

## PTE Academic Lesson Plan Ideas: Test Taking Strategies

### Lesson 18 – Select missing word


**Time allocated:** 60 minutes


#### Step 1: Introduce the Item Type

This item type assesses listening skills, and requires test takers to use contextual and grammatical cues to predict and identify what a speaker will say.

You will hear a recording about an analysis of medical research findings. *At the end of the recording the last word or group of words has been replaced by a beep.* Select the correct option to complete the recording.

Status: Beginning in 7 seconds.

Volume 



☐ before you understood

☐ after diagnosis

☐ from anti-oxidants

☐ on the treatment itself

☐ in the first place

#### Step 2: Present the Item Type Strategies

##### Strategy 1

You have seven seconds before the recording starts. Take this time to read the instructions carefully and skim the response options. Draw on your background knowledge of the topic indicated in the instructions to help you focus your attention and predict what you might hear.

##### Strategy 2

When the recording starts, listen carefully and focus your attention closely on what is being said. Make a mental note of the gist, any repeated words and other keywords indicating details. As far as possible, try to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from context, but do not worry if there are words you do not understand. Focus on what you do understand.

##### Strategy 3

As you listen, remember to remain aware of the audio progress indicator. As the recording is drawing to an end, focus your listening carefully and simultaneously scan all of the response options closely. This will help you predict and select the most appropriate word or phrase when the beep sounds.

## Step 3: Explain and Practice Each Strategy

### Strategy 1

Explain to your students that they have seven seconds before the recording starts. Explain that they should use this time to read the instructions carefully and skim all of the response options to get a sense of the meaning of each one, and the type of word or the structure of each phrase. Remind students to draw on their background knowledge of the topic indicated in the instructions to help them focus their attention and predict what they might hear in the recording.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Display the instructions and response options for Item 1.
- First ask students to read the instructions and identify the topic (an analysis of medical research findings). Have them predict what type of information they might hear in the recording (e.g., a discussion of test results, facts and figures, etc.) and what vocabulary (e.g., *researchers, results, evidence, conclusions*, etc.).
- Next ask students to read the response options. Have them tell you what, if anything, these options can further indicate about the type of information that might be in the recording (e.g., the words “diagnosis” and “treatment” indicate that the recording might be about an illness or ways of treating an illness).
- Ask students if they can identify an option that seems out of place in terms of structure, style or meaning (e.g., Option 1: *before you understood*), and have them give reasons for their responses (e.g., this phrase sounds less formal, use of “you” is unusual in medical analysis). Explain that identifying an option as unusual in some way may help them dismiss it as a possibility.

### Strategy 2

Explain to your students that for this item type it is very important that they listen carefully and remain as focused as possible on what they are listening to. Although students should not take written notes, they should make a clear mental note of the gist of the recording, any words that they hear repeated, and any other keywords that indicate details. Remind students that they should try to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context, as far as possible, but that they should not worry if there are words that they do not understand. It is important that they focus on what they do understand, as unfamiliar words may not be directly relevant to the correct response.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Tell students that you are going to read out the first sentence for the item they have just looked at, leaving out the final words. Tell students to listen carefully bearing in mind the points mentioned above and listening to the sentence pattern for clues to help them predict the final words.
- Read out the first sentence using the transcript for Item 1 and leave out the last two words:  
*My PhD student, Elaine Chong, did what was called a meta-analysis where you analyze the literature very carefully, to see what evidence there is to suggest that what we eat, particularly in terms of antioxidants, prevents you getting [macular degeneration].*
- First ask students what type of word they think is missing from the end of the sentence (i.e., a noun describing an illness, medical problem, etc., or an adjective such as *ill, sick*, etc.).
- Then ask students which part of the sentence helps them make this prediction and why (e.g., “...*preventing you getting*” in the context of a medical report, the most logical collocation here is “preventing you getting ill”).
- Without repeating the sentence, ask students to review what they heard and tell you the gist (e.g., the speaker’s student did a detailed analysis on the effects of what people eat on a particular illness) and any repeated words (analysis, analyze).
- Ask students if there were any unfamiliar words in the sentence. Have them reflect on whether these words affected their ability to understand the gist and/or predict the type of missing word.

- Display the following words:  
*the next generation*      *macular degeneration*  
*sound results*      *mental fatigue*
- Ask students which one seems most appropriate for the end of the sentence and why.
- Show students that even if they are not familiar with the term “macular degeneration” they should be able to make a good guess at the correct option by analyzing word types, word stems and eliminating other options, e.g.:  
*the next generation* (not appropriate: not a medical term, not an illness, does not collocate with “preventing you getting”)  
*macular degeneration* (appropriate: a medical term)  
*sound results* (not appropriate: collocates with “preventing you getting” but not a medical term/illness and does not fit logically)  
*mental fatigue* (not appropriate: collocates with “preventing you getting” but not an appropriate medical term/illness in this context)

### Strategy 3

Explain to your students that as they listen, they should also remain aware of the audio progress indicator. When the recording is drawing to an end, they should focus their listening even more carefully, while simultaneously scanning all of the response options. Explain that doing this will help them make predictions and select the most appropriate word or phrase when the beep sounds.

