



German Leaving Certificate Exam: Listening comprehension

Overview

The listening comprehension section is worth **20% of your total grade** and takes place immediately after the written portion of the exam. It's often considered one of the more manageable sections because it's straightforward and most questions require answers in English.

- **Sections 1, 3, and 4** are answered in English.
- **Section 2** must be answered in German (higher level).

Why Practice Is Key

To excel in the listening comprehension:

- Practice regularly by completing **one listening comprehension per week** in the lead-up to the exam.
- Pay attention to accents and speeds. German listening exams sometimes feature regional accents or fast-paced speech, so becoming familiar with different speakers is crucial.

Building Vocabulary for Success

A strong vocabulary will significantly boost your confidence and performance:

- Keep a **vocabulary notebook** for words or phrases you don't understand during practice sessions. Look up their meanings and learn them.
 - Focus on common topics like:
 - **Professions** (e.g., Lehrer/in – teacher, Arzt/Ärztin – doctor).
 - **Place names** (e.g., Bahnhof – train station, Krankenhaus – hospital).
 - **Problems and emergencies** (e.g., Unfall – accident, Krankheit – illness).
 - **Weather vocabulary** (e.g., sonnig – sunny, Regen – rain), as the weather question in Section 4 is almost guaranteed.
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Understanding the Format

1. **Section 1: Conversations or Dialogues**
 - These are typically short exchanges between two people.
 - Listen for specific details, such as times, locations, or preferences.
 - Answers are in **English**.
 2. **Section 2: Longer Monologues (Answered in German)**
 - The only section where answers must be written in German (higher level).
 - Practice rephrasing information from the audio rather than copying directly to avoid losing marks.
 - Pay attention to question terms like **Wer?** (Who?), **Was?** (What?), **Wo?** (Where?), and **Wann?** (When?).
 3. **Section 3: Advertisements or Announcements**
 - These are typically practical, like event details, sales, or travel announcements.
 - Answers are in **English**.
 4. **Section 4: News Reports**
 - This is the most heavily weighted section, and includes **weather updates**, which are almost guaranteed.
 - The other topics can vary but often involve major events, accidents, or global issues.
 - Answers are in **English**, but the content requires attention to detail.
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Strategies for Each Section

- **Read the questions first:** Quickly skim the questions before the audio begins. This primes you to listen for specific details.
 - **Pay attention to numbers and dates:** These often appear in dialogues and announcements.
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How to Approach Section 2 (German Answers)

- **Focus on grammar and spelling:** Answers must be written correctly in German. Double-check verb conjugations and noun genders.
 - **Be specific:** Include as much detail as possible. If a question is worth multiple marks, ensure your answer has enough information to match the marks available.
 - **Practice paraphrasing:** Instead of copying directly from the audio, learn to summarize in your own words.
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Expanding on Your Points

Many questions ask you to "give details" or provide multiple pieces of information.

- Pay attention to the **marking scheme**:
 - If a question is worth **3x2 marks**, you'll need **three specific points**.
 - If it's **4x1 marks**, provide four brief but accurate details.

- Avoid writing vague answers, as they can lose marks. Practice answering questions with precise and detailed responses during your preparation.
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What to Do If You're Stuck

- **Don't leave blanks:** If you don't understand a word or section, make an educated guess based on the context of the question.
 - **Use context clues:** Sometimes other parts of the exam (e.g., the reading comprehension or earlier listening questions) can give you hints about an answer.
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The News Section (Section 4)

This is a critical part of the exam where many marks are available.

- **Weather updates:** Revise common weather terms and phrases as this question is almost guaranteed.
 - **News topics:** Stay up to date with current events in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland by watching German news clips or reading short articles. Websites like **Tagesschau** are great for practice.
 - **Names and places:** Be ready to identify proper nouns in the audio. They often provide clues to the answers.
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General Exam Tips

- **Stay calm:** Nerves can make you lose focus. Take a deep breath before each section and remind yourself that you've prepared.
 - **Don't panic if you miss something:** You'll hear the audio **three times**, and there are breaks in between to write your answers. Use this time wisely.
 - **Keep moving forward:** If you go blank, move on to the next question and return to the tricky one later. Sometimes hearing other sections can jog your memory.
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Final Preparation Steps

- Practice with **real exam audio** to get used to the pacing and structure.
- Build your vocabulary, especially around common themes like professions, travel, weather, and numbers.
- Use past papers to identify patterns in the types of questions asked.
- Familiarize yourself with the marking schemes to understand how to structure your answers.

