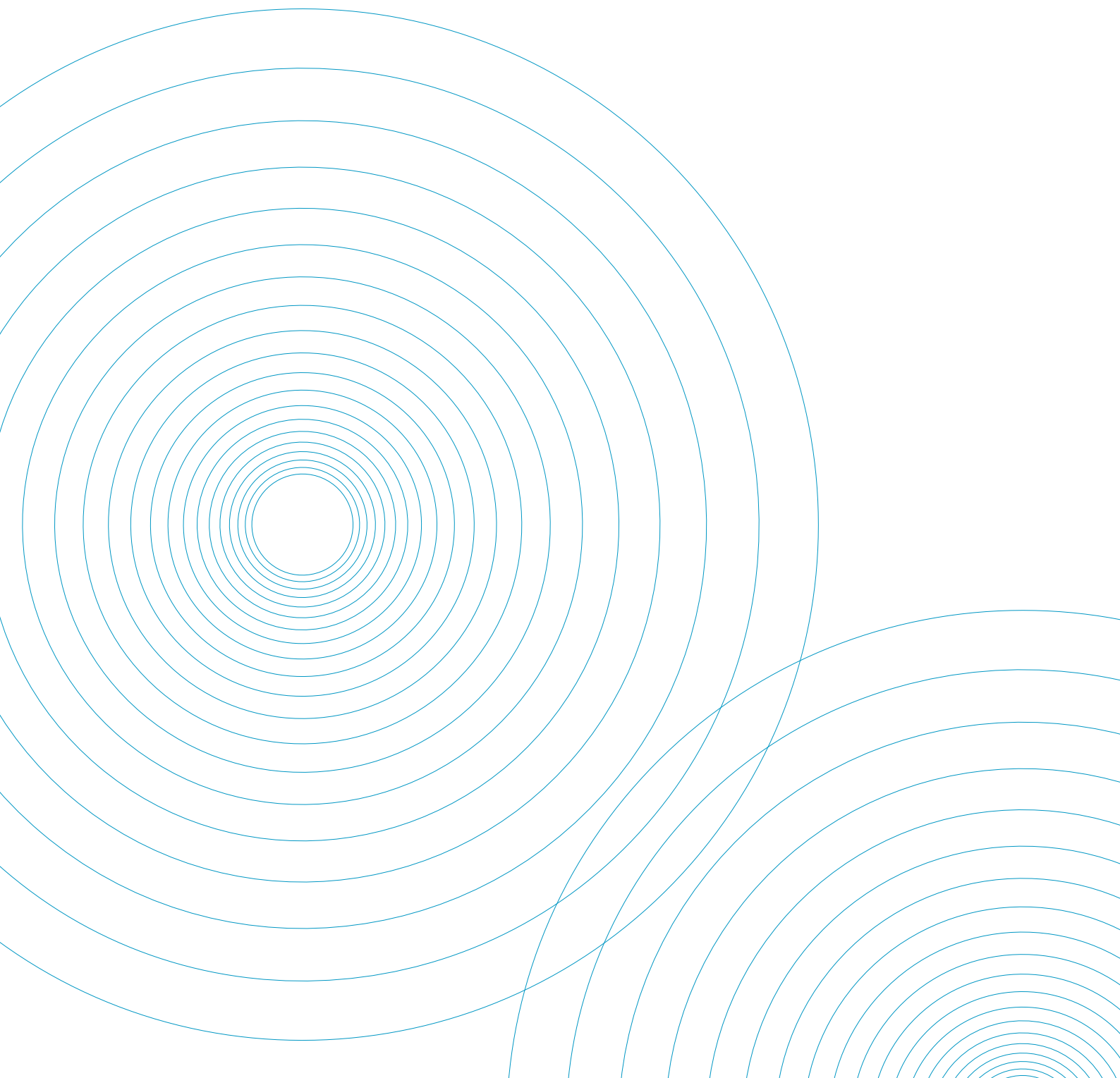


Integrated Skills in English II (B2)

Reading & Writing practice papers



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ISE II

Sample Independent listening task – Wind turbines

Examiner rubric

You're going to hear a talk about renewable energy. You will hear the talk twice. The first time, just listen. Then I'll ask you to tell me generally what the speaker is talking about. Are you ready?

The task will play once.

Can you tell me in one or two sentences what the speaker was talking about?

Give the candidate some blank notepaper.

