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8 Exam Preparation Units
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Simply LanguageCert International ESOL Level C2 **Mastery**

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Mastery C2	Mastery

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Unit 1

Section A Vocabulary

Extreme Weather

- **scorching** extremely hot [Word family: scorch, scorcher]
- **flash flood** (a sudden, unexpected flood)
- **devastation** when something is completely destroyed [Word family: devastate, devastating]
- **drought** long period of time without rain that leads to everything being too dry
- **freezing** extremely cold [Word family: freeze, frozen]
- **clap of thunder** sudden loud noise made in a storm
- **uninhabitable** for a place that no one can live in [Word family: inhabit, inhabitant, habitable, habitat]
- **visibility** the conditions that affect how far ahead one can see [Word family: visible, vision, invisible]
- **avalanche** a large amount of snow that suddenly moves down a mountain
- **relief effort** when there is an organised attempt to help people after a disaster
- **parched** extremely dry
- **wildfire** a sudden, uncontrolled fire in a natural environment
- **dust storm** a storm with clouds of dust carried in the air
- **blizzard** a severe snowstorm with strong winds
- **exposure** the state of being open to unpleasant, dangerous or difficult conditions [Word family: expose]
- **deluge** a large flood/amount of water
- **hypothermia** the condition of having a very low body temperature
- **lightning strike** when lightning hits an object, person or the ground
- **humid** warm and damp air [Word family: humidity]
- **gust** sudden strong wind [Word family: gusty]

1. Use the words/phrases in the box, on the right, to complete the article.

Global weather - From one extreme to the other

As man continues to pollute and abuse the Earth, we are experiencing more and more extreme weather. At one end of the scale we have vast areas of desert where the land is (1) **parched** due to months, if not years of (2) **drought** In such areas, (3) **scorching** temperatures make the environment (4) **uninhabitable** and even plant life struggles to survive. Frequent (5) **dust storms** sting the eyes of anyone attempting to travel across such areas. In contrast to this, global warming is also feeding tropical storms that create (6) **flash floods** and whole villages can be washed away by the (7) **deluge** of muddy water that follows these violent storms. Trees, people and buildings can also be hit by (8) **lightning strikes** that flash down from the sky in a blinding moment of pure electricity. These examples of extreme weather can cause absolute (9) **devastation** and demand millions of pounds in the heartbreaking (10) **relief efforts** that are desperately needed after such tragic events.



Words & Phrases

deluge
parched
uninhabitable
dust storms
lightning strikes
relief efforts
drought
flash floods
devastation
scorching

2. Use the words/phrases from the original vocabulary box to complete these sentences. Make sure you use the correct form.

1. My hat was blown off by a sudden *gust* of wind.
2. Many skiers were buried under the snow in the unexpected *avalanche* that fell down the mountain.
3. The thick fog made *visibility* so bad that we couldn't drive.
4. After our house had been flooded, it was *uninhabitable* so we had to stay in a hotel for several weeks.
5. Thousands of trees were burnt down in the uncontrollable *wild fires*
6. After two hours of being stuck on the mountain, the climber was suffering from *hypothermia*
7. The dogs were frightened of the loud *claps of thunder* during the storm.
8. It was so *humid* that I couldn't get dry after my shower.
9. You can't go outside without a coat, it's *freezing*
10. I burned my feet when I tried to walk on the *scorching* sand.

3. Read the text below. Pay attention to the words and phrases in **bold**

The unexpected storm

It had been **boiling** for the entire week. Everyone was beginning to get tired of the **heatwave** and the beach was the only place to get some relief from the unbearable heat. I lay on my back, floating in the warm water. There was a strange feeling that I couldn't quite put my finger on. The **atmosphere** was changing and as I looked up to the sky I noticed that for the first time in ages it was becoming **overcast**.



The brilliant blue sky of the last few weeks was **rapidly** disappearing before my eyes. To my **astonishment** I felt a few small drops of water on my face. It wasn't proper rain, just a bit of **drizzle**. I was enjoying the refreshing feel of it when suddenly a huge clap of thunder crashed right above my head. I was **petrified**. I looked to the beach to see hundreds of people picking up their things and **breaking into** a run. I swam as fast as I could to the beach and followed them as the sky opened and it started to **rain cats and dogs**. The heatwave was well and truly over.

