



IELTS Listening Question

Types

(practice sets and answer explanations)

In this PDF, you'll see a practice set of questions for each of the six IELTS Listening question types described in the Magoosh Guide to IELTS Listening. Answer explanations are provided at the end of every question set, either in written format, or in the form of a link to an explanation video. The audio tracks for each Listening question set are also linked; you can click each link for audio before you start each question set. Transcripts of the audio are provided at the very end of this PDF.

Short Answer

For this question type in particular, it's critical that you make sure you read and follow the directions. This question type comes with very clear word and number requirements — whatever you do, follow them! Moreover, you will often have to find detailed information related to some category.

Example of Short Answer Questions

Instructions

- Listen to the recording. Write down your answers on a piece of paper as you listen. Answer the questions below.
- [Click for IELTS Listening question audio.](#) **(Audio transcript on pages 24-26.)**

Answer the questions below. Write NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER for each question.

Whom should audience members tell about opportunities to work at the paper?

(1) _____

What is the maximum number of pages the Radcliffe University Paper will have?

(2) _____

What requires a large time commitment from the section editors but not from the writers?

(3) _____

When should writers propose their own ideas for stories?

(4) _____

What recollection does the speaker especially enjoy from her time as a writer for the paper?

(5) _____

[Click here for the answer explanations for these questions \(video\).](#)

Sentence Completion

It's helpful to think about Sentence Completion questions as a form of Short Answer questions. So, once again, pay attention to the instructions — this is where you can easily lose points!

For this question, you're going to complete a sentence and will almost always be a paraphrase of something you heard in the conversation or lecture. So, don't expect to hear an exact word-for-word match with the question. Prepare to think and use synonyms.

These sentences are full of important information that can help you predict the answers. Pay close attention to the grammatical structure of the sentence and the information that's missing. Is it a noun, a verb, an adjective, and so on?

Example of Sentence Completion Questions

Instructions

- Note the answers to the questions as you listen. Complete the sentences below. Write **NO MORE THAN ONE WORD** for each answer.
- [Click for IELTS Listening question audio.](#) (Transcript on pages 27-29.)

Complete the sentences below. Write NO MORE THAN ONE WORD for each answer.

31. The world's many deserts contain a very large number of _____.
32. People living in dryland zones often over-use their own _____, such as water.
33. Drought is an example of how desertification can occur _____.
34. When populations in semi-arid regions grow, people become less _____.

[Click for IELTS listening question explanations \(video\)](#)

Plan, Map, and Diagram Completion

These questions involve some sort of visual — be it a plan, a map, or a diagram. These visuals will have some missing labels. The questions will have you fill out those missing labels based on what you'll have listened to.

These visuals include a lot of clues. For instance, suppose you received a Map Question. Look at the location of the first question, and then look at the map to see where the following questions are located. The questions are asked in the order of what is discussed by the speaker(s). So, you can begin to anticipate the sort of things you'll need to listen for.

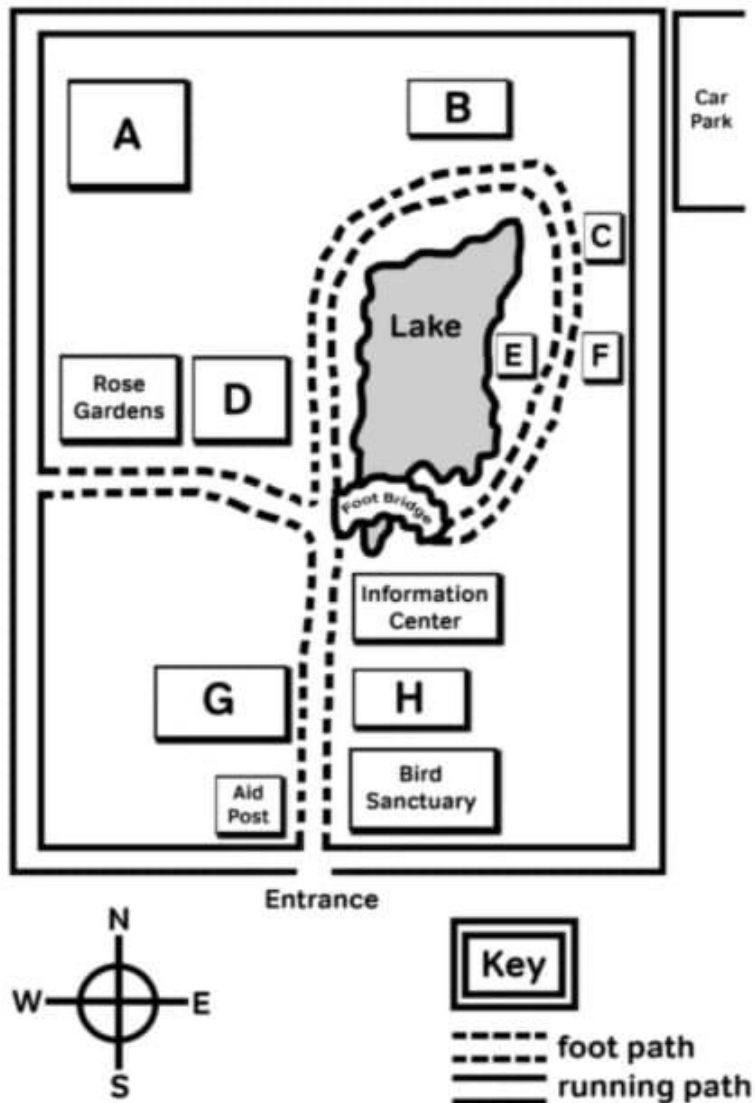
You can also study the map to familiarize yourself with the location of other items. For example, perhaps the map includes a statue, a restaurant, or some other landmark. You can use this to anticipate the sort of things you'll want to pay attention to. Getting familiar with the Map, Plan, or Diagram before you listen to the speaker will help you get oriented. **(Map and questions are on the next two pages.)**

