

Typical errors in IELTS Listening

The lines below are real answers from IELTS Listening tests, but with errors put in so that they would get no mark. Find one error in each of the lines below. Slash (/) means that more than one answer was correct in the exam, in which case only one answer has been made wrong below.

- 1 1 1/2 year
- 2 12.5 percents
- 3 15 month
- 4 20 balloon
- 5 21 may
- 6 25 dollar
- 7 30 enmore road
- 8 5.99\$
- 9 57 book
- 10 65 paunds
- 11 900 mile
- 12 Batchelor of Science
- 13 bristol
- 14 Wenesday
- 15 a dark plaice
- 16 a set of dictionary
- 17 a six-months break
- 18 a three-hours film
- 19 academic reserchers
- 20 animals language
- 21 anual fee
- 22 aproximately
- 23 asesment
- 24 asia
- 25 at 27 April
- 26 atendance

- 27 bathroom right
- 28 between 1800 to 2000
- 29 boats/ plesure craft
- 30 british
- 31 broke door
- 32 carry out researches
- 33 casles
- 34 cellular researches
- 35 check over your works
- 36 churchs
- 37 citys
- 38 clime the tower
- 39 collecting datas
- 40 considerable reduce
- 41 cookking
- 42 cotteges
- 43 cristals
- 44 currant account
- 45 danjerous
- 46 dicsionary
- 47 disabel
- 48 disawdered
- 49 driverble
- 50 each graphs
- 51 eight hundreds
- 52 enviroment
- 53 every hours
- 54 evidense
- 55 excesive
- 56 exercises science
- 57 facilitys

- 58 fea
- 59 flushs
- 60 friday
- 61 from 54,000 and 72,000
- 62 german
- 63 give talk
- 64 go out for diner
- 65 graund
- 66 guide tours
- 67 half ful
- 68 halls of residence/ living quarter
- 69 hiden TV cameras
- 70 high quality vegetables
- 71 histories and economics
- 72 ilegal
- 73 in Friday
- 74 in week
- 75 jem
- 76 july
- 77 kitchen-curtains
- 78 kquality
- 79 lable
- 80 laundries
- 81 leafs
- 82 lecturers two busy
- 83 lekture halls
- 84 lesure activities
- 85 lightings
- 86 loafs
- 87 local crafts men
- 88 long trouser

- 89 maching pairs
- 90 mane workshop
- 91 mass medias
- 92 mountins
- 93 north africa
- 94 nurssing
- 95 office staffs
- 96 ordinry white light
- 97 orful food
- 98 parkings
- 99 peace of string
- 100 picnick
- 101 powerfull computer programs
- 102 questionnaire
- 103 regular dayly intake
- 104 report righting
- 105 rocksalt
- 106 sertain plants
- 107 sertificate
- 108 shoping
- 109 shure
- 110 similar/ almost same
- 111 sixteen rose lane
- 112 skimming
- 113 some musics
- 114 some photo
- 115 space/ loom
- 116 speach
- 117 specialist nowledge
- 118 student news paper
- 119 tekhnical

- 120 the hole family
- 121 the roads system
- 122 the root home
- 123 three hundred millions
- 124 timbers
- 125 to late
- 126 tower of London
- 127 traffics
- 128 trainings
- 129 two thousands
- 130 unnatural
- 131 walk strait past/ pass/ ignore

What kinds of errors are there above? What rules should you keep in mind to not make those kinds of errors?

Use the categories below to help with any you weren't sure about the corrections of.
Capital letters needed

Determiner needed

Different plural forms

Double letter not needed

Double letters needed

Plural "s" needed

Plural "s" not needed

Silent letters

Sounds which could be spelt a different way

Wrong formation of compound nouns

Wrong part of speech

Wrong preposition

Wrong word formation

Homophones

Letter combinations not used in English

Minimal pairs (two words that only vary by one sound)

Mistakes writing currencies and other units

*Find examples to make more precise generalisations/ rules about the ones in **bold** above. For example, there are three categories of words above which need capital letters, with at least two examples of each in the list above.*

Find at least one example of each of the rules below.

