

### Objectives

By the end of this chapter you should be able to do these things:

- recognise cue words in MCQs;
- use cue words in stimulus, question or options to assist in identifying the correct answer;
- effectively eliminate incorrect responses;
- practise active listening;
- identify items based on objectives specific to each module.

### Exam Tip

Be sure to take a pencil to the exam.

## Introduction

Paper 1 has only recently been made into a multiple-choice paper. The aim is to test your knowledge and understanding of the main concepts across the syllabus. For this paper you are presented with 45 items organised into two sections – A and B. The items test either comprehension or language awareness and use. The stimulus material may be in the form of words, illustrations or a combination of both. Paper 1 accounts for 30% of your final grade.

Section A is the listening comprehension. It focuses on your ability to actively listen and then respond to the items on the exam paper. You will need to fully concentrate in order to understand the piece being read to you. This section has seven items and is based on Module 1.

Section B comprises 38 items. Items 8–15 are based on Module 1, items 16–30 are based on Module 2 and items 31–45 are based on Module 3. It is imperative that you are familiar with the objectives of the syllabus. This will help you to do well on this paper.

The aim of this chapter is to assist you in perfecting the techniques needed to complete Paper 1.

## Techniques for Section A

Section A is the listening comprehension.

You will be given two minutes to read through the items before the extract is read to you. Remember there are 7 test items, each with four options. You have about 15 seconds to read each item.

The extract will be from a poem or from a work of prose fiction.

The items in Section A will be based on:

- the main idea of the extract;
- details supporting the main idea;
- the purpose of the extract;
- strategies used to achieve the purpose;
- literary devices used in the extract;
- the type of discourse;
- the effectiveness of devices or techniques used in the extract;
- the meanings of expressions used in the extract.

### Step 1: Read the questions and options

You already know the items that will be in this section – they are always the same kinds of items (see list above) with slight variations. It is important though for you to read each item nevertheless.

As you read the items and options, focus on the key words and expressions.

Underline the key words and expressions in the items. Read the items and options aloud (in hushed tones) if that will help you to register what you need to listen for.

1. The MAIN idea of the extract is that Christmas
- A. is a time of celebration.
  - B. brought a positive change and created a light-hearted, festive atmosphere.
  - C. caused prices to drop and people to stop fighting.
  - D. is the best time of the year.

When you read this item you know you will be listening for the writer's key concept.

The answer you select should reflect the gist of what the extract is saying.

You already know that this extract will have something to do with Christmas. Now you need to listen for the details that tell you 'what about Christmas'.

The options should give you a clue about what you should listen for.

The options tend to capture bits and pieces of information from the piece but remember the function of the distractors – they may look like a possible answer because they carry a word or two mentioned in the extract, but ask yourself 'Is that what the extract is really about?'

3. The expression 'Never were destitutes more deserving' suggests that
- A. at Christmas poor people deserve help.
  - B. Christmas brought more destitutes.
  - C. at Christmas, more than any other time, people feel justified in giving to the poor.
  - D. destitutes did well throughout the year and should be rewarded at Christmas.

This item is asking you to interpret the expression based on the context of the extract.

While you are reading through the options, eliminate responses that you know right away are unsuitable.

Use what you have learnt in other test items.

Item 1 tells you that the extract is about Christmas, so this item therefore has to do with the Christmas season. The fact that this item is based at the interpretive level of comprehension should be a clue to tell you that the response you choose cannot express a literal idea.

worthy of / justified

4. What is the literary device used in 'The streets choked with slow but strident traffic'?
- A. Synecdoche
  - B. Metaphor
  - C. Personification
  - D. Paradox

Indirect comparison; choked – human – like; strident – loud, grating

For the items on literary devices you may not need to wait for the passage to select a response.

You can cross out and/or tick the options as you read them based on how the item is phrased.

Note that you can eliminate options (A) and (D). Neither of those are devices of comparison. You need to use the meanings of the other two devices to decide between them.

You could also use the meanings of the devices to select the correct option straightaway.

**Note:** You **must know** the different literary devices.

Some items may give you a list of literary devices and you have to determine which are used in the extract. In that case, you must quickly remind yourself what each device is and as the reader reads the extract you listen for the devices and jot them down as you hear them.

## Step 2: Listen for the gist of the extract

The first time the passage is read, do not attempt to make any notes.

Focus fully on the words and sentences of the extract.

Your aim is to understand the main idea of the text.

When the speaker pauses, try to quickly and succinctly jot down in note form what the extract is about.

Listen to the extract now. It is available at <https://www.collins.co.uk/page/Caribbean>. (Alternatively, you can read it on page 154.)

