

Classroom implementation

The aim of *Listening* is to help students improve their understanding of English, as spoken by a range of speakers of various nationalities. The ability to understand varieties of spoken English is key to improved communication, and this book gives students experience of hearing different speeds of speech, different accents and different language usage. *Listening* gives students practice in listening for the gist / the main points made by speakers and in listening for the exact meaning of words and phrases. Attention is paid to the impact of culture on the language used and students have the opportunity to enhance their understanding of English vocabulary and usage.

The book contains twenty units, divided into five sections. The five sections are:

1. *Lifestyle*
2. *Practical advice and information*
3. *Attitudes and behaviour*
4. *Passions*
5. *Memorable experiences*

The units in *Listening* have a broadly similar structure. Below are some suggestions as to how each of the unit features can be best used in the classroom.

❖ IN THIS UNIT

What is it?

Each unit begins with a list of contents. Most units contain two or three listening extracts and questions. The topics of each are outlined here.

Suggested implementation:

Predict some of the points the speakers will make and some of the vocabulary they will use when speaking about these topics. Students can use Mind Maps to record this vocabulary.

❖ CLEAR USAGE

What is it?

These boxes (e.g. page 8) focus on specific issues which can cause problems for the listener, such as complex grammar forms used by native speakers or non-standard usage.

Suggested implementation:

Tell students to write their own sentences using the language point. You can also use this opportunity to link to exercises in the *Collins COBUILD – Intermediate English Grammar and Practice*.

❖ USEFUL VOCABULARY AND PHRASES

What is it?

These boxes (e.g. page 12) highlight key words and phrases related to the unit's topic.

Suggested implementation:

1. Encourage students to note example sentences in their vocabulary books, not just individual words. This gives them a record of how new words and phrases can be used. Where possible, encourage students to make their own example sentences.
2. Help students to create Mind Maps, so that new vocabulary is logged with other vocabulary of a similar topic.

❖ LISTENING TIPS

What are they?

These boxes (e.g. page 19) offer specific tips and advice to help your students improve their listening skills, either appropriate to the text type or in a general sense.

Suggested implementation:

The *Listening tips* will probably not take up a lot of class time. However, if you want to concentrate on a particular tip, you can:

1. Get students to find other texts in the book where the listening tip might be successfully employed.
2. Discuss how / where / when this information may be useful, and to what extent students could utilize it in their everyday listening activities.

❖ COBUILD CHECK

What is it?

In order to help students to extend their vocabulary, key words and phrases from the recordings are presented in these boxes (e.g. page 10), with examples taken from the Collins COBUILD Corpus.

Suggested implementation:

Ask students to find more example sentences using the words in bold. They can do this by typing the word into an Internet search engine, using a concordancer or using a dictionary. They can also personalize the vocabulary by creating sentences which are true for them.

❖ SPEECH BUBBLES

What are they?

These give interesting information about language or culture.

Suggested implementation:

Speech bubbles are usually brief and in many cases can be dealt with by reading them aloud in class. Give students the responsibility of deciding whether or not they want to record the contents of the speech bubbles in their notebooks.

❖ NEXT STEPS

What is it?

This box, which comes at the end of every unit gives ideas for further listening activities that students can do, related to the content of the unit.

Suggested implementation:

If you have computers on your premises, many of these exercises can be done using them. This will give you a chance to look at students' Internet search skills.

Next steps can also be given as a homework task. You can ask students to feed back what they have found out in the form of:

- a brief chat to a partner about their findings
- a formal presentation
- a poster
- a short paragraph
- a longer article, review or essay

❖ PLANNING A LESSON

It is recommended with listening texts that you do a pre-listening task, several while-listening tasks and then finish with some post-listening work. Here are some ideas for each of these:

Pre-listening

Pre-listening exercises are always useful as they prepare students for the recording they will hear, often making it easier to understand the first time they listen to it. Here are some suggested activities:

Prediction activities

1. Put students into groups. Ask them to note down three things that the speakers may talk about in the recording. Get them to share their own opinions on what they have written down.
2. Challenge students to speak on the same topic as the recording for one minute without hesitating. This can be done in pairs or small groups.

Vocabulary activities

1. Pre-teach key vocabulary in the listening task. Check vocabulary.
2. Play 'Vocabulary Bingo'. Students choose six words or phrases that they predict will be said in the recording. They listen and tick off the words they hear. The winner is the person who has the most ticked words or phrases at the end of the exercise.
3. Check pronunciation as well as meaning.

While listening

There are a number of exercises in the unit related to each listening text. Each exercise will encourage students to listen in a different way, e.g. listening for the main idea or for specific details.

Alert yourself to what is required in each exercise so that you will be able to direct your students appropriately and ensure they employ the most suitable listening skills for the question. You can also:

1. Encourage students to try to listen for the main ideas, not to try and understand every word.
2. Make students aware that the speakers may repeat or correct themselves and will not necessarily speak in full sentences. Some words may be mumbled. They should not worry about this, but should move on. In many cases, it is sufficient to catch the gist.

3. Encourage students to identify the relationship between the speakers, if there are two or more. Do they agree or disagree? How do they know? If there is one speaker, what is the relationship between the speaker and intended audience?
4. Play the recording once for students to complete a gist exercise, e.g. noting down the topic of the conversation. Then play the recording again for students to listen for specific details.
5. Tell students to read the transcript while the recording plays. This will draw their attention to new vocabulary or features of pronunciation (e.g. intonation, stress and rhythm). They can then look up any new words or phrases, or seek help with pronunciation difficulties.
6. Allow students time to check their answers with a partner before feeding back to the class.

Post-listening

The *Next steps* box at the end of each unit offers useful post-listening tasks. Additionally, the following tasks can be used in classes when:

- you have time to fill before the end of a lesson
- faster students are waiting for slower readers to complete the exercises
- you need to set a homework task.

1. Ask students to 'act out' the recording(s) they have just heard, using their own words.
2. Get students to talk about the same topic, but to alter the content according to their own opinions. Encourage them to use any vocabulary, language or pronunciation that they have learned in the unit.
3. Encourage students to find a recording related to the topic online. They should make notes on what is said and then report back to the class. They can include details on where they found the recording, what the speakers said and what they found easy / difficult about understanding the recording.
4. Go to www.collinselt.com/englishforlife/extras and play the recording(s) in class. Create comprehension questions in advance, or ask students to make notes while listening and discuss what they hear with a partner.
5. If your students know other English speakers, tell them to prepare questions about the unit's topic to ask an English speaker, and to report back in the following class.