Example of Map Completion Questions

Instructions

- Label the map. Write the correct letter, A-H next to questions 16-20 (page 6).
- [Click for IELTS listening question audio](#) (Start audio 3:51; transcript p. 30-32)

Map



- 16. Restaurant _____
- 17. Children's Play Area _____
- 18. Picnic Area _____
- 19. Benches _____
- 20. First Aid Post _____

- **Answer explanations are on pages 13-15 of this PDF**

Matching

Matching Questions usually involve listening for detailed information. It's important to look at the category of information that you will match to the answer choices. Sometimes you'll have lettered options, in others you'll have to fill in a box.

Example of Matching Questions

Instructions

- Listen to the recording. Write down your answers on a piece of paper as you listen. Answer the questions below.
- [Click for IELTS Listening question audio](#) (Start audio 2:50, transcript p. 24-26.)

Questions 6 -10

What does the speaker say about each newspaper section?

- A. could use some new viewpoints
- B. normally, two editors are required
- C. the editor may be too busy to contribute normally
- D. special equipment is available for work on this section
- E. the editor doesn't wear shoes
- F. sometimes overlaps with the "news" section
- G. the editor is being replaced

Newspaper Sections

6. News section _____

7. Features section _____ (Questions continue on the next page.)

8. Sports section _____

9. Opinion section _____

10. Visuals _____

- [Click for IELTS Listening question explanation \(video\)](#)

In this example, you'll need to listen for the relevant proportions and match them to the correct option.

When you analyze these questions before listening to the passage, make sure you understand the category of the lettered answer choices, and pay close attention to the order of the items you need to match in the questions. It is the questions (not the lettered answer choices) that will be presented in order within the passage. You will listen for each of these question items as you "track" answers in the passage.

Multiple Choice

IELTS Multiple Choice questions only have 3 possible answers. Sometimes (but not often), there will be more than three answer choices. In this case, you will usually be instructed to choose more than one answer.

You must remember to enter your Answer Sheet with a letter — either A, B, or C. Remember: Don't write the answer choice word(s)! Sometimes, you will only have two or three Multiple Choice questions in a section. At other times, there could be up to five to eight.

Treat Multiple Choice questions exactly like other question types. In the time provided before you listen to the passage, skim all of the questions and the answer choices to find keywords. Answers will come in order in the passage, so you need Track answers across all of the questions in the task you're working on.

Main Idea Questions

There's an important subtype to the Multiple Choice question type that you may not encounter, but is important to know about. This subtype, known as the Main Idea, will require you to be able to articulate the main point of the recording. You can read an in-depth analysis of this subtype here: [IELTS Listening Question Type: Main Idea](#)

Example Multiple Choice Questions

Instructions

- Listen to the recording. Write down your answers on a piece of paper as you listen. Answer the questions below. Choose the correct letter, A, B, or C.
- [Click for IELTS Listening question audio](#) (Questions are on the next page, transcript is on pages 30-32 of this PDF.)

Questions 11-15

Choose the correct letter, **A**, **B**, or **C**.

11. Certain birds had not been seen for more than
- A. 15 years
 - B. 50 years
 - C. 20 years
12. Traffic incidents have fallen thanks to
- A. more plants and animals
 - B. better safety measures
 - C. more trees in streets
13. Work will begin at
- A. 8:30
 - B. 6:45
 - C. 8:00
14. Amir's list includes those who
- A. may develop allergies
 - B. eat a poor diet
 - C. care on a diet
15. Work will end at
- A. 5 pm at the latest
 - B. 4:30 at the earliest
 - C. 4:30 exactly
- **Answer explanations are on pages 16-20 of this PDF.**

Form, Note, Flow-Chart, Table, Summary Completion

These question types might look very different, but they actually share a lot in common. They are often Short Answer questions, but you may also be presented with a list or a box with answer choices. Basically, you will need to fill in missing information based on the Listening passage.

It's critical to look at each question number. Notice where it is located on the visual or summary and what the keywords are that surround it. You should "track" these keywords as you listen to the speaker.

