

## PTE General: Tips for Students

### Tip 1 – Listening

#### Beware of Distracters!

*Distracter: One of the wrong answers given as an option in a multiple choice test.*

It is normal for the wrong answers in a multiple choice test to sound correct.

Sometimes a few of the words heard will match one of the wrong answers but it will not answer the actual question. i.e.,

**Question: What does your mother do in the evening?**

- a.) Watch TV
- b.) Read fashion magazines
- c.) Look at websites
- d.) Talk to friends

In the exercise you may hear ***“I like to watch TV in the evening but my sister prefers to read magazines – usually about fashion - and talk on the phone. My mother often surfs the internet – I think she is addicted.”***

Although you hear the words used in answers A & B they are not the correct answer. The correct answer is C. C is correct because the mother likes to surf the internet – surfing the internet and looking at websites are the same activity.

**The incorrect information often comes before the correct answer. So be sure to listen carefully to the whole recording.**

## Tip 2 – Writing

### Universal Errors

The mistakes found in most students' English writing and speaking are predictable. The mistakes are usually connected to the differences between English and your native language such as countable and uncountable nouns.

**Keep a record of the mistakes you make in writing** and you will start to see a pattern after a few exercises. Such as constant mistakes with present perfect or prepositions. Often each student only has two or three of these mistakes but makes the mistake in almost every sentence.

When you know what these mistakes are, **ask your teacher to explain them**. In any future writing assignment look at these trouble spots carefully and make sure they are correct before giving the assignment to your teacher.

With practice these mistakes will disappear and your writing (and your speaking) will improve greatly!