4. Replace the parts of the sentences in brackets with the correct form of words from the article.

1. There's no need to put up the umbrella, this *drizzle* [light rain] won't make us very wet.
2. Before a storm you can feel the *atmosphere* [air] changing.
3. The children *broke into* [started to do] laughter at the funny clown.
4. When I saw how big the spider was I was *petrified* [very frightened].
5. It's too *overcast* [cloudy] to get much of a suntan today.
6. We had the air conditioning on all the time during the *heatwave* [period of hot weather].
7. It's *boiling* [very hot] in here, let's open the windows.
8. I got wet running the short distance to my car because it was *raining cats and dogs* [raining heavily].
9. Although I liked Jane at first, I am *rapidly* [quickly] going off her.
10. To my *astonishment* [surprise] I got the job despite being late for the interview.

5. Use the word given in capitals at the end of each sentence to form a word that fits the gap.

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. The weather is so <i>unpredictable</i> today that I don't know what to wear. | PREDICT |
| 2. Hundreds of people died in the <i>devastating</i> earthquake. | DEVASTATE |
| 3. The <i>inhabitants</i> of the village tried to escape from the avalanche. | INHABIT |
| 4. The beautiful rainbow over the sea was a wonderful <i>vision</i> . | VISIBLE |
| 5. Too much unpredictable <i>exposure</i> to the sun can cause skin cancer. | EXPOSE |
| 6. This <i>humidity</i> is too much for me, I can barely breathe. | HUMID |
| 7. Wow, what a <i>scorcher</i> today has been! | SCORCH |
| 8. Seeing the tsunami approaching was absolutely <i>petrifying</i> . | PETRIFY |

Idioms connected to the weather

6. Read the sentences below and match the idioms in **bold** to their meanings in the box below.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. I'm not going out for dinner tonight as I'm feeling a bit under the weather . | c |
| 2. Gill was on cloud nine after passing the exam with a distinction. | f |
| 3. Come rain or shine , Bob walks his dog every day. | j |
| 4. We had a small dinner party to break the ice when our new housemate moved in. | h |
| 5. I'd love to go for a coffee but I am snowed under with work and I just don't have time. | a |
| 6. Don't worry about me, it's just a cold and I'll be right as rain in a day or two. | g |
| 7. I'm not nervous about the exam at all. It will be a breeze . | d |
| 8. I lost my job last week but every cloud has a silver lining because I got an even better one today. | i |
| 9. Why don't you stop worrying so much and throw caution to the wind and see what happens? | b |
| 10. All we can do is ride out the storm and hope that no one loses their job. | e |

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. have too much to do | f. be very happy |
| b. take a risk | g. feel well |
| c. feel unwell | h. get to know someone |
| d. be easy | i. there is always a positive side |
| e. wait until something improves | j. whatever the weather |

7. Complete the sentences below using the correct form of some of the idioms above.

- I thought the interview would be challenging, but actually it *was a breeze*.
- I'm thinking about *throwing caution to the wind* and selling my house in order to travel around the world.
- I think I am in shock after the accident but I'm sure I *will be right as rain* if I sit down for a moment.
- George visits his grandparents every Sunday *come rain or shine*.
- He started a conversation to *break the ice* with the man sitting next to him.
- Father is furious with you at the moment so you had better avoid him for a while and *ride out the storm*.

8. Fill the gaps in the following sentences with the correct answer (a, b or c).

1. It's at work because the heating has broken down.
a. humid **b. freezing** c. gusty
2. The has led to the river drying up.
a. drought b. drizzle c. dust storm
3. Don't worry that you won't be able to cope, it will be a
a. deluge b. scorcher **c. breeze**
4. I can't stay in this dirty hotel, it is
a. uninhabitable b. parched c. devastating
5. Planes dropped water on the forest to try to put out the
a. heatwave b. avalanche **c. wildfire**
6. Because of the thick cloud, was down to two or three metres.
a. visibility b. atmosphere c. hypothermia
7. She was when the vicious dog ran towards her.
a. boiling **b. petrified** c. overcast
8. I believe that every cloud has a lining.
a. golden b. diamond **c. silver**
9. The house was damaged by a lightning
a. strike b. clap c. punch
10. Don't go outside now, it's raining cats and
a. birds b. fish **c. dogs**



9. Are the following statements **True** or **False**?

1. A heatwave only usually lasts for a day.
2. Parched land needs to be watered.
3. It would be difficult to ride a bike in a blizzard.
4. You could easily sit outside and read a newspaper in gusty weather.
5. Relief efforts are often put in place after a natural disaster.
6. If you are an adventurous person you don't mind throwing caution to the wind.
7. Most people feel under the weather after a holiday in the sun.
8. You would probably be on cloud nine if you won the lottery.