Here's a quick overview of the different types of completion questions that you might encounter on the IELTS Listening section:

- **Flow Chart Completion Questions**
 - This shows steps or stages in a process. You can expect that you will need to listen for the different stages of the process.
- **Table Completion Questions**
 - It can refer to many things, but often a table is used to categorize several things, so you will need to fill in missing information on the table.
- **Notes Completion Questions**
 - This is a common question type for Passage 4, in which you will hear a lecture. You will have incomplete lecture notes that you need to fill in based on what the professor says.
- **Summary Completion Questions**
 - You'll be presented with a paragraph of several sentences which summarize the listening passage and fill in the blanks based on the talk.
- **Form Completion Questions**

- This question type is common for Section 1 of the Listening exam, though they can come up in other sections from time to time. **(Questions are on the next page.)**

Example of Notes Completion Questions

Instructions

- Complete the notes. Write **ONE WORD ONLY** for each answer.
- [Click for IELTS Listening question audio](#) (Start the audio at 3:54, transcript on p. 33-35.)

Questions 7-10

Best route: Take the express train to Bough Street Exit 2B

has functioning 7 _____

On arrival: Find the 8. _____ entrance

Best for classrooms

Music: On the first floor, to the left of the 9. _____

Pottery: Same floor but go right 10. _____ of the hallway

- **Answer explanations can be found on pages 20-23 of this PDF.**

Answer Explanations (Map Completion)

Answer 16

The speaker refers to “that area on the north side of the lake between the running path and **the restaurant.**” If “that area” is on the north side of the lake and it has a running path and a restaurant next to it, you can assume that the running path and the restaurant are also north of the lake. B is north of the lake and has a running path above it on the map, with some space in between. So that must be the restaurant!

The answer is B.

Answer 17

You can get a little confused here if you mistake “*go right on past* the bird sanctuary” with “*turn right after* the bird sanctuary.” To “go right on past” something means to pass it and continue going straight; in this case, the phrasal verb “right on” refers to continuing in the same direction, not turning in a *right* direction. Instead, the children’s sanctuary will be seen to the left *after* you pass the bird sanctuary (“...go right on **past the bird sanctuary** and it’s **on your left...**”). This is G, but if you misunderstood “right on past” to mean a right turn, you might mistakenly choose H. **The answer is G.**

Answer 18

Here, the important part from the passage is:

- **At the south end of the lake, turn to the left** and follow the footpath **to the running track** which goes all around the perimeter. You’ll see the **rose gardens to**

the right but keep going **up the running track** until **the path takes a right turn just after the picnic area.**

This is a lot of directional information! Fortunately, much of it is redundant. As long as you hear that you're going to the running track and will see the rose gardens to the right as you go there, you'll know that you take the footpath in the left middle of the map. It helps to know that going *up* the running track means going *north* on it, but even if you weren't familiar with that meaning of "up," you can see that the running path turns right just after area D. So that must be the picnic area, **and the answer is A.**

Answer 19

The speaker says:

- Just go straight from here **past the information center on your right**, cross **over the little footbridge** and follow **the path around the lake**. There are several **benches next to the path on your left** which give you a great view of the lake.

The information center and footbridge mentioned above are both labelled, so they should be easy enough to find on the map. And if you hear that you need to go over the footbridge, you'll know that you are facing west and will follow the path along the west side of the lake.

All of that is not so difficult, provided you can keep up with the pace of speech in the talk. But don't let your guard down yet! Keep listening carefully, so you realize the benches are "next to the path **on your left.**" Otherwise you might mistakenly choose F instead of correct answer E. F is next to the path too, but is on the *right*. **The answer is E.**

Answer 20

One thing that can be a little confusing about this question is that there are *two* first aid

posts, and one of them is labelled. Don't let your eye be drawn to the labelled first aid post near the entrance for too long, or you might get distracted from the location of the other aid post, which is *nowhere near* the one at the park entrance.

Here is the key part of the talk, with the most important information in **bold**:

- There **are a couple of first aid posts** set up, one just here next to the entrance and **the other is** ...well, it's **up here**. If you **follow the running path to the right** and watch out for signs **to the car park, you'll see it on your left between there and the lake**.

As soon as you hear "up here," you should know to look at the upper (northern) part of the map. From there, your eyes should naturally go up the right side of the map along that outer running path, if you correctly hear the spoken directions.

Once you hear "between there and the lake," it's important to realize that "there" refers to the car park, which was mentioned right before the word "there." "There" does not refer to the earlier mentioned running path. So choose C, which is between the bottom of the car park and the lake, not F, which is only between the path and lake.

The answer is C.

Answer Explanations (Multiple Choice)

Question 11

The Correct Answer (B)

So here, obviously, you'll want to listen for reference to "birds," a reference to a specific number of years, and a reference to the birds being unseen for that time period. These are the lines you should pay attention to:

- The Riverside State's Lab of Ornithology — a lab dedicated to the study of regional **birds** — recently found that, since this project kickstarted **a decade and a half ago**, more and more migratory birds have returned — even some species that **hadn't been seen in over fifty years!**

The final words of this relevant part of the talk, "hadn't been seen in over fifty years," point to choice B.