Now listen to the talk again. This time make some notes as you listen, if you want to. Then I'll ask you to tell me what reasons the speaker gives for and against the use of wind energy. Are you ready?

The task will play once.

Now tell me what reasons the speaker gives for and against the use of wind energy. You have one minute to talk.

Audio script

When it comes to investing in wind turbines to create electricity, there are various factors that need to be considered. Most obviously, the creation of wind energy is 'clean'. Unlike the use of coal or oil, generating energy from the wind doesn't produce pollutants or require harmful chemicals, and it's this factor which weighs most heavily with those worried about the future of our planet. Moreover, wind will never run out, unlike other natural, non-renewable resources. So it would seem to be a winner in at least two very significant areas.

There are those, however, who continue to argue against the use of wind turbines – but it has to be said their arguments tend to focus on much more detailed issues, and largely ignore the bigger overall picture. It's claimed, for example, that the blades of wind turbines can sometimes be dangerous to wildlife, particularly birds. This may be true, but it seems a small price to pay compared to using other means of power generation, which could end up destroying the habitats of those very same birds. In addition, the sound turbines create can, admittedly, be a problem for those nearby. Perhaps a more significant point, though, and certainly one often mentioned by those who object to turbines, is that it requires a lot of open land to set them up, and cutting down trees seems to defeat the green purpose.

Those who criticise wind energy point out that the wind doesn't always blow consistently. And that's certainly a drawback right now – turbines typically operate at only 30% capacity. If the weather isn't in your favour, you may end up without electricity. And when there is wind, well, severe storms or extremely high winds might damage turbines, especially when they're struck by lightning. As such weather already damages existing methods of power production, however, this line of attack seems to be without much merit.

Ultimately, wind is free. In suitable geographical locations, it's there for the taking. While start-up costs are still off-putting for some, it's undeniable that the overall costs of producing wind energy have been dropping significantly in recent years, and as it gains popularity, it'll continue to become more affordable. In many countries, the costs of purchasing and installing turbines are subsidised by government schemes aimed to promote expansion. There are, no question, a number of problems associated with turbines which still require solutions – but in the longer view, the case for them appears beyond doubt.

Answers

Main point/gist: Wind energy may be a good way to reduce damage to the environment, but there are drawbacks. Overall, there is a strong case for using them (any broadly similar formulation is acceptable).

| Arguments for | Arguments against |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Clean energy – no harmful chemicals or pollutants involved/produced▶ Will never run out▶ Doesn't destroy habitats as other power generation means do▶ Essentially free/any associated costs falling | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Turbines dangerous to wildlife, especially birds▶ Noisy▶ Require large area of open land – may lead to cutting down of trees▶ Supply of wind not consistent – turbines operating at 30% capacity▶ Bad weather can damage turbines |

ISE II

Sample Independent listening task – Truth and lies

Examiner rubric

You're going to hear a talk about truth and lies. You will hear the talk twice. The first time, just listen. Then I'll ask you to tell me generally what the speaker is talking about. Are you ready?

The task will play once.

Can you tell me in one or two sentences what the speaker was talking about?

Give the candidate some blank notepaper.

Now listen to the talk again. This time make some notes as you listen, if you want to. Then I'll ask you to tell me what suggestions and advice the speaker gives about how to tell if someone is lying. Are you ready?

The task will play once.

Now tell me what suggestions and advice the speaker gives about how to tell if someone is lying. You have one minute to talk.

Audio script

The truth is important, but everyone tells lies sometimes. Even babies learn to deceive from an early age, for example pretending to cry in order to get attention. Even though lying is natural human behaviour in a sense, it's also important to be able to tell the difference between a person who is speaking honestly and one who is telling lies. You don't need a heavy piece of electronic equipment to detect dishonesty. Everyone can be their own 'lie-detector'. There are three types of signs to look out for: speech patterns, general attitude and body language. Firstly, in speech, the liar tends to use overly formal language and to distance themselves, for example by avoiding the personal pronoun 'I'. You should also look out for a person giving you too much detail, or even far too little detail, as they tell their story.

