

Classroom implementation

Collins English for Business: Listening aims to develop learners' awareness and understanding of speakers with a variety of different accents of English, native and non-native.

The book is designed for self-study but is also suitable for use as supplementary material on business communication and business English courses. Look at the introduction in the main book (pages 2–3) to get an overview of its approach and components.

These notes provide:

- ideas on how the materials can be used in the classroom, either with groups or one-to-one
- ideas for additional activities that extend beyond the materials.

This first document looks at some of the generic issues and ideas related to the exploitation and extension of the book in the classroom.

The other downloadable documents provide detailed lesson notes for the first three units of the book, giving step-by-step procedures for classroom exploitation of the components. The plans demonstrate how to make the exercises work best in a classroom environment, and also offer extension opportunities to really get the most from the content.

Another purpose of the detailed lesson notes is to provide illustrations of the sort of procedures and activities that you can apply to further units. You can also use the activities as models of how to exploit and extend material in other parts of the book.

Of course, you are free to pick the sections you want to use in relation to the requirements and interests of your learners.

USING THE RECORDINGS

In the recordings business people speak unscripted, in a natural way, 'on location' at their workplaces.

Learners who are used to scripted, studio-recorded audio materials might at first find understanding difficult. They may be surprised by the amount of hesitation, and by the changes of course and 'mistakes' that they hear. In using the recordings, the book provides a progression from general comprehension to more detailed listening activities, allowing learners to develop strategies for understanding a wide range of speakers and accents.

Suggested implementation for pre-listening

Avoid playing recordings 'cold' – use at least one pre-listening activity to prepare learners for what they are about to hear. Here are some ideas:

1. The basic pre-listening activity, of course, is to get your learners to focus on the rubric (= instruction) relating to what they are going to hear. Make sure that they have understood the rubric, not by saying 'OK?' or 'Do you understand?', but by asking specific questions about meanings of words that might cause difficulty and explaining them where necessary. Likewise, learners should look in detail at all the questions relating to what they are going to hear. Again, ask specific questions about meanings of words that might cause difficulty and explain them where necessary.
2. Another pre-listening activity is to ask learners to read both the rubric and the questions and then get them to anticipate what they might hear.
3. A variation on the above is to ask your learners to make a list of words that they think they might hear in the recording. They then have to listen out for these words and say which of them actually occur.

Further suggestions for pre-listening are provided in the lesson plans for Units 1–3.

Suggested implementation for listening and post-listening

The book offers a wealth of listening and post-listening exercise options. But don't just plough through the exercises. Instead, exploit each recording in different ways, both to provide variety and to approach the recording in the way most suited to the task.

Some of the exercises in each unit will work better as individual activities and some as pair/group activities.

The following types of exercises are better handled as individual work:

- finding words/phrases missing from the transcript
- summarising what speakers have said

These exercise types are better treated as pairwork or groupwork:

- guessing/infering meaning
- paraphrasing or 're-creating' what the speaker has said, for example a pair-work interview based on a monologue in the unit
- discussion questions

Getting learners to discuss and react to what they hear is one of the most important things in listening, with the teacher encouraging them to use some of the language that they have heard.

EXPLOITATION OF OTHER FEATURES

- *Clear usage* looks at issues that can cause problems for non-native listeners, for example, complex grammar forms and non-standard forms used by native speakers.
- The unit-specific lesson plans suggest ways in which the usage points can be further practised, with occasional cross-references to useful units in *Collins Intermediate Business Grammar & Practice*.
- The content in dark speech bubbles. e.g. *Nigerian English* on page 9, provides background information on the context of what learners hear in the recordings. You can, where appropriate, get learners to discuss parallel issues with relation to their own context.
- The *COBUILD CHECK* section provides sample sentences from the Collins Corpus demonstrating some of the words in the unit. These are real examples taken from the COBUILD database of written and spoken English.
- The *Useful vocabulary and phrases* boxes offer extension vocabulary on the same theme as the recording. You can create all sorts of exercises from this material to broaden your students' word base.
- Some of the most difficult terms in each unit are glossed in the *Mini-dictionary* at the back of the book, which contains both definitions and examples. The *COBUILD CHECK*, *Useful vocabulary and phrases*, and the *Mini-dictionary* sections can be used in conjunction with the online *COBUILD Advanced Dictionary* at: www.collinsdictionary.com/COBUILD. Here, your learners can look up definitions online for words they don't understand. If you have Internet access in the classroom, do this once or twice with them there, otherwise, ask them to do this for homework and report back in the next class.
- *Further study* points out additional recordings of speakers in the main unit that learners can find on the Collins ELT website. Your learners can listen to these in their own time. This could form the basis of a homework task.

Homework task

There are also some suggestions in the unit-specific teacher notes for homework tasks that can follow on from the activities – for example, writing tasks that mirror one of the activities in the unit, or speaking tasks with learners recording conversations or preparing spoken presentations to be played/given in the next class.

English for Business: Listening

CLASSROOM EXTENSION

Suggestions for additional communicative activities

The main skill that this book aims to develop is, of course, listening, but using the book in the classroom gives the teacher the opportunity to make the learning experience more multi-disciplinary, more communicative, and thus more rewarding. Obviously, the learner response to the comprehension activities when used in the classroom is usually in spoken form. These notes also provide additional ideas on further speaking activities. As with all the material in these teacher resources, you are free to pick and choose the activities you wish to do in relation to your learners' needs and interests.

A major advantage of linking from listening into speaking is that it further improves learners' listening skills. For example, learners' comprehension and memorisation of language will improve if they use the language they have heard when speaking themselves. This applies to individual words and expressions, as well as longer stretches of language.

A good procedure for speaking activities is as follows:

1. Explain the task clearly. If the task is complicated, ask a confident learner (but not the same one every time) to be your partner and act out the beginning with them, so as to demonstrate the task.
2. Make sure all your learners know who they are paired with. Start the task. Circulate, monitor and assist where necessary, but don't interrupt learners who are working well. Note down any points that are causing difficulty.
3. Call the class to order. Go over any points that caused problems, ensuring learners use the correct wording in each case.
4. Ask one or two of the pairs to perform the activity for the whole class, incorporating your corrections.
5. If doing pair work with a one-to-one learner, the teacher can take one of the parts and the learner the other part. Do this twice if necessary, with the learner incorporating any improvements or corrections, and the teacher, if appropriate, pointing out language that they chose to use. You can then exchange parts, encouraging the learner to incorporate this language.

The teacher resources for Units 1–3 provide some examples of these.

Suggestions for additional writing activities

It is equally possible to create engaging writing activities out of the Listening material. Use the unit topic and the 'getting started' question as an assignment, or ask the students to create their own (written) account of whatever they listen to on the CD. The topics are designed to be relevant to all, so there is no end to the opportunities for manipulation and reuse.