Wrong Answers (A, C)

"A decade and a half ago" makes the answer "15 years" very tempting. But that's actually when "this project"— the reforestation-- started. "15 may also be tempting because of what is said right *before* the mention of birds:

- If you've recently taken a stroll by the Riverfront, you'll have seen that **our first crop planted fifteen years ago** has grown quite a bit.

And 20, the other wrong answer, is also tempting if you go with a number you hear before birds are mentioned, in this line:

- Now, for those joining us for the first time, the city's urban reforestation program began as a part of a number of public program **two decades ago**.

The IELTS loves to trick you by putting a lot of numbers into one part of the passage. Remember to listen primarily for the meaningful words *related to* the numbers, rather than just listening for the numbers themselves!

Question 12

What to Listen For Here, listen for information related to safety, traffic, accidents, and cars-- ideas related to “traffic incidents” in other words. These are the lines you should really pay attention to:

- Other studies have found that our street tree planting scheme has also contributed to a **53% drop in car accidents** across the board — whether involving other **cars, cyclists, or pedestrians**. Increasing animal, insect, and plant life, and **traffic safety** all in one program!

So the question is-- what made traffic more safe? These “traffic incidents” were reduced “thanks to” what cause?

The Wrong Answers (B, C) Answer B is very tempting because it makes logical sense. But there’s no mention of specific safety *measures* (rules and regulations) in the talk. Answer C, “more plants and animals” sounds a little bit like “Increasing animal, insect, and plant life, and **traffic safety**.” But not so fast! This part of the talk simply lists plants, animals, and traffic safety as things that are all increasing; there’s no indication that one of these causes the increase of another.

The Right Answer (A) We get to choice A by elimination. But the first part of the important line for this question also confirms this answer as correct: “our **street tree planting** scheme has also **contributed to** a 53% **drop in car accidents**.” *Contributed to* means *caused*, so the *traffic incidents* were reduced *thanks to* “more trees in the streets.”

Question 13

A Multiple Numbers Trap!

Since this is an IELTS question with numbers in the answer choice, you just *know* you're going to hear a few different numbers together. Which number is the actual time that the work starts? Let's listen carefully to the wording:

- I know the email we sent several weeks ago mentioned that we would **start at 8** in the morning. **Or was it 8:30?** Well, anyway, given the unusually warm weather this year, **we've adjusted that to 6:45.**

That's a really mean trick, isn't it? The speaker explicitly *says* the work *would* start at 8. You have to carefully notice the word "would," since "would" refers to events that aren't happening, but might happen under different circumstances. **Other Ways to Hear the Correct Answer** If you don't catch that though, this passage does give you some extra chances to realize it's actually 6:45. After first mentioning that the work start time has been "adjusted" (changed) to 6:45, the speaker reinforces the 6:45 time again, saying:

- So, **by 06:45, we'll leave** here to go with our groups **to-to where we'll be working** for the rest of the day— I'll have more to say about this later. **Once we get started at seven-foret...**, erm, I mean, **06:45**, you'll be working with your group...

The answer is C.

Question 14

What to Listen For

"Amir" is an exact name you can listen for in the passage. But the answer choices also deal with just two specific types of information: info related to diets and allergies. So

listen closely for diet or allergy-related words too! You should recognize this as the correct part of the talk:

- For those who indicated that they **have a special diet** like vegans or **have food allergies**, no problem! Please see...ah, yes, thanks for waving **Amir**. **Please have Amir add your name to his list** so that we can make sure we have food for you — we don't want anyone going hungry today.

The Wrong Answers (A, B)

- A is wrong because the people who go on the list are people who *already have* allergies to food, not people who may develop such allergies in the future.
- B doesn't work because a *special* diet is not the same thing as a poor diet. A poor diet would be one that is *unhealthy*. A special diet is merely a different diet from that of most people.

The Right Answer (C)

C is correct because *to have* a special diet means to follow a specific diet. And another way to say this is to say one is "on a diet."

Question 15

What to Listen For

And yet another question in the set has numbers for answers. So again, you can assume the speaker will say *all* of the answer choice numbers. Or in this case, *both* of the numbers. So when does work end? No earlier than 4:30? No later than 5:00? Or at exactly 4:30? Listen for a reference to work ending, and for the numbers, and you'll hear:

- We'll be **calling it a day around 04:30** — some groups **might end earlier**, some a **little later**, but **no later than 5:00**.

What if you don't understand "calling it a day?"

Now, "calling it a day," which means *ending a workday* is an idiom you might not be familiar with. But that's OK! The rest of the language in that part of the talk relates to how precise the times of 4:30 and 5:00 are. That language is easier, and that's what you really need to know.