True / **False**
True / False
True / False
 True / **False**
True / False
True / False
 True / **False**
True / False



LISTENING Part 1

The listening task and format

In Part 1 of the listening exam you will be asked to listen twice to six short sentences. The sentences will include descriptions, statements, questions, explanations or instructions. The sentences will include idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. Candidates will also need to understand stress, opinion and register shifts.

Each question will have one three-option multiple choice question for each item from which the candidate has to choose the appropriate response.

Choosing the best reply to 6 short sentences

In an exam situation, you will only have 15 seconds in which to look at your test questions. After the playing of each sentence, you will have another 10 seconds to choose the correct reply (out of 3) in each situation. There is insufficient time, therefore, to read through all the question options before the playing. However, by practising the following exam technique prior to the listening exam itself, you will be better prepared to answer the questions correctly.

Step One

Focussing on the questions

When you practise similar listening tasks, always read through the questions before the first playing of the listening exercise. For each question, time-permitting, try to identify the context of each option. Ask yourself what kind of situation is being referred to (sometimes there may be insufficient information for this) and how the speaker is feeling. This way you are more likely to focus on the correct answer when you hear the whole conversation played. Obviously time is limited in the actual exam itself, but familiarising yourself with this technique can ensure that you will be more adept at using it when the exam comes.

Placing the questions in context

Look at the following statements, which are similar to the 3 options that you will get in **Part 1** of the Listening exam. Decide, if possible, the context of the conversation, or, how the speaker is feeling.

- a) He is very cross.
- b) He didn't offer to lend me a hand.
- c) Let's keep it between the two of us then.

Answer:

In **a)** we learn that someone is not happy about something. He is already cross so he would already be aware of a problem.
In **b)** someone needed help with something, but they didn't receive it.
In **c)** the two people in the conversation know about something that they don't want anyone else to know about. They have some kind of secret.

Step Two

Conversational context

In the exam itself, obviously, you will not be able to see the audioscript. However, here we will look at the audioscript as an aid to understanding conversational context. (*In the exam you will have to do this only by listening to the recording.*)

Now look at the following sample sentence below and try to identify the context of the conversation.

'Keep your fingers crossed that he doesn't find out.'
'Keep your fingers crossed that he doesn't find out.'

First of all, note that you hear the sentence twice just in case you didn't catch it all the first time.

Answer:

The people don't want someone to know about something and currently he obviously doesn't know. Notice the use of the idiomatic expression here, to **keep one's fingers crossed**. There will always be at least two idioms in this part of the listening test.



Step Three

Identifying the correct answer

Having identified the possible contexts and the feelings of the speaker in each question option, next, compare the options with the dialogue itself. This way, the correct answer should be easily found by finding the best fitting match between the question options and the dialogue.

- a) cannot be the correct response as he doesn't know anything about the situation yet.
- b) cannot be the answer as he would have to be aware of the situation if he were to lend a hand.
- c) therefore must be the correct answer as we know they want to keep him in the dark over the situation and they are hoping that he doesn't find out.
This is why they decide to keep it to themselves so that the information does not get back to him.

Potential pitfalls

Always beware, however, of distractors. Often words in the dialogue will be copied in the question options. *Do not assume that a word heard in the dialogue and repeated in the question option will automatically lead you to the correct answer. Often, the opposite is true.* Often, repeated words are used as distractors. To avoid being caught out, always focus first on the context of the question option, then on that of the dialogue. Look at the following example to see how distractors can function to confuse the listener.

Example of a statement with distractors:

'Knowing what she's like, I suspect she did that accidentally-on-purpose.'

Example of a set of answer options with distractors:

- a) It certainly was a terrible accident.
- b) No, she did it deliberately.
- c) I'm afraid you might be right.

