

Teaching Listening

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Introduction

- Listening is a receptive skill, 1 of the 4 macro skills
- The importance of listening
 - Develop speaking skills
 - An important way of acquiring the language

Extensive and Intensive Listening

Extensive → listening for pleasure (listening on your own; because you *want* to)

Intensive → listening for a purpose (often done with the teacher's help; because you *have* to)

What are some examples of why you might engage in extensive and intensive listening activities?

Top-down processing

- Listener gets a “*general understanding*” or “*overall view*” of the listening text.
- This is greatly helped if the listener’s schema allows them to have appropriate expectations of what they might hear.
- For example, if I am listening to a doctor talk to a patient, I expect to hear about a medical problem. I expect that the doctor will give some advice, maybe a prescription for some medicine. I also know many of the vocabulary they will use.

Examples of listening strategies

(Top-down processing)

1. Predicting the content of a lecture or short talk on a subject that Ss know something about.
2. Listening to get the general idea of the topic of a conversation.
3. Listening to a series of short conversations in order to understand where the conversation is taking place.

Bottom-up processing

- The listener focuses on individual words or phrases and gains an understanding of the whole passage by linking these together.

Examples of listening strategies (bottom-up processing)

1. Listening carefully to football results.
2. Listening to flight departure announcements in order to hear the departure gate.
3. Listening attentively to try and understand (or infer) a speaker's attitude to something because the speaker has not stated their opinion clearly.
4. Listening in order to do a dictation activity.

What Do We Listen?

In groups of four, discuss what we listen

1. in real life
2. in the classroom

What do we listen to

Telephone conversations about business;

- Lessons or lectures given in English;
- Instructions in English;
- Watching movies in English;
- Dealing with tourists;
- Interviews with foreign-enterprises;
- Socializing with foreigners;
- Listening to English songs;

- Radio news in English;
- Conversations with foreigners;
- Watching television programs in English;
- Shop assistants who sell goods to foreigners;
- International trade fairs;
- Negotiations with foreign businessmen;
- Hotel and restaurant services.

Typical materials used for listening

Authentic:

- radio broadcasts, recordings (e.g. of movie times, airport announcements), videos of TV shows or movies, lectures, phone conversations

Semi-authentic:

- unrehearsed tapes; role plays with native speakers who speak at normal speed

Prepared:

- commercially prepared tapes and videos

Discussion

- Think about your English learning and teaching experience.
- What may cause difficulties for listening comprehension?

What interferes with listening comprehension?

- Unfamiliar vocabulary
- Grammar
- Text too long
- Several people talking
- Unfamiliar Context
- Lots of details
- Topic not interesting
- Theme not clear
- Accent
- Speed
- Idiomatic speech
- Task too difficult
- Unprepared for the discussion
- Not prepared for the format
- A lack of background information

Stages of a listening lesson

Pre-Listening

1. Introducing the listening task

Purposes:

- T prepares Ss for the task & familiarizes them with the topic
- T arouses Ss' interest

Ideas for pre-listening tasks

- Looking at the pictures /titles /diagrams/chart etc. before listening
- Making lists of possibilities/ideas/suggestions...
- Reading a text before listening
- Reading through questions (to be answered while listening)
- Labeling a picture
- Predicting/speculating
- Informal teacher and class discussion

Pre-Listening

2. Presenting vocabulary

- Just present some important vocab items
- It's not necessary to teach words of the same family
- Give attention to **words with difficult sounds**, active items, proper names

Pre-Listening

3. Giving guiding questions

- T writes guiding Qs on the board
- Ss listen to recording once or twice without pauses, focusing on gist

While-Listening

Teaching tips

- Appropriate tasks given to check major details
 - T. plays recording.
 - Ss listen for task
- Divide long scripts into short trunks to facilitate listening
 - Set clear instructions for each task: What to do (cross/circle/tick/give short answers..) + how many times

While-Listening

- Appropriate tasks given to check major details
- T. plays recording.
- Ss listen for task

Teaching tips

- Design varied tasks (T/F, MC. Gap-fill, comprehension Qs, table completion ...
 - Moving from simple -> complicated tasks
 - Less challenging activities for slower classes
- Let Ss swap info. Before checking
- When checking, rewind recording to relevant parts for confirmation (with pauses if necessary)

Ideas for while-listening activities

- Making/checking items in pictures.
- Which picture?
- Storyline picture sets.
- Putting pictures in order.
- Completing pictures.
- Picture drawing.
- Carrying out actions.
- Following a route.
- Form/chart completion.
- Labeling.
- T/F
- Multiple choice questions.
- Text completion.
- Spotting mistakes.
- Seeking specific items of information.

Post-Listening

- T. directs related tasks
- Depending on time allowed, post-listening can be:
- For language practice
 - For developing other skills (speaking or writing)

Ideas for post-listening activities

- Matching with a reading text.
- Re-telling the listening text.
- Using information from the listening text for problem-solving and decision making activities.
- Establishing the mood/attitude/behavior of the speaker.
- Identifying relationships between speakers.
- Role-play

Match the instructions with the ways of listening listed A-G. There is 1 extra option you do not need to use.

Instructions

1. Watch the video to see how the woman looks. How do you think she feels?
2. Listen to each pair of words. Say if they are same or different
3. What town does Jim live in? Listen and find out.
4. Listen to the description of the boy and the girl and draw them.
5. Listen and underline the word in the sentence that the speaker says most strongly
6. Listen to the story and decide what is the best title for it.

Ways of listening

- A. Listening for gist
- B. Understanding body language
- C. Listening for individual sounds
- D. Listening for detail
- E. Listening for sentence stress
- F. Extensive listening
- G. Listening for specific information

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Put these stages of a listening task into a logical order in the correct column

Pre-listening tasks	While-listening tasks	Post-listening tasks

Put these stages of a listening task into a logical order in the correct column

- a. The teacher focuses on features of grammar and vocabulary that occur in the recording, e.g. by asking Ss to complete a gapped transcript
- b. The teacher sets a task that requires listening for specific details. She plays the complete recording, check the answers, and replays sections if necessary
- c. Learners read the transcript of the recording and listen at the same time
- d. The teacher generates interest in the topic by, for example, asking the class about their experience of, feelings on or knowledge about, the topic
- e. The teacher presents some key vocabulary in the listening text – for example, by giving, or eliciting, a definition or an example.
- f. The teacher sets a gist listening task – for example, Who is talking to whom, about what, and why? She then play a short section of the recorded extract, and checks the answers.

Put these stages of a listening task into a logical order in the correct column

Pre-listening tasks	While-listening tasks	Post-listening tasks
d, e, f	b, a, c	

Put these stages of a listening task into a logical order in the correct column

1. Play the cassette.
2. Relate topic to students' interests and set the scene.
3. Do follow-up work.
4. Pre-teach essential vocabulary.
5. Check the students have performed the task satisfactorily.
6. Get students to compare answers in pairs.
7. Have group feedback and invite groups to agree or disagree.
8. Check that students are completing
9. Prepare students to listen.
10. Set the listening task carefully and check students know what they have to do.
11. The teacher confirms correct answers, if necessary.
12. From your monitoring, decide whether to play the cassette again.

Put these stages of a listening task into a logical order in the correct column

Pre-listening tasks	While-listening tasks	Post-listening tasks
2, 4, 10, 9	1, 5, 6, 8, 12	3, 7, 11

Online Resources

- Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab
- CNN Student News
- **Podcast**
 - ▣ English Idioms and slang
 - ▣ Breaking News English
 - ▣ ESLpod
 - ▣ ESL Podcast
 - ▣ TOEFL Podcast
 - ▣ English Through Stories