



# RECEPTIVE LEARNING SKILLS

LISTENING

Seminar 4 will look at *Receptive and Productive Skills*. The first half of the session is dedicated to the 'easier' *Receptive Skills*. The second part to the 'more challenging' *Productive Skills*.

# Listening

Listening is a skill which requires a lot of practise.

The difficulty of listening depends on many variables:  
Lexis, grammar, speed, accent, background noise etc.

Consider:

1. Student level/ability
2. Length of recording
3. Quality of recording



## Introduction.

This module aims to look at the main skills involved in teaching listening skills to students of English and also to present a few examples of different types of Listening activities. Obviously, students need to practise their listening skills as much as possible outside the classroom as well in order to raise their level. In presenting listening activities, teachers will need to consider the current level of their class in terms of listening ability and the lengths of recordings they may select. Longer recordings may be 'cut up' into several smaller portions, for example, to make the exercise more accessible.

Image: <http://www.eslgold.com/listening/imgC.jpg>



# Listening – Pre-Listening

## WARM UP & PREDICTION

Just as we discussed with *Reading It* is beneficial to do *Warm Up & Prediction* activities for *Listening*.

You can use exactly the same type of activities that we discussed for *Reading*.

### Prediction skills.

Participants need to remember that in a second language, people tend to use communication strategies.

One of these, which is related to our ability to understand things, is the skill of prediction.

Before a listening exercise begins, the students need some time to predict what they might see and hear and what the topic of the recording will be about.

For example, a lesson about London might refer to the recording “London skyline” ([www.bbc.co.uk/world service/learning English](http://www.bbc.co.uk/world_service/learning%20English)) from the series of “6 minute English”.

The teacher could ask the students for the typical lexis they might hear – e.g. skyscraper, architect, landscape and so on. To simulate this activity, the seminar presenter could ask the participants to make their own predictions.

## Listening – Pre-Listening

### A sample

- Name as many things as possible in the picture – you have 60 seconds
- Feedback as a class
- Now listen and complete the tasks:
- [http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/general/sixminute/2014/09/140918\\_6min\\_london\\_skyline.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/general/sixminute/2014/09/140918_6min_london_skyline.shtml)



Here is a sample activity which would accompany this listening:

For example, a lesson about London might refer to the recording “London skyline” ([www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/)) from the series of “6 minute English”.

The teacher could ask the students for the typical lexis they might hear – e.g. skyscraper, architect, landscape and so on.

To simulate this activity, tutors could ask the participants to make their own predictions and do the task above partially or in full.

Image: <http://www.cubebreaker.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/skyline-07-london.jpg>



## Listening – for Gist

*Listening for Gist* is similar to the *Scanning Skills* we looked at for *Reading*.

It allows students to get the general idea of the piece before moving on to more detailed tasks.

Teachers should check for basic understanding by asking some general questions and check whether predictions made in *Pre-Listening* tasks were accurate.

### Listening for gist.

The first time students listen to something is an opportunity for students to get the main idea or “the gist” of a topic.

At this point teachers might check for basic understanding and perhaps verify if the class predictions were on target or not.

## Listening – for Gist

### A sample

- What do you think is happening in the scenes below?
- Is the news report about a positive or negative thing?
- How do the people interviewed feel?
- Make more questions...



Here is a sample activity which would accompany this listening:

For example, a History lesson about the Cold War between the USA and the USSR might begin with a news film like "The fall of the Berlin Wall (BBC news, 9<sup>th</sup> November 1989)" on Youtube.

Questions are needed to follow-up the item -: Where are the people going ? What do you think is happening ? .....

Tutors might ask the participants to watch the clip and then , working in pairs, to write a set of follow-up questions for use in class.

These could then be shared with the group. This will depend on the time available and the dynamic of your group.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fjNz1lvXgzU>



## Listening – for Detail

*Listening for Detail* is similar to the *Skimming Skills* we looked at for *Reading*.

Asks students to listen for specific information.

In tests we often ask students to listen for spellings of names, dates, times, prices, phone numbers etc. because these are common things which are easily confused.