First of all, the expression **accidentally-on-purpose** is used when you do something deliberately but pretend it was an accident, especially to make someone notice you. (*He dropped his keys at her feet accidentally-on-purpose to get her attention.*)

Here we can see that in answer **a)** the word accident is repeated as a distractor. There was not actually an accident there was some kind of deliberate action on her part. Answer **b)** is clearly wrong as the first speaker is also saying this was a deliberate act so they would be agreeing with each other, not disagreeing in the response. Therefore answer **c)** is the correct response.

Before you practise

Now you have read the Listening tips, look at the first question in **Listening Part 1**.

Question 1

1. a) I'm just feeling a bit dizzy.
b) It just blew down in the wind.
c) She's just being defensive again.



Now identify the context of each question option (if possible) and the feelings of the speaker.

- a) The speaker doesn't feel well and they must look ill if they are being asked if they are ok.
- b) Something must have fallen or broken and they are being asked how it happened.
- c) Someone else is being referred to here and discussed and a question has been asked about her.

If you now look at the statement in the audioscript you will see two distractors.

'I haven't the faintest idea why she took offence.'

Response **a)** refers to the distractor of feeling dizzy in relation to the word '*faintest*'. Here the candidate might think the person is feeling faint/dizzy but the first speaker is saying they have no idea – not the faintest idea why she took offence. She wasn't physically ill.

Response **b)** refers to taking offence as the candidate might think they are discussing a fence, hence the reference to it (the fence) blowing down in the wind.

Response **c)** is therefore the correct response as if someone takes offence they are upset about something that has been said or done or they may be being unreasonably defensive.

LISTENING

Exam Practice

Part 1

Total: 6 marks

You will hear six sentences **twice**. Choose the best reply to each sentence. Look at the example. If you hear 'The trouble is, she wants the best of both worlds. The trouble is, she wants the best of both worlds.', the best reply is (c). Put a circle round the letter of the best reply.

Example:

- a) He is very cross.
- b) He didn't offer to lend me a hand.
- c) Let's keep it between the two of us then.**

1.
 - a) I'm just feeling a bit dizzy.
 - b) It just blew down in the wind.
 - c) She's just being defensive again.**
2.
 - a) I think we were well represented.**
 - b) I agree, it was a valid point.
 - c) He intends to do his best when he meets them.
3.
 - a) He deserves a happy retirement, doesn't he?
 - b) He was thrilled about it.
 - c) I have to say it's well deserved if he does.**
4.
 - a) I'll have a rethink.
 - b) I wouldn't be surprised as it's a big commitment.**
 - c) She's usually first to offer her opinion.
5.
 - a) It's not a risky project.
 - b) You need to have more faith in my abilities.**
 - c) Thanks for finishing it for me.
6.
 - a) Absolutely, but I would prefer something more traditional.**
 - b) Can you prove it?
 - c) I agree completely that we need to redesign it.

READING Part 1

Answering True/False Questions

In **Part 1** of the reading test you will be given a literary text. The text will include metaphors, similes and idiomatic language, literary narrative or academic ideas, arguments and opinions. There will be 5 sentences to identify true and false statements about the text.

Step One

When faced with a long reading text, first read the questions and underline key words.

Below are questions for the sample text which follows, with key words underlined.

1. Retirement can be just as difficult for women, as it is for men. **T/F**
2. Women were better at adapting to retirement in the past, than they are today. **T/F**
3. Newly-retired women are unlikely to enjoy running a household. **T/F**

Step Two

Read the text, underlining corresponding key words to those previously underlined in the questions.

Note: questions will always follow the order of the text.

Sample text with key words underlined

It's traditionally been assumed that men struggle most with the switch from professional work to retirement. It would seem, however, that women find it even harder to adjust. In the past, they were relatively unaffected: careers were only rarely the centre of their lives, so this transition was of less importance. Now, though, with swathes of women who broke the mould and began professional lives in the 1960s and 1970s hitting retirement age, current research suggests they are struggling with the transition from paid employment to endless domesticity.

Now, try to find the answers to the above questions.

Answers to questions

1. **False** Key information in question states that women and men find retirement equally difficult. Key information in text states that retirement is more difficult, '*even harder*' for women than men.

2. True Key information in question states that women found retirement easier in the past. Key information in text agrees with statement in the question, since women were '*relatively unaffected*' by retirement (as compared to today's situation referred to in para.1, where they find it '*harder to adjust than men*').

