

## **Independent Listening Task: A Nightmare Weekend!**

### **At a glance**

**Level:** ISE II

**Focus:** Independent listening task

**Aims:** To improve students' listening comprehension skills

**Objectives:** To understand the main points and details of complex spoken English and to improve note taking skills

**Topic:** Hotel review and manager's response

**Language functions:** Listening for gist and for detailed information

**Grammar:** Following natural spoken discourse

**Lexis:** A Hotel review

**Materials needed:** Text (to read out), student worksheet (cut into strips; 1 per group of 4-6 students), student worksheet, whiteboard, pens and paper for students to make notes

**Timing:** 45-60 minutes

### **Procedure**

#### **Preparation**

1. Read through the listening text (see teacher's notes) to familiarise yourself with it. If another teacher is available, record them reading the text out so the students can practise hearing another voice.
2. Photocopy one set of 'Task statements' (see teacher's notes) per group of 4-6 students and cut up.
3. Also photocopy one student worksheet per student.

#### **In class**

1. Explain to the class that they are going to work on their listening skills for the Independent listening task in the ISE II Speaking & Listening exam. This task involves listening to a recording *twice*. The first time for *gist*, the second time for more detail.
2. Write GIST in large capital letters on the board. Elicit from students what they understand by the term *gist*. Possible answers may be:

*To understand the principal idea*

*The main point  
What they are talking about  
The theme etc.*

Write the correct ideas on the board. Explain to students that in the ISE II Speaking & Listening exam they will hear the recording twice. The first time they hear the recording they should listen for the *gist*. Tell the students that a possible question from the examiner could be “*What was the speaker talking about?*”. They should be prepared to answer in one or two sentences.

3. Now introduce the class to the topic of the listening – a nightmare holiday. Ask the students some questions about what can go wrong on holiday. For example:

*A lost passport  
A puncture to the car on the way there  
The hotel is next to a noisy building site/ airport*

Ask them to discuss in pairs or small groups some of their bad experiences, or experiences other people have had, or films they have seen, or to just use their imagination. Try to get the class highly motivated and interested in the topic.

4. Now ask the class to focus on what problems people could have with their hotels. Ask the class to discuss in pairs or small groups. Feedback in open-class.
5. Finally, ask the students what they could *do* if they had a problem with the hotel. Possible answers include:

*Complain to the manager  
Send a letter or email  
Write to or phone the head office  
Write to the newspaper etc*

Write key vocabulary on the board.

6. Explain to the students that they will now listen to a text about a nightmare holiday.
7. Read out the text (at normal speed) or ask a colleague to read it out, or have a recording ready to play. Ask the students to listen carefully and be ready to tell you what the gist of the story is.
8. Ask the students to discuss what they feel the gist of the text is. Possible answers include:

*Complaining about a hotel to the manager and the manager’s response  
A very bad weekend at a 4 star Hotel  
A couple who are angry at the service they received at a hotel etc.*

Write some of the answers on the board.

9. Now explain to the class that they are going to listen to the text again, but this time they will be listening for detailed information, and in particular, in what order things happen. For this they will need to make notes individually. After they have heard the text, they will work in groups putting the events in order, so it is important to make notes.
10. Show the students the strips of paper to explain what they will need to do (but don't hand them out yet). Organise the students into groups of 4-6 (depending on class size).
11. Hand out the student worksheet and make sure each student has a pen.
12. Read out the text again or play the recording from start to finish. The students should make notes on the student worksheet.
13. Quickly give out strips of paper to each group. Explain to the group that they will now have to organise the events into the order in which they happened. Allow some discussion in the groups. Monitor the groups to check their understanding and completion of task. Make sure they are referring to their notes and are working together well. Do not allow one person to take over, make sure everyone is involved. Time allowed – 10-15 minutes.
14. Elicit the answers from 1 - 22 (in the order they appear on the teacher's notes).
15. Now encourage the students to re-tell the story in their own words.
16. If there is some disagreement, read out the necessary part(s) of the text again.
17. Explain that what you read or what they heard was an example of the Independent listening task in the ISE II Speaking & Listening exam. Ask them what they thought about it. What did they find easy and difficult? Do they feel ready for this part of the exam?
18. Ask the students what they could do to improve their listening skills?  
Possible answers:

*Listen to an English song and work out what they are singing about*

*Watch a short clip of a film in English and identify the gist*

*Watch a short clip of a recipe being made and make notes on the ingredients and order for making the dish*

*Watch part of a sports match online and listen to the commentator and make notes on the main events etc.*

**Extension activity**

More advanced students can try to re-enact what they heard using the strips of paper, using voices of *complaining* for the unhappy client, and *peace making/pacifying/patient understanding* for the Manager.