If you provide gap fill activities help weaker students to identify the type or words they are listening for, e.g.: Mike wants \_\_\_\_\_ to help him (name).  
Thatcher was the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Tory party (job/role).

A good rule for writing questions is: if you find the listening challenging (and you know the answers/topic) it will be far too difficult for your students.

Do not give them something too challenging as they will 'switch off'.

### Listening for detail.

The second and other listenings are usually intended to identify particular details in a recording.

These may be details of content ( a historical date, a name, a place) or details of language (perhaps a word previously met in a previous lesson).

## Listening – for Detail

### A sample

- Make specific questions...
- E.g.: What percentage of the world's population visited 'The Great Exhibition'?
- Multiple choice answers can be offered for all students or for differentiation.



Here is a sample activity which would accompany this listening:

For example, tutors could ask the participants to imagine that they are going to teach a lesson about The Great Exhibition of 1851 as a History topic.

The participants could then listen to the first 5-10 minutes of the programme "The Great Exhibition (from the In Our Time series by Melvyn Bragg on Youtube) and as they listen to create a set of 10 detail questions for their class to respond to when the listening has ended.

**NB: This is a very challenging listening. You may wish to select an authentic listening which is appropriate for the level of your participants. By Seminar Four you will be better placed to select something which matches their ability.**

Obviously, the participants will need to listen twice in order to do this.

Tutors could then check examples of the questions with the group.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4UeidY0SkI>



# Listening – HOTS

As with *Reading*, *HOTS* tasks should be used to consolidate knowledge and recycle new vocabulary/phrases from the completed reading task.



Go through the slide.



## Listening – Make a choice

When choosing *Listening* for your CLIL class consider their level and ability as well as the difficulty of the concept and the actual listening.

All *Listening* tasks should be authentic, but by carefully selecting *how* to do the task we can make life easier for our students.

Go through the 2 points above then ask participants for their views on how we can make *Listening* easier or more difficult.



## Listening – Make a choice

- “Blind Listening” : here the students listen to a recording with no help from images, subtitles, or scripts. **Very Difficult.**
- Videos and films : Here the students have the advantage of the visual images of a film or video to give them a clue about the topic content. It is easier to understand someone when you can see their lips moving. **Average-Difficult.**
- Subtitles : Videos and films can also be played with the subtitles, if necessary, as a support for the students to follow. **Average-Easy.**
- Scripts : A series like 6 minute English also offers the opportunity for the students to follow a recording word for word by using the script that can be downloaded. There is also a glossary for the vocabulary for each item. **Easy.**

“Blind Listening” : here the students listen to a recording with no help from images, subtitles, or scripts.

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## Listening – with the BBC

The BBC offers a range of options for promoting *Listening* with students.

Some are only about 3 minutes long and are quite humorous (e.g. *Words in the News*).  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/witn>

Some are longer and topical (e.g. *6 Minute English*).  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/6-minute-english>

They are updated weekly and there is a huge back catalogue.

You can download audio and scripts, answer questions and watch reports with subtitles.

Go to [www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish](http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish) and choose 'features'.

I think this is particularly beneficial as a means of helping students to maintain *Listening Skills* and will probably be beneficial for participants too.

Tutors can choose whether to access the links and go through a task or not.

## Listening – Conclusion

- Select *Listening* tasks carefully.
- Offer support materials (e.g. scripts) for weaker students.
- Engage students through *Pre-Listening* tasks.
- Encourage students to practise their *Listening Skills* with short activities (BBC).



Go through the slide.

Image: <http://cache3.asset-cache.net/gc/103059163-high-school-students-listening-to-headphones-gettyimages.jpg?v=1&c=IWSAsset&k=2&d=UY6TVaRTe617Nmww6Y%2BU6CiSHbQeazsj7eg2R3oOOMk%3D>

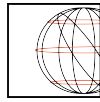


Any comments?

You can brainstorm any comments/feedback here.



**THANK YOU FOR LISTENING**



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