

The mistakes that quietly cost Pakistani students half a band in Section 1 and 2.

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Why Spelling Costs More Than You Think

In IELTS Listening, you hear the answer correctly but write it with one wrong letter — and score zero. Unlike Reading or Writing, there is no partial credit. One letter wrong means zero marks for that item. The good news: spelling errors are completely preventable with a short focused drill. The words below are the most frequently misspelled in Pakistani students' Listening scripts.

Most Commonly Misspelled Words

CORRECT SPELLING	COMMON WRONG VERSION	MEMORY NOTE
accommodation	accomodation / accommadation	Double c, double m
necessary	neccessary / necesary	One c, double s
government	goverment / gouvernement	No extra "e" — gov-ern-ment
reference	refrence / referance	ref-er-ence (three syllables)
receive	recieve	i before e except after c
environment	enviroment / enviorment	en-vi-ron-ment — the "n" stays
approximately	aproximately / approximatly	Double p, ends in -ely
separately	seperately	sep-ar-ate-ly — not "separ-ite"
questionnaire	questionaire / questionairre	Double n before -aire
committee	commitee / comittee	Double m, double t, double e
maintenance	maintainance / maintenence	main-te-nance (not -ain-)
guarantee	guarentee / guarantee	guar-an-tee — the "u" stays
immediately	immediatly / imediately	im-me-di-ate-ly

CORRECT SPELLING	COMMON WRONG VERSION	MEMORY NOTE
beginning	begining / beggining	One g, double n: be-gin-ning
calendar	calender / calandar	cal-en-dar — ends in -ar
January	Januery / Januray	Jan-u-ary — all three syllables
February	Febuary / Feburary	Feb-ru-ary — the first "r" is silent but must be written
Wednesday	Wendsday / Wednessday	Wed-nes-day — spell it as three parts

TIP After every Listening practice test, write out every word you spelled wrong three times from memory — not looking at the correct version. Then check. This takes 5 minutes and eliminates the same errors in future tests faster than any other method.

Number & Letter Confusion (Section 1 Traps)

Section 1 frequently asks you to write a phone number, reference code, or postcode. These items are dictated slowly and repeated — yet they produce some of the highest error rates in Pakistani students' scripts. The cause is letter/number confusion at normal speaking speed.

SOUND CONFUSION	WHAT YOU HEAR	HOW TO DISTINGUISH
B vs D vs E vs P	Letters in reference codes and postcodes	The speaker says "B for Bravo" or "D for Delta". Listen for the full word after the letter.
13 vs 30 (teens vs tens)	"thirteen" vs "thirty"	The stressed syllable: THIR-teen (stress end) vs THIR-ty (stress start). Remember: 13 is teen, 30 is ty.
Digits in phone numbers	Long sequences of numbers	Write in groups as you hear: 0300 / 610 / 7060. Regroup at the end, not at the beginning.
Zero vs "O"	Postcode or code with 0	Both "zero" and "oh" are acceptable in IELTS answers.
Comma in numbers	"fourteen hundred" vs "one four zero"	Both mean 1400. Write the number, not the words, unless the instructions say otherwise.

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