The Wrong Answers (B, C)

If you listen closely, you should know that 4:30 isn't the earliest, because some groups of workers "might end earlier" than that time. And since some groups of workers might end earlier, 4:30 isn't a strict, *exact* ending time.

The Right Answer (A)

If you've eliminated B and C, it seems the answer must be A. But it's best to double-check and make sure the one answer that seems right really *is* right. A is correct because the speaker says the work will end "no later than 5:00." And "5pm at the latest" is a very close paraphrase of the speaker's words!

Answer Explanations (Notes Completion)

Question 7

- **What to listen for:** This question is about taking the train, so although you'll hear the speakers talk about busses at first, don't worry too much about that. Wait until you hear a speaker say:
- But the quickest route would be **by train. Take** the Central Line express and get off on Sloane Street station.
- **But where is the answer?** But wait! Sloane Street is a different station than Bough! From here, listen carefully to figure out why the speakers ultimately mention Bough. What does Bough have that is "functioning"? The following two lines give you the answer:
- Ah, uh...**I've heard that Sloane doesn't have elevator access right now. So** that route actually won't work for my daughter.
- Hm. It seems that **the one at** Bough Street's Exit 2-B is **operational**.

"Operational" means the same thing as "functioning," and "the one" refers to "the elevator," which Sloane doesn't have right now. **The answer is "elevator."**

Question 8

The phrase "on arrival" in the question is pretty important. This means you need to listen for a mention of arriving at the building that houses the classes, the building with the "entrance." Which entrance should Sam's daughter use? Here is the key part of the passage:

“Oh, and a quick note about when you arrive. **The building has a number of entrances** and you’ll be coming from the east but **the best for you would be on the south side** as it’s the closest to the elevator and the classrooms.”

Here, there can be some temptation to immediately write down “east,” because it’s the first entrance you hear. Be patient and wait to see if other entrances are mentioned. That way, you’ll realize that the *south* entrance is the recommended one! **Answer: south**

Question 9

Listening for reference to the music class is easy enough. You’ll soon hear: “**Now then, the music class is easy to find.**”

Next, though, you’ll want to listen for the word “left.” That’s where it gets tricky! This direction word comes up a lot in the next lines:

- Now then, **the music class** is easy to find. It’s on the first floor **to the left of the stairs**. The first room **on the left**.

Fortunately, the wording in the question is very similar to the correct part of the Listening passage. The question says the music class is “to the left of the (SOMETHING),” not simply *on* the left.

Question 10

Because “the other course” is the last course mentioned in the conversation, it must be the same as “Pottery,” the course at the end of the questions. So what does the passage say about this other course?

- As for **the other course**, it's on the same floor but you need to go right not left and then **follow the hallway right to the end** where you'll see **a large green door**.
That end room is the workshop.

“Green door” is seen directly in the question, and the word “end” is used twice to clearly show that this class is at the end of the hallway. **The answer is “end.”**

Audio Transcripts

Short Answer and Matching Questions: Transcript

Hi everyone! Welcome to our first staff meeting of the fall term. I'm Carrie, and I am the editor-in-chief of the Radcliff University Newspaper this year, so if you stick around you'll be seeing a lot of me!

Okay, it looks like there are quite a few new faces in the room today, which is great. We're always looking for new writers, illustrators, and photographers to come onboard. So tell your friends!

As you probably know (unless you're a freshman), the Radcliff University Paper comes out on a bi-weekly basis. That means every two weeks, not twice a week [chuckle], just to be clear. So we are looking at a twelve- to eighteen-page spread every fourteen days, which, I'll be honest with you, is a lot of work. We've had a lot of late nights in this office, [chuckle] and we'll have a whole lot more before the year is over!

Lucky for you, finalizing the layout is the most time-consuming part of putting the paper together...and this is the responsibility of each of our wonderful section editors. As staff writers, you just need to come to these weekly meetings, pick up stories that are pitched, and get them in to your editors on time. Most of the pitching is done by the section editors, but if you have an idea for a story you'd like to write, feel free to pitch it to one of us during the weekly meeting....the editors will let you know if you have a green light to proceed.

It's so great to have everyone assembled here today because...uh, normally...well, as the term gets underway and we begin our work at the paper, you'll find that you will normally only meet with other members of your section. You will get to know your team members *[emphasize] very well* this year as you work together to meet your bi-weekly deadlines. Indeed, many close friendships are forged within this pressure-packed environment. And

if you thrive on intensity, then you're *definitely* in the right place. Speaking personally, some of my favorite memories from my days as a writer were the late-night debates with my section mates as a story deadline crept closer and closer.

I look forward to more of this during the upcoming year. And more importantly, I look forward to forming new relationships with all of you--the newest members of this great team!

[pause]

All right, so could I please have the section editors come to the front of the room? I'm going to introduce everyone, and then we can break off into groups.

Okay, this is our news section editor, Greta. News is our biggest section, since we are, after all, a *newspaper*. Typically we have two news editors to share the load, but right now it's just Greta, doing double the work. So if any of you are interested in becoming a news editor, please come talk to me after the meeting. We could really use a hand in the news section!

