

## EA S 2022 Part1 Listening comprehension: 7 Doctor's Appointment

### Doctor's Appointment

The following recording is a dialogue between a medical receptionist and a patient making an appointment. In each question, decide which of the patient's responses is the most polite. You can listen to the receptionist's line once and to each option as many times as you like.

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7.1 What would the patient say?

Receptionist: **Hello, how can I help you?**

Patient:

Option A. I want to make an appointment to see a doctor. Is there anything available today or tomorrow?

Option B. I need to see a doctor and I'd like it as soon as possible. Is there a time slot available in the next two days?

Option C. I'd like to arrange to consult with a doctor, please. Maybe today or tomorrow if that's possible

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7.2 What would the patient say?

Receptionist            **We have no appointments that soon, I'm afraid, but ten twenty next Monday morning with Doctor Brown is available. Would that be okay for you?**

Patient:

Option A. Ahh, I see. Well, that would be fine then, thank you and my name is Shirley Smithers.

Option B. That's a bit of a wait, but okay, it'll have to do, I suppose. The name's Shirley Smithers.

Option C. Hmm, I was hoping for something sooner, but that's alright. Shirley Smithers is the name.

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7.3 What would the patient say?

Receptionist            **Okay, thanks, Miss Smithers and we have your details on file here I see. May I ask the reason for your visit?**

Patient:

Option A. Erm, sorry, but can I ask why do you need to know that? I'd rather discuss it with the doctor.

Option B. I don't feel comfortable giving that information. Surely, only the doctor needs to know that.

Option C. Why do you need to know? Isn't it a confidential matter between me and the doctor?

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7.4 What would the patient say?

Receptionist            **I understand, Miss Smithers. You don't need to go into any detail. It's just in general terms so we can know how long the appointment might take or if we might need any special arrangements. If you really don't want to say, that's quite alright.**

Patient:

Option A. Well, I suppose that's okay when you put it like that. I've had a bit of a pain in my knee.

Option B. Ahh, that makes sense , I guess, now that you've clarified. It's about some pain in my knee.

Option C. Oh, I get it. Fair enough, then. And thanks for explaining. It's just about my knee. It's a bit painful.

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Here's an explanation of why the selected responses (**7.1c**, **7.2a**, **7.3a**, **7.4c**) are the most polite, along with reasons why the other options are less suitable.

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### **7.1 Receptionist: *Hello, how can I help you?***

- **Chosen Response (7.1c):** *I'd like to arrange to consult with a doctor, please. Maybe today or tomorrow if that's possible.*
    - **Why it's best:**
      - The phrase *"I'd like to arrange to consult with a doctor, please"* is both formal and polite, making the request sound respectful.
      - *"Maybe today or tomorrow if that's possible"* adds a gentle, non-demanding request rather than insisting on an immediate appointment.
    - **Why not (7.1a):** *I want to make an appointment to see a doctor. Is there anything available today or tomorrow?*
      - "I want" is a bit direct and less polite than "I'd like to arrange."
      - The phrasing is neutral but not as tactful as (7.1c).
    - **Why not (7.1b):** *I need to see a doctor and I'd like it as soon as possible. Is there a time slot available in the next two days?*
      - "I need" sounds more demanding than "I'd like."
      - "As soon as possible" suggests urgency, which might not always be necessary and could come across as pushy.
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**7.2 Receptionist:** *We have no appointments that soon, I'm afraid, but ten twenty next Monday morning with Doctor Brown is available. Would that be okay for you?*

- **Chosen Response (7.2a):** *Ahh, I see. Well, that would be fine then, thank you, and my name is Shirley Smithers.*
    - **Why it's best:**
      - Acknowledges the delay in a neutral way ("Ahh, I see. Well, that would be fine then").
      - Includes a polite "thank you," making the interaction courteous.
      - Clearly provides the patient's name in a smooth and natural way.
    - **Why not (7.2b):** *That's a bit of a wait, but okay, it'll have to do, I suppose. The name's Shirley Smithers.*
      - "That's a bit of a wait" sounds slightly negative and reluctant.
      - "It'll have to do, I suppose" expresses disappointment, making it less polite than (7.2a).
    - **Why not (7.2c):** *Hmm, I was hoping for something sooner, but that's alright. Shirley Smithers is the name.*
      - "I was hoping for something sooner" expresses mild dissatisfaction.
      - The phrase "Shirley Smithers is the name" sounds a bit unnatural compared to "My name is Shirley Smithers."
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### 7.3 Receptionist: *Okay, thanks, Miss Smithers. We have your details on file here, I see. May I ask the reason for your visit?*

- **Chosen Response (7.3a):** *Erm, sorry, but can I ask why do you need to know that? I'd rather discuss it with the doctor.*
    - **Why it's best:**
      - Includes "sorry," which softens the hesitation.
      - The question "Can I ask why you need to know that?" is respectful rather than confrontational.
      - "I'd rather discuss it with the doctor" keeps the response polite while setting a boundary.
    - **Why not (7.3b):** *I don't feel comfortable giving that information. Surely, only the doctor needs to know that.*
      - "I don't feel comfortable" is understandable but sounds defensive.
      - "Surely, only the doctor needs to know that" comes across as argumentative rather than curious.
    - **Why not (7.3c):** *Why do you need to know? Isn't it a confidential matter between me and the doctor?*
      - "Why do you need to know?" sounds abrupt and could be interpreted as rude.
      - "Isn't it a confidential matter?" could sound accusatory, implying the receptionist is overstepping.
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**7.4 Receptionist:** *I understand, Miss Smithers. You don't need to go into any detail. It's just in general terms so we can know how long the appointment might take or if we might need any special arrangements. If you really don't want to say, that's quite alright.*

- **Chosen Response (7.4c):** *Oh, I get it. Fair enough, then. And thanks for explaining. It's just about my knee. It's a bit painful.*
    - **Why it's best:**
      - "Oh, I get it. Fair enough, then." shows understanding and cooperation.
      - "And thanks for explaining" acknowledges the receptionist's patience, making it polite.
      - "It's just about my knee. It's a bit painful." provides a brief, non-invasive response while maintaining privacy.
    - **Why not (7.4a):** *Well, I suppose that's okay when you put it like that. I've had a bit of a pain in my knee.*
      - "Well, I suppose that's okay" sounds hesitant and slightly reluctant.
      - It's polite but less warm than (7.4c).
    - **Why not (7.4b):** *Ahh, that makes sense, I guess, now that you've clarified. It's about some pain in my knee.*
      - "I guess" makes the agreement sound less certain.
      - "Now that you've clarified" acknowledges the explanation but is less friendly than "Thanks for explaining" in (7.4c).
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## Summary:

The selected responses (**7.1c, 7.2a, 7.3a, 7.4c**) are the most polite because they:

1. Use softeners like "*I'd like,*" "*Sorry, but can I ask,*" and "*Thanks for explaining,*" which keep the tone courteous.
2. Acknowledge the receptionist's role and effort, making the conversation more cooperative.
3. Avoid demanding, defensive, or overly direct language that might sound impolite in a medical setting.