**Further support activity**

Weaker students can be given fewer strips of paper (5 for example), blocks of the correct sentences with only 5 missing to complete the story

**After class**

Listen to a short English text (online for example). Listen to it twice: once for the *gist*, the second time for *detailed information*. Practise making notes and practise explaining what happened.

**Audio Script**

**Independent Listening Task:**  
**A Nightmare Weekend!**

Voice 1: "A nightmare weekend!"

Reviewed 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014

A 60<sup>th</sup> birthday treat for my wife. Booked through the web. Their website is very misleading. You think you are going to a 4 star hotel with fine dining and it's more like a holiday camp. The staff were mostly excellent, especially the Reception Manager when we arrived. We had asked for a quiet room, only to be told we would be in a noisy room above a wedding reception. He found us a nice room. No complaints about the room, other than the TV remote did not work.

The swimming pool was ok but looks nothing like the picture on the website, it's very drab now. There was also no hot water in the showers. I told the attendant. He didn't even apologise.

The bar is awful unless you want to watch football - We didn't! Why was it that the lounge bar, which had been open in the afternoon, was not open before dinner? It was a nice room and would've been perfect.

The restaurant is not fine dining! It is well below par. The A la Carte menu is like a bad pub menu and the buffet was poor, especially as the staff did not keep the supplies of food topped up so people were waiting around with half full plates trying to get staff to replenish the hot trays. The drinks are expensive and some of the restaurant staff were rude and unhelpful.

Breakfast was utter chaos, with not enough cutlery, plates or food. We had to go and get our own tea. Nobody came to the table except to take away plates that were not finished. I had to go to the cutlery draw myself twice! One toaster was not working, the other was burning toast.

We were on the second floor in the Old School and the lift was not working. Overall, we found the weekend most unpleasant, not the relaxing break we had been dreaming of. We think other holiday makers should be aware of the standard of the hotel so that they are under no illusions, and do not feel cheated – as we do.

This hotel should definitely not have 4 stars. It could be excellent but.... The buildings and grounds are very nice, but the service, facilities and food are awful.

Manager's response (could be read out by another person – Voice 2)

*Guest Relations Manager at Devonshire Estate, responded to this review, 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014*

Thank you for taking the time to write a review of our Hotel.

I was pleased that after a small problem with your room allocation that our Reception Manager found a lovely room for you.

I was however disappointed to read your comments on our leisure Club and I have passed this feedback onto our Leisure Club Manager.

I have also had a meeting with our Restaurant Manager about our menu and especially your comments on our staff being rude and unhelpful, this is not acceptable and will be addressed immediately.

I hope your wife had a lovely birthday despite the small problems you experienced.

Kind Regards

Kim Norris- Guest Relations Manager

**End of text**

**Task Statements**

**Cut up the following 22 statements and give them to the students in a jumbled order.**

|  |
|--|
| Reserved online                        |
| Holiday camp                           |
| Reception manager very helpful         |
| Television remote control did not work |
| Swimming pool was OK                   |
| Hot water didn't work in the showers   |
| Watching football in the bar           |
| Lounge bar closed                      |
| Not enough food!                       |
| Drinks are pricey                      |
| Attitude of staff                      |
| Breakfast madness!!                    |
| Searching for knives and forks.....    |
| Malfunctioning toasters                |
| We had to walk up 2 flights of stairs  |
| Lovely grounds                         |
| Terrible service, facilities and food  |
| An appropriate room given              |
| Feedback passed on                     |
| Feedback passed on                     |
| Sorting out problems of rude staff     |
| Happy Birthday to your wife            |