The news section is...well...just what it sounds like...breaking stories about what's going on around campus. These aren't human-interest pieces – we save those for the features section. This is just old-fashioned journalism...you know...trying to get the word out to students about important news at the university. Are the dining hall workers on strike? That's news. The board of directors voted to divest from fossil fuels? That's news. That one guy with the t-shirt who never puts on shoes, even when it's zero degrees out? That would be a feature, [chuckle] not news. You get the idea. So if you're interested in writing for news, go talk to Greta.

Okay, moving right along. Next we have features. Alexandra here is our features editor...she goes by Alex. She has a very important job because features are the backbone of our paper. They're the middle spread, and they're in color. People love features. So what's the difference between features and news? Well, there can be some overlap, but generally features focus more on human-interest stories rather than hardline

news. That being said, we often have features that get bumped to the news section, since news is a six-page spread and the features section only has two dedicated pages. Occasionally, there is some mixing between these sections. If you're interested in writing for our features section, talk to Alex.

Sports! A pretty niche section here at Radcliff, but we do have a few dedicated sports writers for whom we are eternally grateful. Our sports section editor is Jon, and our unofficial secondary sports section editor is Rachael, because she seems to write every single story. And while we love Rachael's work, it'd be great to add some fresh perspectives to the sports page...so if you like sports, and think you might be interested in covering some of our teams, come talk to these two.

Next we have the arts section. Our arts section editor is Anicka. She's been doing this for a long time, so go talk to her if you want to write an album review, cover a local show, or write-up any sort of art-related on-campus event. The arts section is also a place for think pieces, as long as they're topical.

Our opinion editor is Owen, but he'll be writing his thesis this term, so we could definitely use some junior editors to pick up the slack. This section is just what it sounds like...opinion articles, newspaper editorials, and sometimes we even run letters to the editor. If you have an opinion you want to put out into the world, here's your platform.

Okay and finally, Leighton [pronounced: Lay-ton] is our visuals editor, so artists please go see him. We have cameras to lend out if you don't have your own, as well as a whole range of image editing software on our office computers if you want to do some digital illustration. The newspaper would be a huge boring block of text without our artists, so we really appreciate what you all do for us.

Okay everyone, so those are your section editors, now let's form groups based on who you're interested in writing for, and we can start pitching!

Sentence Completion Questions: Transcript

Often when we think about deserts, we imagine vast, uninhabitable wastelands that are basically...umm, well, uninhabited! But actually, drylands comprise over forty percent of the Earth, and over two billion people across the globe live within these very tough ecological zones. Obviously, the scarcity of water is a huge issue for any population, big or small. And to survive, people in drylands... err, these kinds of societies often will utilize too much of what little resources they have. It's an unsustainable process, leading to an eventual degradation and intensification of environmental conditions. The whole process is known as desertification—the land basically deteriorates over time, becoming a harsher and harsher desert.

But I should mention that desertification does happen naturally. Severe and persistent droughts occur and... well, they're basically unavoidable, unfortunately. But the intensification of the process has become alarming. Let me walk you through how human activity has affected desertification. Throughout history, the populations of arid and semi-arid regions were small and, uh, basically nomadic, balancing survival techniques like hunting and gathering with farming and herding. They moved around a lot in... in their attempts to navigate the irregular seasons. But population growth led to less movement and more farmland, and that farmland needs to be irrigated.

[pause]

Now, all life is essentially dependent on healthy soil. Plants can't grow without it. And without plants, there... umm, there aren't any crops for people or, for that matter, grazing animals. Healthy soil is the result of a few concerted efforts, like heavy composting, rotating crops, and using chemical fertilizer sensibly and correctly. And for truly rich soil, there needs to be fungi and microorganisms in the earth... byproducts of organic decay. The breakdown of dead plants and animals provides essential nutrients like carbon, nitrogen, and, um...sulfur and phosphorus. Now, those components need to be maintained in the soil in order to farm effectively. That's true anywhere...not just in a

dry areas. Without proper conservation of healthy soil, we begin to see desertification. Too often, chemical fertilizers are overused, as is what little water is available, sapping the topsoil of those fundamental nutrients. If plants can't draw nutrition from the earth, they don't grow, which means there are fewer root systems...absent of those roots, the soil becomes too compact or too loose, resulting in erosion, and that leads to even further desertification.

But, uh, there are also a few other causes. Grazing animals can be responsible as well. Livestock like cows and sheep are obviously very important to any robust farming society. But the problem with permitting animals to feed uncontrolled in dry regions, with few predators and no migration, is that they can quickly eliminate all plant life. And, like before, without vegetation cover, topsoil is exposed, so we see erosion starting when heavy wind, or—or storms sweep the land. And here's another cause that I know some of you are already thinking of: the reckless clear-cutting of forests. That, too, can set off the desertification process. Trees are needed for securing topsoil and reducing wind erosion. Again, balance... I mean, sustainability is too often disregarded, resulting in still more degradation. And keep in mind that a region without grasses and trees only gets hotter and hotter over time—the process doesn't stop with erosion. The stark surface reflects sunlight back into the atmosphere, leading to greater evaporation and less rainfall.