To practice this strategy, ask your class to do the following activities:

- Tell students that you are now going to play the recording for this item in full, and that they will practice using the strategy above to help them identify the correct response.
- Show students the instructions and response options for Item 1 again, and remind them of the topic. Explain that when the recording starts to come near the end, you will raise your hand as a sign for them to listen very closely and start to scan the options.
- Play the audio [L18\_Listening\_Select\_missing\_word\_1], and raise your hand at the beginning of the final sentence (indicated in bold in the transcript below).  
*Robyn Guymer: My PhD student, Elaine Chong, did what was called a meta-analysis where you analyze the literature very carefully, to see what evidence there is to suggest that what we eat, particularly in terms of antioxidants, prevents you getting macular degeneration.*  
*Norman Swan: Because ophthalmologists have been using antioxidants quite a lot.*  
*Robyn Guymer: That's right. There have been studies looking at whether antioxidant supplements slow the progression once you have the disease whereas this study was looking at trying to stop you getting it {in the first place}.*
- Have students identify the correct response option. Then review the transcript, provide explanations for Item 1 and discuss any queries.

## Step 4: Respond to a Select Missing Word Item

Explain to your students that they will now respond to a test item simulating test conditions. They will have seven seconds to prepare before the recording starts. Remind them of the three strategies covered in this lesson and ask them to apply these strategies.

Give out copies of Item 2 and play the audio [L18\_Listening\_Select\_missing\_word\_2].

## Step 5: Provide Feedback

Ask your students if they were able to use the strategies. Which one was the most difficult to apply? Which one do they think was the most useful?

Ask students to compare each other's responses in pairs in groups and to explain the reasons for their choices. Then show the transcript and the answer for Item 2, and have students discuss why this response option is most appropriate. Provide the explanations for Item 2.

## Item 1

*You will hear a recording about an analysis of medical research findings. At the end of the recording the last word of group of words has been replaced by a beep. Select the correct option to complete the recording.*

- ☐ before you understood
- ☐ after diagnosis
- ☐ from anti-oxidants
- ☐ on the treatment itself
- ☐ in the first place

## Item 1: Transcript, Answer Key and Explanations

*Robyn Guymer: My PhD student, Elaine Chong, did what was called a meta-analysis where you analyze the literature very carefully, to see what evidence there is to suggest that what we eat, particularly in terms of antioxidants, prevents you getting macular degeneration.*

*Norman Swan: Because ophthalmologists have been using antioxidants quite a lot.*

*Robyn Guymer: That's right. There have been studies looking at whether antioxidant supplements slow the progression once you have the disease whereas this study was looking at trying to stop you getting it {in the first place}.*

**Incorrect:** before you understood

**Explanation:** This is incorrect because it does not fit into the context of the passage. There is no discussion related to listener understanding.

**Incorrect:** after diagnosis

**Explanation:** This is incorrect because it does not fit into the context of the passage. The speaker talks about a scientific study on the effectiveness of antioxidants in preventing a disease. There is no discussion on diagnosis of the disease.

**Incorrect:** from anti-oxidants

**Explanation:** This is incorrect because it does not fit into the context of the passage. The speaker indicates that studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of antioxidants in preventing and slowing the progression of a disease. There is no discussion on the causes of disease.

**Correct Answer:** in the first place

**Explanation:** This is correct because "stop you getting it in the first place" echoes the speaker's earlier statement about "preventing you getting" a disease. Also, the conjunction "whereas" signals a contrast between the first and second half of the sentence. The first half of the sentence talks about using antioxidants after one has the disease, whereas the second half of the sentence talks about using antioxidants before one gets the disease.

## Item 2

*You will hear a recording about meiosis. At the end of the recording the last word of group of words has been replaced by a beep. Select the correct option to complete the recording.*

- ☐ genetics
- ☐ diversity
- ☐ species

## Item 2: Transcript, Answer Key and Explanations

*So what, what meiosis does for every species is generate a lot of diverse individuals. Individuals with different capabilities. In the hope, that by having a population with very diverse individuals that at least some of them will be competent to survive. And, it's wildly successful, almost, almost every species on this planet has meio... has, has a way to create genetically diverse gametes, and they use meiosis to do that. Ok, so um, meiosis is extremely important in the evolution of life and the survival of the {species}.*

**Incorrect:** diversity

**Explanation:** This response is incorrect because “diversity” is not a physical thing that can evolve and survive. Additionally, the sentence requires a countable noun to follow “the” and “diversity” is an uncountable noun.

**Incorrect:** genetics

**Explanation:** This response is incorrect because “genetics” is not something that evolves or survives. In addition, the sentence requires a countable noun to follow “the” and “genetics” is an uncountable noun.

**Correct Answer:** species

**Explanation:** This response is correct because the speaker refers to the impact of meiosis on species throughout the recording. In addition, the sentence requires a countable noun to follow “the”, and “species” is a countable noun.