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In response to the growing popularity of IELTS the Taipei Times, in conjunction with the British Council, brings our readers an IELTS preparation page which will run every Saturday on p14 of the Taipei Times. Each week will focus on a different area of the test. IELTS, the International English Language Testing System, is an upper-intermediate test of English communication. It can be used for university entry and emigration around the English-speaking world and beyond. It measures your ability to communicate across the four language skills — reading, writing, listening and speaking — through authentic challenging tasks. With over 700,000 people taking IELTS annually, it is one of the fastest growing English tests in the world, trusted and accepted by over 4,000 organisations and faculties worldwide, and is a great alternative to TOEFL.

## The listening test

### ▶ Key facts

- 30 minutes plus 10 minutes to transfer your answers
- Four sections
- 40 questions in total

### ▶ Preparation

You will hear a variety of different accents in the test: British, Australian and American, so listen to spoken English from as many different sources as possible: BBC, CNN and Australia Network. You will also hear people talking in different situations, for example friends chatting, university lectures, radio shows and so on. To prepare, you could practise listening to TV soaps and lifestyle shows which contain less formal spoken English, as well as more serious news reports and documentaries.

### ▶ Exam tips

- Listen to the introduction to each question carefully. It will give useful information about the situation and the topic.
- You have time to look through the questions before the recording starts. Do this, and predict what kind of information you need to listen out for.
- Make sure your answers fit grammatically.
- Check your spelling carefully (British and American spellings are both acceptable).

### ▶ Listening task one: table completion

You have to complete the table with words from the recording. You should write no more than three words or a number in each space.

Study the table carefully and look at the example before moving on to the dialogue. Try and predict any possible answers. This will help you to pick out the key words later on.

Historic period	Notes
Example: Ancient Greece	Household waste, 1. _____ and _____ were recycled.
Pre-industrial times	2. _____ was melted down and recycled, and 3. _____ was used to make bricks.
4. _____	Citizens donated metals and cloth.
5. _____	Recycling aluminium uses 6. _____ percent less energy than new production.

### ▶ Listening task two: classification

For this type of question, you have to listen out for detail and show that you understand the relationships and connections between facts in the recording.

The following statements are true about which of these products according to the dialogue?

Statements	Products
7. The vast majority of this product is recycled in the UK. _____	Batteries
8. Recycling this product can be dangerous. _____	Glass
9. It is more environmentally friendly to reuse this product than to recycle it. _____	Plastic
10. Different types of this product cannot be mixed together. _____	Paper

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## ABOUT THE LISTENING TEST

### ▶ Listening task three: dialogue (Get two friends to read out loud, if possible!)

Two friends are preparing a presentation on recycling for a university course they are taking. Listen as they discuss their findings.

**Toby:** So Chris, have you come up with any useful information?

**Chris:** Well, I've been looking at some material in the library, and I've found out quite a lot on the history of recycling.

**Toby:** History? That could be useful in our presentation. I'd only thought of it as being a recent phenomenon.

**Chris:** No, far from it. Apparently we humans have been recycling for most of our history. Archaeological studies show that as far back as ancient Greece, people were recycling things like household waste, tools and pottery.

**Toby:** I suppose they had to make the best use of what they had around.

**Chris:** Yeah. Then, studies have found that in pre-industrial times, bronze was melted down and recycled repeatedly, and ash from fires was used to make bricks.

**Toby:** Right. It was all relatively simple back then though. When did modern recycling as we know it really begin?

**Chris:** It wasn't really until World War II that recycling took off on an industrial scale. A lot of countries urged citizens to donate metals and cloth as part of the patriotic war effort.

**Toby:** Of course, I remember learning about the collections of pots and pans when I was at school.

**Chris:** More recently, er... let me see. Ah, yes, there was big investment in recycling in the 1970s due to rising energy costs. They found that recycling aluminium, for example, only used five percent of the energy required to produce it from scratch.

**Toby:** I guess that had to do with the oil crisis back then. Well while you've been doing that, I've been looking at some of the products we commonly recycle today and making notes on some of the difficulties involved.

**Chris:** That sounds intriguing. What have you found out so far?

**Toby:** Well, it seems batteries are a high priority in a lot of countries.

**Chris:** Why's that?

**Toby:** The main reason is they contain heavy metals and toxic chemicals which can do a lot of damage to the environment. The problem is that there's a large variety of shapes and sizes of batteries, which makes sorting very difficult. They also have to be handled with extreme care.

**Chris:** Anything else?

**Toby:** Yep. I've also looked at the situation with glass. I've read that it makes up a large proportion of household waste these days, but fortunately it is relatively easy to recycle; according to one of the sites I looked at, 752,000 tons of glass is now recycled annually in the United Kingdom. They say it's an ideal material for recycling because it's virtually infinitely recyclable, although to be really green it's better to reuse the original bottles rather than to use recycled glass to produce new ones.

**Chris:** What about plastic? We go through so much of it these days.

**Toby:** Yeah, I know. I was just coming to that. Unfortunately, compared to other products, plastic is quite difficult to recycle. In Britain, for example, we only recycle 24 percent of our plastic bottles, which isn't much when you consider that 80 percent of paper is reused.

**Chris:** That's a massive difference! Why don't they recycle more of the stuff?

**Toby:** Well, according to a government information sheet I downloaded, compared to other materials, recycling plastic is very complex.

**Chris:** Don't they just melt it down?

**Toby:** Yes, but the problem is that there are so many different types of plastic, and they have to be separated before they are melted down. If different types are mixed together, they separate, a bit like oil and water, and they can't be reused.

**Chris:** I guess we should all just try and use fewer bottles and plastic bags.

**Toby:** You're probably right. Anyway, going back to paper for a minute, I've discovered that in 1972, a staggering... (fade)



PHOTO: MICHAEL KEARNEY, TAIPEI TIMES



Answers  
1. tools, pottery 2. bronze 3. ash 4. World War II (WWII) 5. 1970s  
6. 95 7. Paper 8. Batteries 9. Glass 10. Plastic