You can also tell a lot from a person's attitude. In a conversation about a missing item, for example, an honest person will be furious throughout if they feel they are being accused. They will tend to be enthusiastic and want to help to discover who is guilty. In contrast, you may notice that a dishonest person is less involved in the conversation, becoming defensive and angry only in short outbursts. Another clue is wanting to talk about the event in strict chronological order, always starting from the beginning and never changing the order. Try asking them to relate their story in a different way and they may well get confused. Body language is perhaps the most obvious giveaway. You have probably heard that liars won't look you in the eye, but, in fact they often stare at the speaker too steadily.

Another common belief is that people make little nervous movements when they are not telling the truth. But instead you may find that they keep their upper bodies quite still. So look out for a person moving their knee or foot. There are so many small signs, such as blinking your eyes a lot, or putting up physical barriers between yourself and the other person. A classic example of this is rubbing your nose - which effectively hides either your mouth or your eyes. But, of course, these physical reactions can happen naturally as well. Truthful people can feel just as nervous as liars. It is only when you notice a number of these things happening together that you should be suspicious.

Answers

Main point/gist: how to spot a liar – various clues (any broadly similar formulation is acceptable).

| Clues | Examples |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Speech | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Formal language ▶ Distance self |
| Attitude in conversation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Less involved ▶ Angry in flashes ▶ Needs chronological order |
| Body language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Gaze too steadily ▶ Moving knees and feet ▶ Blinking ▶ Hiding face |

ISE II

Sample Independent listening task – New town stadium

Examiner rubric

You're going to hear a talk about a town. You will hear the talk twice. The first time, just listen. Then I'll ask you to tell me generally what the speaker is talking about. Are you ready?

The task will play once.

Can you tell me in one or two sentences what the speaker was talking about?

Give the candidate some blank notepaper.

Now listen to the talk again. This time make some notes as you listen, if you want to. Then I'll ask you what reasons the speaker gives for and against the plans. Are you ready?

The task will play once.

Now tell me what reasons the speaker gives for and against the plans. You have one minute to talk.

Audio script

So today we're looking at the debate about the planned new stadium. Right, so, the city's football club say their present stadium, in the city centre, isn't big enough (which I must say surprises me, as it's half empty for most matches at the moment). So they've announced their plan to build a much bigger stadium in a quiet neighbourhood five kilometres north of the city centre.

Of course, local shopkeepers are excited about the plans, as business has been difficult recently, and the stadium would bring thousands of people to their shops. Similarly, several big fast food companies have already said they would be keen to open outlets in the area. But most of the local residents are protesting. They don't want 40,000 people walking past their houses every week or two, which is quite understandable! They're saying things like it wouldn't be safe to park your car on the street when there's a match; and if the two teams didn't like each other, they wouldn't feel safe walking near their own home. So what does the club say? Well it's told them it will pay for police and security people to keep the streets safe.

OK, but what about all the plastic cups and fast-food papers left in the streets after a match? Well, local businesses say they will share the cost of street cleaners with the club – they say that everywhere will be clean one hour after a match, which seems fair, but possibly a little hard to believe. Finally, what everybody who lives there is saying is that the roads are too small for football match traffic – they're worried they won't be able to drive their cars. So the club says it has plans to build a giant car park on empty land outside the city, with hundreds of special buses. The city bus company says this system works in other cities, and it will work here, although it's not clear what they mean by 'in other cities'. And the local government? Well, it says that the stadium will create a lot of new jobs, and bring a lot of money into a part of town that, to be honest, is not rich. The football club says it will give money to improve the local schools and hospital, although it hasn't mentioned a specific amount in its plans. So that's the situation. Now, what do you think?

Answers

Main point/gist: Plans for a new stadium – there are arguments for and against (any broadly similar formulation is acceptable).

| Arguments for | Arguments against |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Good for local businesses – difficult times recently▶ Opportunity for fast-food companies▶ Will bring money and new jobs to poor part of town▶ Present stadium not big enough▶ Football club will give extra money to schools and hospitals | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Local residents don't want 40,000 people walking past their houses▶ Not safe to park▶ Not safe to walk▶ Litter in the streets▶ Roads too small for extra traffic |

ISE II

Sample Independent listening task – Tea

Examiner rubric

You're going to hear a talk about tea. You will hear the talk twice. The first time, just listen. Then I'll ask you to tell me generally what the speaker is talking about. Are you ready?

The task will play once.

Can you tell me in one or two sentences what the speaker was talking about?

Give the candidate some blank notepaper.

Now listen to the talk again. This time make some notes as you listen, if you want to. Then I'll ask you to tell me some of the advantages and disadvantages associated with drinking tea in the past and present. Are you ready?

