IELTS Listening Tactics Discussion Questions and Tips
Discuss these aspects of the listening task(s) that you did or have in front of you:

What things about the task(s) make them difficult to complete? How can you tackle those things?

What things about the task(s) can make them easier to complete? How can you use those things to help you?

Put these things into the two categories above, for example marking help with + and hindrances with -. Some things could be considered both a help and a hindrance, in which case you should put them in both categories.
1. Adding extra information which is wrong to your answer leads to no mark
2. All spelling and punctuation must be 100% correct
3. Answers which have exactly the same meaning as the words which are in the recording should also get a mark
4. Compound nouns must be written correctly (one word, two words or two words with a hyphen)
5. Dates and other numbers are usually pronounced the British English way
6. Each of the listening extracts could have any of the question types
7. How many words and/ or numbers are allowed in each gap varies a lot
8. It's impossible to predict anything about a multiple choice answer before listening (although it is worth thinking about what synonyms you might hear or how what you hear could be different to the options such as being about a different person)
9. Most listening extracts have more than one kind of question type, sometimes with a gap in the recording between the question types and sometimes not
10. Most of the listening texts are in an academic setting
11. People often make mistakes when transferring their answers to the answer sheet
12. Signalling phrases such as "but in fact…" often suggest that the right or wrong option has just been said or is just coming

13. The first recording starts with an example
14. The information for the first question is usually quite a while after the beginning of each recording
15. The information for the last question is usually a while before the end of the recording
16. The kinds of interactions in each part of the exam is always the same (one person asking questions and making notes, a speech giving instructions on things like using the library, a two- or three-way conversation on a topic such as a lecture they've just heard, and a lecture)
17. The words around a gap will usually be different from the recording
18. The words in a gap will be exactly the same as in the recording
19. There are a limited number of question types (multiple choice, gapfill, summary completion, etc)
20. There are no half marks – answers must be completely correct or get no mark
21. There are no strong (native speaker or non-native speaker) accents
22. There are usually some Australian accents
23. There is a bit of extra time to check your answers before the next recording is introduced
24. There is often something after the answer that confirms/ reinforces it
25. There is often something before the answer that can help you anticipate that the answer is coming
26. There is often something before the answer that can help you anticipate what the answer will be
27. There is plenty of time to read through the task before the recording starts
28. They might not spell names which are also common words (e.g. "Mr Brown")
29. They will spell all names (e.g. of places) which aren't also common words, e.g. Marlborough
30. Words in gaps must also fit grammatically (e.g. be an adverb if that fits the gap) but grammatical words like determiners can sometimes be left out (and sometimes have to be to stay under the maximum number or words and/ or numbers)
31. Words which aren't names shouldn't be written starting with capital letters
32. Writing not enough information can sometimes lead to no mark, e.g. writing "men" where the answer should be "tall men"
33. Writing over the given maximum of words and/ or numbers leads to no mark
34. You can also guess during the transferring answers to your answer sheet stage
35. You can only hear each recording once
36. You can usually guess something about what information is needed in gaps, e.g. that it is a date or length of time
37. You can write numbers as figures rather than words
38. You can write on or underline things on the question paper
39. You have ten minutes to transfer your answers to the answer sheet at the end of the test
40. "Double" is sometimes used when dictating numbers and words

Discuss how you can use the things that make the exam easier and tackle the things that make the exam more difficult.

What other tactics can you use in the exam?

What should you first do when you open the Listening paper and see the first task?

What things can vary in the exam? How can you make sure you aren't caught out by those things?

What should you do while the instructions are being explained?

What kinds of things should you underline?

What should you do if you don't know the answer?/ How can you make it easier to guess?

What should you do if you are sure you have all the answers before the recording finishes?

What things can make you lose marks at the transferring answers stage? How can you avoid those problems?

How can you make exam listening practice at home realistic?

What should you do after you do an exam listening at home?

How else can you prepare for the listening exam outside of class?

Choose a top five from this list:

◇ Australian movies or radio (e.g. ABC radio podcasts)
◇ English language learning radio programmes
◇ English language pop songs
◇ Graded readers with recordings
◇ Learning academic vocabulary
◇ Listening again to exam recordings after you have already read the tapescript
◇ Lots of timed exam practice
◇ IELTS Listening self-study books
◇ Radio documentaries (e.g. BBC science podcasts)
◇ Radio news
◇ Radio with English-speaking DJs
◇ Recordings of lectures (e.g. Royal Society lecture series BBC podcasts)
◇ Sitcoms
◇ TV documentaries, e.g. nature documentaries
◇ TV dramas
◇ TV news
◇ Textbook listenings (IELTS or other EFL textbooks)
◇ Videos of lectures (e.g. TED.com)
◇ YouTube videos of people taking IELTS Speaking tests