### Example of notes made during pause

Bad year, things scarce

Christmas, crowded, people shopping, streets choked = traffic jam

Clumsy toys, bright signs, decorations

Gaiety (cheerfulness)

Year ending well

The notes you write here should assist you with responding to all seven test items, so you need to listen carefully so that you can get as much information as you possibly can.

Item 2 generally asks about details relating to the main idea so these notes should help you to answer that item.

Remember though that you are not allowed to start answering the items until the examiner gives you the go-ahead.

### Step 3: Listening for specific information and detailed understanding

When the extract is being read the second time, keep in mind the seven items you will need to respond to.

You will be listening for specific details based on the key words you underlined in each test item.

As you pick up key words and details make your jottings, preferably next to the test item to which they are relevant.

Do not be dismayed if you are not able to write notes for each item.

**Instructions:** You will hear an extract. It will be read twice. Listen carefully before answering the items based on the extract.

1. The MAIN idea of the extract is that Christmas
  - A. is a time of celebration.
  - B. brought a positive change and created a light-hearted, festive atmosphere.
  - C. caused prices to drop and people to stop fighting.
  - D. is the best time of the year.

2. Which of the following details support the main idea?
  - I. Rosy-cheeked Santa Clauses
  - II. Fights in shops
  - III. Prancing reindeer
  - A. I and II only
  - B. I and III only
  - C. II and III only
  - D. I, II and III

People shopping, decorations everywhere  
(bright sign, Santa Claus, reindeer, snow)  
People seem happy

3. The expression 'Never were destitutes more deserving' suggests that
  - A. at Christmas poor people deserve help.
  - B. Christmas brought more destitutes.
  - C. at Christmas, more than any other time, people feel justified in giving to the poor.
  - D. destitutes did well throughout the year and should be rewarded at Christmas.

4. What is the literary device used in 'The streets choked with slow but strident traffic'?
  - A. Synecdoche
  - B. Metaphor
  - C. Personification
  - D. Paradox

Indirect comparison; choked – human-like;  
strident – loud, grating

5. What is the main literary device used in the extract?
  - A. Personification //
  - B. Imagery /////
  - C. Metaphor
  - D. Irony

For an item like this, you may not be able to make note of all the examples and, in fact, you don't need to.  
Instead make a mark next to the relevant option each time you hear an example of that literary device.

6. Which of the following types of discourse is used by the writer in this extract?

- A. Narration
- B. Exposition
- C. Argumentation
- D. Description

Tell a story x

Give info x

Argue points / persuade x

Paint pic / describe scene ✓

These are the kind of notes you would make for this item as you read through the items.

As you hear the passage read you can put a tick or a cross beside the definitions.

7. Which of the following comments BEST expresses the effectiveness of the phrase 'the urgent gaiety that belonged to the season'?

- A. It presents a visual picture of the flurry and excitement that came with Christmas.
- B. It creates a sense of urgency in the audience.
- C. It shows that Christmas has a sense of happiness.
- D. It helps the audience to visualise how happy the people were.

Remember when you are asked about effectiveness, you are really being asked 'How well did something work?'. Therefore, think about what the expression does, what it helps you to understand, feel, think and imagine about what is presented to you in the extract.

### Step 4: Once you are told to begin, do so.

The first three have been done for you. Review the test items and notes above.

Maybe listen to the extract again, and practise with items 4–7.

Check your answers online at <https://www.collins.co.uk/page/Caribbean> or on page 156.

1. (A) (B) (C) (D)
2. (A) (B) (C) (D)
3. (A) (B) (C) (D)
4. (A) (B) (C) (D)
5. (A) (B) (C) (D)
6. (A) (B) (C) (D)
7. (A) (B) (C) (D)

## General pointers

### Before listening

- Prepare to listen. Focus on key words and expressions in the items and options.

### While listening

- Focus on key words and expressions. (Remember you underlined them in the items before you.)
- Take notes to support your memory.
- Focus on the intonation of the reader. (This usually helps with understanding the extract.)

### After listening

- Think about the extract again. Ask yourself if you have understood the main points.
- Repeat to yourself (mentally) what the extract is about.
- Summarise what you understand the main idea to be.
- Before going on to respond to the test items review your notes.

### Study Tip

To practise listening comprehension skills, select some poems from your CXC® Poetry text and get in groups with your friends and go through as many as you can.

Each of you take a turn reading a poem and then attempt to write responses based on the different areas you know this section will cover.

Share and discuss your responses with each other.

There are also two listening comprehensions for you to practise with at the end of Chapter 2.