So, how exactly can desertification be stopped? A big part of the problem is that the societies living in these kinds of harsh zones are usually marginalized and, err, very poor. Some are even war refugees, on the run from invading militias. They're, well, desperate, sometimes. It's only through education, the teaching of sustainable agricultural techniques, that desertification can be slowed or stopped. Common-sense treatment of topsoil is key, and crop rotation has to be practiced. The planting of cover crops, like, umm, beans and lentils... that's been shown to boost nitrogen in topsoil. Responsible irrigation should also coincide with building terraces in hilly areas. Those terraces—they look kind of like stairs built into the side of a hill—they help to prevent

runoff and erosion. Planting more trees in specifically chosen locations can also lessen environmental degradation and help to stabilize the soil. And we're still developing ways to adapt! Conservation ingenuity has even resulted in something called "arid aquaculture," a method of breeding fish in the salty ponds of certain drylands. So as bleak as this all might seem, there's still plenty of opportunity to overcome it.

Map Completion Questions and Multiple Choice Questions: Transcript

Good morning everyone! Thank you for coming here today to this preliminary meeting. It's so good to see so many familiar faces again this year. Much like previous years, we're going to be planting a new crop of trees to make our city safer and healthier for everyone with the only difference that this year we'll be doing it in our city park as part of its renovation program.

Now, for those joining us for the first time, the city's urban reforestation program began as a part of a number of public program two decades ago. This particular project started as a way to both create social connection as well as solve several problems we've faced. The benefits of this program can be seen throughout the city. If you've recently taken a stroll by the Riverfront, you'll have seen that our first crop planted fifteen years ago has grown quite a bit. The Riverside State's Lab of Ornithology — a lab dedicated to the study of regional birds — recently found that, since this project kickstarted a decade and a half ago, more and more migratory birds have returned — even some species that hadn't been seen in over fifty years! Other studies have found that our street tree planting scheme has also contributed to a 53% drop in car accidents across the board — whether involving other cars, cyclists, or pedestrians. Increasing animal, insect, and plant life, [stressed] annnd traffic safety all in one program! Your help today does make a difference in making our community a better place.

Uh, right, so, let's get down to the nuts and bolts of the day. As the planting veterans can attest, the work gets progressively harder the hotter it gets. I know the email we sent several weeks ago mentioned that we would start at 8 in the morning. Or was it 8:30? Well, anyway, given the unusually warm weather this year, we've adjusted that to 6:45. Anyhow, thank you for being so flexible at such short notice! We might appreciate the sun right now, but it can get unbearable by mid-afternoon. So, by 06:45, we'll leave here to go with our groups to-to where we'll be working for the rest of the day— I'll have

more to say about this later. Once we get started at seven-fort..., erm, I mean, 06:45, you'll be working with your group until a quarter before noon, at which point we'll all be taking lunch. For those who indicated that they have a special diet like vegans or have food allergies, no problem! Please see...ah, yes, thanks for waving Amir. Please have Amir add your name to his list so that we can make sure we have food for you — we don't want anyone going hungry today! After about an hour, we'll move on to the afternoon portion of our work, and there are some cautions about this time slot that I'll loop back to in a bit. Your group will then wrap up and we'll look forward to seeing you again next year!

[pause]

Le-let me organize my notes here for a second. Ah, right. [pause] Let's now talk about who's doing what and where. When you checked-in, you should have been told your group number. Ah, if you aren't sure, please check with Ari. Ari would you wave your hand so people can find you? [waits a moment] Thanks! Fe-for those who've volunteered in the past, please be on the lookout for anyone who seems confused or could use help.

It's important for you to find and stick with your group because we're splitting up and this is one big park! For those of you not so familiar with it, I've set up this map here on this large screen.Now then, group 1 will be planting sweetgums here in that area on the north side of the lake between the running path and the restaurant. All the trees we're planting are fast growing and I'm sure you'll all agree that this particular tree is a great choice.

Now, we'll also be planting some red oaks which are brilliant for shade. That'll be around the children's play area. It's on this side of the lake. From where we are standing at the main entrance, go right on past the bird sanctuary and it's on your left.

That takes care of group 2. What about 3? Well, you'd better arrive early because it's a long walk! At the south end of the lake, turn to the left and follow the footpath to the

running track which goes all around the perimeter. You'll see the rose gardens to the right but keep going up the running track until the path takes a right turn just after the picnic area.

Last but not least, group 4. This is not such a walk! Just go straight from here past the information center on your right, cross over the little footbridge and follow the path around the lake. There are several benches next to the path on your left which give you a great view of the lake. You'll be planting silver maples next to them.

