

GAC007 Academic English II: Listening and Speaking Skills

GAC Academic English

What this module is, and how it is marked

GAC007 is Academic English II, listening and speaking. It repeats the shape of GAC001 at a higher level: the units are still themes, and the skills are still what carry the marks — but the tasks now assume you can already follow a straightforward talk.

Assessment is again spoken and continuous: a **listening test** 听力测试, a **presentation** 演讲 using digital media, participation in **discussion**, and **coursework**.

- The new demands are **note-taking under pressure**, **describing data aloud**, and holding a discussion rather than contributing to one.
- △ Describing a graph in English is a specific skill with its own vocabulary, and it appears in every Level II and Level III assessment in some form.

People and society: analysing spoken text types

- At Level I you named the text type. Now you **compare** two, and analyse the **speech functions** 言语功能 inside them: informing, persuading, hedging, conceding.
- A **hedge** 模糊限制语 softens a claim: *tends to*, *in most cases*, *appears to*. Academic speakers hedge constantly, and hearing it is part of hearing the meaning.
- **Register** 语域 shifts within one talk. A lecturer moves between formal exposition and informal aside, and the aside is often where the exam question is.

Living environments: listening skills and strategies

- **Selective listening** 选择性听力 at this level means holding a structure in mind while details arrive, rather than catching everything.
- **Inference** 推断: what is implied but not said. *That approach was popular in the nineties* usually means it is not now.
- **Discourse markers** 语篇标记 signal the turn ahead: *having said that*, *on the other hand*, *which brings me to*.

Worked example. You hear: "The scheme worked well in the first year — although, having said that, the funding was unusually generous."

The inference is that later years were worse, and the cause was money. Neither is stated. The marks in a Level II listening test sit in exactly this kind of question.

Work and business: note-taking and summarising

- **Note-taking** at speed uses abbreviation, symbols and indentation to show structure.
- **Summarising** 概括 aloud afterwards is the assessed part: two or three sentences that keep the shape of what you heard.
- Keep the speaker's **hierarchy** 层级: what was the main claim, what supported it, what was an aside.
- △ A summary that lists every detail in order has not summarised. Selection is the skill.

Health science: describing data aloud

- Name the **chart type** 图表类型 first: a bar chart, a line graph, a pie chart, a table.
- Give the **axes and units** before any number, so the audience knows what they are hearing.
- Use the language of trend: *rises sharply, levels off, fluctuates, falls steadily, peaks at, bottoms out*.
- Quantify with approximation: *roughly a third, just under 40%, around double*.

Worked example. "This line graph shows household energy use in kilowatt-hours per month across one year. Use rises sharply from October, peaks at about 780 in January, then falls steadily to a low of roughly 300 in June."

Type, axes, units, shape, then the numbers. That order is the marked structure, and it works in every data question in the programme.

Processes and production: explaining a process

- A **process** 过程 description is sequential, and its marks are in the connectives: *first, once that is complete, this then allows, finally*.
- Use the **passive voice** 被动语态 where the agent does not matter: *the sample is heated*, not *we heat the sample*.
- Signal each stage before describing it, so a listener can count the stages as they arrive.

The environment: leading and encouraging discussion

- At Level II you are expected to **encourage** discussion, not only join it.
- Ask questions that open rather than close: *What would change if...* beats *Do you agree?*
- **Summarise the state of the discussion** periodically: *So we agree on the cause but not the remedy.* That single move is scored, and few students make it.
- Manage the time. A discussion task that reaches no conclusion because two people argued for nine minutes has failed for everyone in it.