

**“On the skiing slopes”. Comprehension Questions**

<p>1. We often imagine skiing as a sport...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Where snow melts and avalanches happen</li> <li>B. Where appearance counts more than security</li> <li>C. Where quantity counts more than quality</li> <li>D. Where danger counts more than appearance</li> <li>E. Where appearance counts more than performance x</li> <li>F. Where appearance counts more than ability</li> </ul>	<p>6. What two things make cross-country skis different from more common downhill skis?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. They are not waxed</li> <li>B. They are twice as long</li> <li>C. They are half as long</li> <li>D. They have no bindings at the back of the boot</li> <li>E. They are wider</li> <li>F. They are thinner</li> <li>G. They have an extra set of bindings at the back of the boot</li> <li>H. They have no bindings at the front of the boot</li> </ul>
<p>2. Who usually start avalanches?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Freestylers</li> <li>B. Off-piste skiers</li> <li>C. Toboggans</li> <li>D. The neighbours</li> <li>E. Snowboarders.</li> <li>F. Ice-skaters</li> <li>G. Olympic ski champions</li> <li>H. Cross-country skiers.</li> </ul>	<p>7. What special soles fix onto boots, letting you run in the snow without sinking in?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Cross-country skis</li> <li>B. Wings</li> <li>C. Snowboards</li> <li>D. Tennis rackets</li> <li>E. Snowshoes</li> <li>F. Ice skates</li> <li>G. Toboggans</li> <li>H. Snow boots</li> </ul>
<p>3. What are more and more skiers wearing on the slopes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Ski passes</li> <li>B. Sunglasses</li> <li>C. Snowshoes</li> <li>D. Goggles</li> <li>E. Thinner skis</li> <li>F. Motorcycle helmets</li> <li>G. Fluorescent clothes</li> <li>H. Helmets</li> </ul>	<p>8. What two things can you not control on a toboggan?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Safety</li> <li>B. Weather conditions</li> <li>C. Temperature</li> <li>D. Speed</li> <li>E. Gravity</li> <li>F. Time</li> <li>G. Direction</li> <li>H. Distance</li> </ul>
<p>4. What do most ski resorts offer to snowboarders who wish to improve their technique?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Snowparks</li> <li>B. Mountain guides</li> <li>C. Avalanches</li> <li>D. Olympic ski champions</li> <li>E. Sleigh rides</li> <li>F. Ski lifts</li> <li>G. Ski slopes</li> <li>H. Toboggans</li> </ul>	<p>9. Why does the “flying man” have trouble flying?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. He doesn't have any wings</li> <li>B. He doesn't know what pain is</li> <li>C. His skis are broken</li> <li>D. His wings are frozen with ice</li> <li>E. His wings are too small</li> <li>F. He suffers from vertigo</li> <li>G. He is an endangered species</li> </ul>
<p>5. According to the video, what two types of people should not do free-styling?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. People who get airsick</li> <li>B. People who are good at football</li> <li>C. People with vertigo</li> <li>D. People suffering from migraines</li> <li>E. People with a lot of stamina</li> <li>F. People without a ski pass</li> <li>G. People who don't like sliding about</li> <li>H. People suffering from backache</li> </ul>	<p>10. What four places do people from snowy countries go to on skis?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. To bed</li> <li>B. Into town</li> <li>C. To the shops</li> <li>D. To work</li> <li>E. To the Olympic Games</li> <li>F. To the neighbours</li> <li>G. To school</li> <li>H. To church</li> </ul>

## “On the skiing slopes”. Tapescript

1 We often imagine skiing as a sport where appearance counts more than performance. Nonetheless skiing can  
2 be a dangerous sport: this skier hasn't noticed that the temperature is rising and the snow is beginning to melt.

3 As he goes down, a lab of snow breaks away and creates an **avalanche**. Luckily for him, he manages to stop,  
4 otherwise he could have been carried away by the mass of snow.

5 In general, avalanches are started by off-piste skiers, but sometimes it's the ski-run supervisors who start  
6 them with dynamite before the slopes open, for the sake of security.

7 Although avalanches present a real danger, you don't risk much if you ski on the marked runs, just like this  
8 snowboarder. Having said that, it's the best place to crash into someone else! That's why there are more and  
9 more skiers who wear a helmet.

10 **Snowboarding** has recently become fashionable. To train, or improve your technique, there are snowparks in  
11 all major ski resorts, reserved for snowboarders.

12 **Free-styling** is highly inadvisable for people suffering from vertigo or backache. If skiing is an expensive  
13 sport, free-styling is twice as expensive, since you pay for the same ski pass, but stay as little as possible on  
14 the slopes!

15 For those afraid of speed, there's **cross-country skiing**. The skis are thinner and there are no bindings at the  
16 back of the boot. It's a very demanding sport that requires lots of stamina.

17 That's why most of the future Olympic ski champions come from countries where it often snows. It makes  
18 sense, really: they use their skis to go to work, into town, to school or to the neighbours'. You'd think they  
19 even sleep with their skis on!

20 For those who don't like sliding about, there are always **snowshoes**. No they're not tennis rackets, but special  
21 soles that fix onto boots.

22 They enable you to run in the snow without sinking in. Inhabitants of snowy countries might be talented at  
23 skiing, but they're a lot less good at football. That's understandable: playing football with snowshoes on isn't  
24 that easy!

25 At the end of the day, people who still want to play in the snow can go **tobogganing**. Don't bother trying to  
26 control your speed or your direction, there's no brake and no steering wheel!