3. True Key information in question states that women who have recently retired do not adjust well to being at home. Key information in the text agrees with statement in the question, saying newly-retired women '*now ... hitting retirement age*' are '*struggling*' with '*domesticity*'. In the examples given, the answers were fairly straightforward. However, as you are underlining key words in the text, you need to be aware of distractors i.e. information that may disguise the real answer and/or mislead you, so that you give the wrong response.

It is, therefore, important when underlining key words in the text, to pay attention to certain factors such as **qualifiers**. These modify a statement by expressing *amount, quality, degree, or intensity*. Often these can be used to change the meaning of a statement dramatically.

Potential pitfalls

Qualifiers

Look at the following three sentences. See how the meaning is changed completely by the use of different qualifiers.

Sentence 1

Few people objected to signing the petition.

Sentence 2

A few people objected to signing the petition.

Sentence 3

Only a few people signed the petition.

Sentences 1 and **2** mean that the majority of people signed the petition; only in **sentence 3** it is the minority who signed.

Now look at the following sentences and decide how the qualifier changes the meaning in each case.

Sentence 1

Countless people believe in democracy.

Sentence 2

The majority of people believe in democracy.

Sentence 3

Many people believe in democracy.

Negatives

Use of negative words or prefixes can change a statement substantially. Watch out for the negative prefixes: **dis-**, **il-**, **im-**, **in-**, **non-** and **un-** and the negative words: *not*, *cannot* and *no*.

Look at the following sentences and decide how the negative word/prefix changes the meaning in each case.

Sentence 1

He was not unknown for his generosity.

Sentence 2

He wasn't known for his generosity.

Sentence 3

Not for his generosity, was he known.

In **Sentence 1**, the meaning is that people knew about his generosity.

In **Sentence 2**, the meaning is that no-one considered him generous.

In **Sentence 3**, the meaning is that he was known to people but not because he was a generous person.



Before you practise

Now you have read these tips, read the text in **Reading Part 1** and try to work out if the questions that follow, are **True** or **False**. Remember to first underline the important information in the question.

1. Yeobright had known Humphrey for a long time.

Here we are interested in the relationship between Yeobright and Humphrey. The important thing, however, is how long they have known each other, rather than what kind of relationship they had. In **True** or **False** questions the information needed is usually very specific. There will not be any ambiguous answers.

READING

Exam Practice

Total: 5 marks

Part 1

Read the following text, then read the five statements. Some of these statements are true according to the text, some of them are false. Write **T** for True or **F** for False in the box next to each statement.

The very next day Yeobright went to Humphrey's cottage, and borrowed off him leggings, gloves, a whetstone and a hook, to use till he should be able to purchase some for himself. Then he wandered off with his new fellow labourer and old acquaintance, and selecting a spot where the furze grew thickest he struck the first blow in his adopted calling. His sight, though useless to him for his previous work, sufficed for this task and he found that when a little practice should have hardened his palms against blistering he would be able to work with ease.

This gentleman from Paris was so disguised by his attire and by the dark glasses that he was obliged to wear over his eyes, that his closest friend might have passed by without recognizing him. He was a brown spot in the midst of an expanse of olive-green gorse, and nothing more. Though frequently depressed when not actually at work, when in the full swing of labour he was cheerfully disposed and calm. The monotony of his occupation soothed him, and was in itself a pleasure. A forced limitation of effort offered a justification of homely tasks to an unambitious man, whose conscious would hardly have allowed him to remain in such obscurity while his status had been higher. Hence Yeobright sometimes sang to himself and when obliged to accompany Humphrey in search of brambles for faggot-bonds he would amuse his companion with sketches of Parisian life and character, and so while away the time.

On one of these warm afternoons Eustacia walked out alone in the direction of Yeobright's place of work. He was busily chopping away at the furze, a long row of faggots which stretched downward from his position representing the labour of the day. He did not observe her approach and she stood close to him, and heard his undercurrent of song. It shocked her to see him there, a poor afflicted man, earning money by the sweat of his brow, had at first moved her to tears; but to hear him sing and not at all rebel against an occupation which, however satisfactory to himself, was degrading to her, as an educated lady-wife, wounded her through.