 I hired a new _____ to help run errands.
- 11 A(n) _____ of snow covered the roads, making it very dangerous to drive.
- 12 The soldier died fighting for his country, so his death was not _____.