By the way, I think there are some representatives here from the Department of Public Works and Office of Urban Forestry. Would you please raise your hands? [pause] Thank you. They've kindly volunteered to help out with this program and it wouldn't be possible without their generous help throughout the year. They'll be sharing with you the benefits of this project during group orientation, and try and find the time to ... to talk with them about what their office does and other volunteer opportunities throughout the year.

Now...[shuffles paper] some general points before we break. It's warm out today and, we're probably in for temperatures in the upper 20s. Please make sure you're taking enough fluids, and taking the time to rest in the shade as needed or every hour. If you start to feel dizzy, lightheaded, or otherwise unwell, let your group leader know immediately. There are a couple of first aid posts set up, one just here next to the entrance and the other is ...well, it's up here. If you follow the running path to the right and watch out for signs to the car park, you'll see it on your left between there and the lake.

So, uh, that should be it. Thanks so much for helping out. Any questions? Please find either myself or any of the other coordinators wearing a reforestation hat. We'd be happy to help. See you all tomorrow!

Notes Completion: Transcript

Alex (A): Hello, Fairview Summer Youth Program, my name is Alex. How may I help you today?

Sam (S): Oh, hi there. My name is Sam. I'm, uh, calling about the classes you offer kids this year.

A: Thanks for calling, Sam. I'm happy to answer any questions you might have.

S: Ah, um...I'm interested in two courses for my daughter. But, well, I can't tell if she can take them both, given the scheduling. Can you help me figure this out?

A: Of course. What are those two classes?

S: I'm wondering about "Comics and Cartooning," and, ah, the other is about...about jazz...?

A: Oh, are you thinking about the music class? The one called "Singing the Blues"?

S: Yes. The one that costs \$175?

A: That's the one! OK, I see why you were confused. Those classes had been booked at the same time and same day, at 07:00pm on Tuesdays, but...

S: Oh, it changed?

A: It did. The singing class was moved to Thursdays, and the time slot was moved to afternoons, er, 3pm. OK, but...let me see here. I'm afraid that there aren't any spaces left in the class.

S: I see...hmm. My daughter also might like the pottery class. Are any seats still available for that one?

A: The class on Monday afternoons?

S: That is the one, I believe.

A: As of right now...yes, it seems that there's room for your daughter. But there are only a couple spots left, so you'll want to sign her up as soon as you can, ideally within the next day or two. It's such a popular class. Also, it's listed at \$150, but is actually \$153, as there's a small materials fee.

S: OK, thanks for letting me know about that! And the extra \$3 is fine. Say, why is it such a popular class?

A: Don't you know? Well, it's run every summer by local artist Roisin Dunne. She's awesome and all the kids love her!

S: I see.Let me make ahey...how do you spell her first name?...

A: Haha...It's not easy, is it? It's R-O-I-S-I-N then D-U-double N-E

S: Got it. Thank you. Um, I was also wondering: I found two pretty different descriptions of the cartooning class on your website. Do you know which one is up to date for this term?

A: Oh, that's confusing. Erm, unfortunately, we don't have access to the teacher's current lesson plans. Rumiko's still teaching the course. I'd say talk to her. I'm sure she can tell you everything you need to know.

S: That makes sense, I'll reach out as soon as possible.

A: Oh, before I forget there's something important I forgot to mention about the cartooning course.

S: Oh?

A: Yes, well... I know it was listed at \$180, but a local charity foundation is willing to pay half the fees of the first 10 students that apply for the subsidy. This scholarship wasn't very well publicized, and so far only two students have actually applied.

S: Oh, that's good to know! So, when is the deadline to get that discount? And how do I request it?

A: Right! When you complete registration for that particular course, you'll get a confirmation email, and you can click a link at the bottom of the email that says "extra funding options." The link brings you to the foundation website, where you'll see instructions...

[pause]

S: OK. Thanks for your help. Oh ...actually, while I have you, what's the best route to class? We live in the Highland neighborhood but we're new here and don't know our way around yet. What do you suggest?Bus?

A: Well, there are a few options by bus. But the quickest route would be by train. Take the Central Line express and get off on Sloane Street station. Then, the street you'll take... you'd go about three blocks on Johnson. That will save you about fifteen minutes...

S: Ah, uh...I've heard that Sloane doesn't have elevator access right now. So that route actually won't work for my daughter. She uses a wheelchair and uh

A: Oh, I see. Let me check... Hm. It seems that the one at Bough Street's Exit 2-B is operational. And [pause] now that I think about it, this might be a quicker route since our building is directly uphill from Sloane.

S: Great! This helps a lot.

A: Oh, and a quick note about when you arrive. The building has a number of entrances and you'll be coming from the east but the best for you would be on the south side as it's the closest to the elevator and the classrooms. Now then, the music class is easy to find. It's on the first floor to the left of the stairs. The first room on the left. The elevator is to the right. As for the other course, it's on the same floor but you need to go right not left and then follow the hallway right to the end where you'll see a large green door. That end room is the workshop.

S: Thank you so much. You've been very helpful.

A: You're welcome.