27 For the nature lovers, the mountains are of particular interest; since you can find rare birds there. To catch  
28 sight of them, you only have to wait... Here's one!

29 Looking at the way it's flying, it must be an endangered species. It's a bird called the “**flying man**”, and as  
30 you can see, he doesn't have any wings. This makes it impossible for him to fly for more than a few seconds.

31 Takeoff never lasts long, flight time even less, and yet landing lasts a long time. A very long time! You'd  
32 think that he's hurt himself very badly, but he doesn't know what pain is. Nothing bothers him. An odd  
33 animal, don't you think?. Even odder is the fact that he'll throw himself off the same mountain tomorrow!

## Questionnaire

1. How would you value this listening exercise in general?

- ① very bad    ② Not very good    ③ average    ④ good    ⑤ very good

2. Point out the aspects you liked and the ones you disliked from the listening exercise (both text and questions).

☺ <b>LIKE</b>	☹ <b>DISLIKE</b>

3. How competent do you consider yourself in English listening comprehension?

- ① poor    ② average    ③ good    ④ very good    ⑤ excellent

4. Did you get any wrong answer in the exercise? If so, how many?

- ① + than 4    ② 3-4    ③ 2    ④ 1    ⑤ 0

## Performance checklists

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Performance checklist for listening**

<b>Before listening</b>	<b>Yes</b>
I understand the task (what I have to do after I have finished listening)	
I know what I must pay attention to while I listen	
I have asked the teacher for clarifications, if necessary	
I have attempted to recall all that I know about the topic	
I have attempted to recall what I know about the type of text I will listen to and the type of information I will probably hear	
I have made predictions on what I am about to hear	
I am ready to pay attention and concentrate on what I am about to hear	
I have encouraged myself	
<b>After listening</b>	<b>Yes</b>
I concentrated on the task to be accomplished	
I attempted to verify my predictions	
I revised my predictions accordingly	
I focused my attention on the information needed to accomplish the task	
I used background noises, tone of voice, and other clues to help me guess at the meaning of words I did not understand	
I used key words, cognates, and word families to understand the text	
I used my knowledge of the context and of text structure to understand the text	
I evaluated the logic/plausibility of what I understood	

(Place a check mark in the 'yes' column when verifying each statement)

In order to improve my performance, next time I will \_\_\_\_\_

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Performance checklist for listening comprehension**

Question	After first listening			Before second listening
	Guess?	Reason(s)?	V	Other possibilities?
Where? (setting?)				
When? (time? Time of day? Season?)				
Who? (speakers, their relationship?)				
How? (tone? Mood?)				
What? (What is it about?)				
Why? (goal? Particular circumstances?)				

V= verification (check in this column when your guess has been verified)

What I found easy: \_\_\_\_\_

What I found difficult: \_\_\_\_\_

What I will do the next time: \_\_\_\_\_

Vandergrift, L. (1999)

<b>Useful websites to teach &amp; practice listening comprehension</b>
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Here is a list of some interesting web sites which you can use for both teaching and practicing English as a foreign language.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/video\\_and\\_audio/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/video_and_audio/default.stm). Wonderful resource to read and watch the World News. A short summary of the news can be watched by clicking on “One Minute World News”

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/>. B <http://www.radio-locator.com/?xyz=2> . These are two great resources to listen to the radio.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/>. This is the BBC section designed for learners/users of English as L2.

Apart from exercises on grammar, vocabulary and reading, the listening section provides us with listening extracts we can listen to by just clicking on the icon, a full tapescript which can be downloaded in pdf format, listening comprehension questions with answers and vocabulary practice on the extract listened.

<http://www.esl-lab.com/>. This is a virtual language laboratory in which extracts are classified according to different levels of difficulty. This web provides us with pre-, during- and post-listening activities plus a full tapescript for each exercise.

A. <http://www.lyrics.com>, B. <http://www.azlyrics.com>, C. <http://www.lyricsworld.com> They are web pages where you can find the lyrics for almost every song.

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) . This is the most visited page for those who are looking for videos of any kind. Just type the topic you are interested in on the search box and you will have a great variety of videos.

<http://www.script-o-rama.com>/Useful links to scripts if you want to use this material with or without the film in the English classroom.

[www.apple.com/es/itunes](http://www.apple.com/es/itunes). This web site offers us a very wide variety of podcasts (sound & video files). There are many different options in different languages and also a specific link to podcasts to teach, learn and practice in English as a foreign language. The files can be easily downloaded on your own computer or even on your mp3 player, so you can listen to them whenever and wherever you want.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/podcasts/directory/station/radio4/>. This is also a useful web pages where you can download podcasts in English.

<http://www.dictationonline.com> This is a useful web to practice dictation

A. <http://www.howsay.com> B. <http://www.fonetiks.org> C. <http://www.oddcast.com/home/tts>. These are useful web pages to practice pronunciation

[www.xlingo.com](http://www.xlingo.com). This is a language exchange community where you can practice any language of your choice by simply registering and stating the languages you speak and the ones you would like to practice.

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net> On this web page you can download the program Audacity for free. This program allows you to manipulate, record and edit any kind of audio material.

Moviemaker. This is a program you can find in your Office Pack and it can be used with any audiovisual material to create your own film, select only the extracts you are interested in, include subtitles in whatever language you like, include new or different sounds or voices, etc.

<b>References</b>
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Vandergrift, L. (1999): “Facilitating second language listening comprehension: acquiring successful strategies”. ELT Journal Volume 53/3: 168-176.