Capital letters needed – place names, days and months, languages and nationalities

Determiner needed – meaning one with countable nouns

Different plural forms – y changes to ies, irregular plurals with -f changing to -ves, words which are almost always used in their Latin-based plural form, +es to sound like iz with sounds which are similar to s and z

Double letter not needed – with –ed and –ing following long vowel sounds

Double letters needed – short stressed vowel sound followed by consonant has consonant doubled to keep the short vowel sound

Plural “s” needed – lengths of time and other units with figures apart from one, nouns which are always plural, determiners meaning more than one with countable nouns

Plural “s” not needed – first noun in compound nouns, uncountable nouns, large numbers, determiners always followed by singular nouns, adjective with a number before a noun

Silent letters – sounds lost in fast natural speech

Sounds which could be spelt a different way – soft c, sh, schwa, soft g, ow, long er, long ee, short i, long or, final (dark) l, short e, ch, k

Wrong formation of compound nouns – the first word in a compound noun is singular, rarely used compound nouns tend to be two words, very common compound nouns tend to be one word

Wrong part of speech – adjectives are often made from past participles, adverb with verb and adjective

Wrong preposition – on with days and dates, prepositions which go together

Wrong word formation – y changes to i when adding a suffix, don't confuse words and affixes, don't change root words when adding prefixes

Homophones (= words with the same sound but different spelling and different meanings)

Letter combinations not used in English

Minimal pairs

Mistakes writing currencies and other units

Suggested answers

- Capital letters needed – place names (North Africa, Asia, Tower of London, Bristol, 30 Enmore Road, 16 Rose Lane), days and months (Friday, 21 May, July), languages and nationalities (British, German)
- Determiner needed – meaning one with countable nouns (in a week, give a talk), similar/ almost the same
- Different plural forms – y changes to ies (cities, facilities), irregular plurals with -f changing to -ves (leaves, loaves), words which are almost always used in their Latin-based plural form (collecting data, mass media), +es to sound like iz with sounds which are similar to s and z (churches, flushes)
- Double letter not needed – with –ed and –ing following long vowel sounds (cooking, nursing)
- Double letters needed – short stressed vowel sound followed by consonant has consonant doubled to keep the short vowel sound (skimming, shopping, hidden TV cameras, go out for dinner), excessive, questionnaire, approximately, attendance, assessment, annual fee
- Plural “s” needed – lengths of time and other units with figures apart from one (900 miles, 1 1/2 years, 20 balloons, 15 months, 25 dollars, 57 books), nouns which are always plural (long trousers, halls of residence/ living quarters), determiners meaning more than one with countable nouns (a set of dictionaries, some photos)
- Plural “s” not needed – first noun in compound nouns (animal language, exercise science, the road system), uncountable nouns (laundry, training, timber, carry out research, check over your work, lighting, parking, traffic, office staff, some music, history and economics, cellular research), large numbers (eight hundred, two thousand, three hundred million), determiners always followed by singular nouns (every hour, each graph), adjective with a number before a noun (a three-hour film, a six-month break)
- Silent letters – sounds lost in fast natural speech (ordinary white light, high quality vegetables), Wednesday, environment, specialist knowledge, castles
- Sounds which could be spelt a different way – soft c (certificate, certain plants, evidence), sh (dictionary, sure), schwa (cottages, drivable), soft g (dangerous, gem), ow (ground, 65 pounds), long er (academic researchers), long ee (speech, fee), short i (crystals, mountains), long or (awful food, disordered), final (dark) l (label, disable), short e (leisure activities, boats/ pleasure craft), ch (Bachelor of Science, matching pairs), k (technical, picnic)
- Wrong formation of compound nouns –the first word in a compound noun is singular (animal language, exercise science, the road system), rarely used compound nouns tend to be two words (kitchen curtains, rock salt), very common compound nouns tend to be one word (student newspaper, local craftsmen)
- Wrong part of speech – adjectives are often made from past participles (broken door, guided tours), adverb with verb and adjective (considerably reduce, too late, lecturers too busy)
- Wrong preposition – on with days and dates (on Friday, on 27 April), prepositions which go together (between 1800 and 2000, from 54,000 to 72,000)
- Wrong word formation – y changes to i when adding a suffix (cities, facilities, regular

daily intake), don't confuse words and affixes (powerful computer programs, half full), don't change root words when adding prefixes (illegal, unnatural)

- Homophones (= words with the same sound but different spelling and different meanings) – main workshop, climb the tower, the whole family, piece of string, a dark place, walk straight past/ pass/ ignore, current account, the route home, report writing
- Letter combinations not used in English – lecture halls, quality
- Minimal pairs – space/ room, bathroom light
- Mistakes writing currencies and other units – \$5.99, 12.5 percent