The task will play once.

Now tell me some of the advantages and disadvantages associated with drinking tea in the past and present. You have one minute to talk.

Audio script

Long stressful days at work, lack of exercise, too much convenience food that is high in fat and sugar but low in fibre, are all having an effect on our modern lives. For some a tea break is the best way to relax, but can it do more to help maintain a healthy lifestyle? Tea drinking began in China. According to legend, the Chinese emperor was sitting beneath a tree, while his servant boiled drinking water, when some leaves from the tree blew into the water. The tree was a *Camellia sinensis*, and the resulting drink was what we now call tea. But it wasn't until the 17th century that the British began drinking tea with an enthusiasm that continues to the present day.

At first tea was too expensive to be widespread among the whole population. Nevertheless, in the 18th century the first arguments began about whether tea drinking was good or bad for the health. Wealthy businessmen worried that too much tea drinking among workers would lead to weakness and depression, and therefore have an impact on business production. However, they didn't worry so much about the effect on the rich. The debate continued on into the 19th century, when a new generation of wealthy businessmen realised the value of tea drinking to the temperance movement. The movement wanted to discourage workers from drinking alcohol. So, to encourage the working classes not to drink, tea was offered at meetings instead of alcohol. And it seems that the benefits of tea drinking are back in the forefront again.

Doctors are now saying that drinking tea is a really good way to get the water you need to consume every day. It's actually better for you than drinking water because it contains antioxidants, which help fight disease. In fact, studies from around the world are finding that some of the ingredients in tea may help towards maintaining a healthy heart. A study of women in Saudi Arabia showed that tea drinkers were 19% less likely to suffer from heart disease than non-tea drinkers. Tea is also a great natural source of fluoride which strengthens your teeth and prevents gum disease. Added to benefits in weight loss and improvements in concentration and performance it seems that there is no end to the advantages of drinking tea. So perhaps instead of worrying about your hectic life and your health you should just sit down, relax and have a cup of tea.

Answers

Main point/gist: People have been drinking tea for many years and discussing if it is good or bad for health. It is now considered to be very good for you (any broadly similar formulation is acceptable).

| | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Past | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Stops people drinking alcohol | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Makes you weak and depressed ▶ Bad for business ▶ Too expensive for everyone |
| Present | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provides necessary water ▶ Good for your heart ▶ Good for your teeth ▶ Helps you concentrate ▶ Gives you time for a break ▶ Helps weight loss | |

ISE II

Sample Independent listening task – Cycling

Examiner rubric

You're going to hear a talk about cycling. You will hear the talk twice. The first time, just listen. Then I'll ask you to tell me generally what the speaker is talking about. Are you ready?

The task will play once

Can you tell me in one or two sentences what the speaker was talking about?

Give the candidate some blank notepaper.

Now listen to the talk again. This time make some notes as you listen, if you want to. Then I'll ask you to tell me what the speaker says the advantages and disadvantages of cycling are. Are you ready?

The task will play once

Now tell me what the speaker says the advantages and disadvantages of cycling are. I'll stop you after one minute.

Audio script

The popularity of cycling seems to be increasing daily. Certainly in many European cities, the number of free bike hire programmes is growing steadily. And there are more and more highly visible cyclists on the roads, especially during the rush hours. But is cycling really such a great idea? Should we all be throwing away our car keys and putting on bike helmets? Cycling remains a dangerous way to get around many cities. Accidents are not unusual. This can be due to other road users not being aware of cyclists. Unfortunately, many cyclists ignore normal road rules such as traffic light signals, and this causes problems too. What's more, cycling remains impractical for many. For the very young and the elderly, a bike's not going to replace a car or bus as the best way to get to school or the shops. Long-distance commuters are unlikely to prefer cycling to trains or driving. And those living in the countryside or particularly hilly areas won't be giving up their cars soon. Neither are bikes that cheap. A decent one costs quite a bit – and on top of that there's the cost of specialist clothing, lights and maintenance. And an effective lock is a necessity in many cities as bike theft is so common. What about countries with extreme temperatures? It's bad enough being caught on a bike in the English rain, but what about trying to ride in 30 plus degrees heat or monsoon conditions. So why do so many people seem keen to promote cycling? One answer lies, with the growing concern over weight issues. Cycling's seen as cheaper and more interesting than gym membership – and much healthier than sitting in a car. And if you're lucky enough to live in a city such as Munich in Germany which has extensive cycle paths, many of them through parks or woodland, then travelling to work by bike's a pleasure. Research does show, incidentally, that such activity's especially good for your mind as well as body, and you're likely to arrive at school or work buzzing with ideas and feeling fantastic. Anything that helps reduce congestion and pollution, and the chaos on many roads, has to be welcomed too. The hire schemes I mentioned earlier should surely be encouraged. Train companies need to make things easier for cycling commuters – and perhaps electric bikes could help older people, and those in hotter climates.

Answers

Main point/gist: Discussing the pros and cons of cycling – should it be encouraged? (Any broadly similar formulation is acceptable)

Pros

- ▶ Concern over weight issues: better than gym or driving
- ▶ Pleasure in cities with good paths, eg Munich
- ▶ Research shows cycling is good for the mind and body
- ▶ Reduces congestion and pollution

Cons

- ▶ Dangerous (in cities) because of other drivers and cyclists disobeying rules
- ▶ Impractical for many – for young, old, long-distance commuters and hilly areas/countryside
- ▶ Not cheap – bike, clothing, lock (theft a problem)
- ▶ Difficult in countries with extreme temperatures

ISE II

Sample Independent listening task – New Year's resolutions

Examiner rubric

You're going to hear a talk about New Year's resolutions. You will hear the talk twice. The first time, just listen. Then I'll ask you to tell me generally what the speaker is talking about. Are you ready?

The task will play once

Can you tell me in one or two sentences what the speaker was talking about?

Give the candidate some blank notepaper.

Now listen to the talk again. This time make some notes as you listen, if you want to. Then I'll ask you to tell me about the kinds of resolutions that people make and what advice the speaker gives to help people to achieve their aims. Are you ready?

The task will play once

Now tell me about the kinds of resolutions that people make and what advice the speaker gives to help people to achieve their aims. I'll stop you after one minute.

Audio script

We all do it, every year on the 31st of December we promise ourselves that next year we will get fit, lose weight or give up something unhealthy. At this time of year, a lot of your friends will be making New Year resolutions. You may be making one yourself. Perhaps you've decided to join a gym and get fitter, or go on a diet to lose weight – decisions related to health like this are the most popular resolutions. Other common self-improvement ones are being more organized, saving money and spending less time looking at computer screens. Actually, at any time of year, people often have the feeling that their lives could be improved if they ate more healthily, took up a hobby, read more books and so on. Whatever the goal, though, one study has shown that only 8% of people are successful in sticking to their decision. Luckily, there are some tips that will greatly improve your chances. Firstly, when choosing your goal, it's important to be specific. So, just saying you aim to save money isn't enough. How much are you going to save? By when? How will you do it? When answering questions like this, you shouldn't make things too easy, or you won't feel that you've really changed anything. On that other hand, your aims need to be achievable – setting yourself an impossible goal is a definite recipe for failure. Once you've decided what you want to do, tell people about it. Research shows that the more people you tell about your decision, the more likely you are to keep the resolution. Taking this sharing idea a step further, there's also evidence that doing things in a group greatly increases everyone's chances of success. One reason is that an element of competition comes into play, and also individuals feel that if they fail, they'll be disappointing others. Doing things in a group is also more fun, and this is another important aspect. Once you've got started, focus on the pleasurable part of what you're doing, rather than constantly worrying about the goal. In other words, try to think of the activity as enjoyable for its own sake, not just as a means to an end. Finally – and this might seem to contradict the last point – think about what might go wrong. Of course all the self-improvement books emphasise the power of positive thinking, but if you've anticipated potential problems and worked out how you might overcome them, you're much less likely to give up at the first sign of trouble.

Answers

Main point/gist: The speaker is talking about resolutions and the fact that many people fail to stick to them. He then offers several tips or pieces of advice to help people succeed (any broadly similar formulation is acceptable).

- ▶ Most resolutions are health-related or other forms of self-improvement
- ▶ Common examples are getting fit, losing weight, saving money, cutting down on screen time, being more organised
- ▶ Research shows 8% of people successfully stick to resolutions
- ▶ Advice/tips:
 - be specific, not general
 - choose something not too easy but still achievable
 - tell other people what you are doing
 - do something in a group
 - enjoy what you are doing (for its own sake)
 - consider/anticipate problems