

Listening Tasks

The listening tasks can be principally of two types:

- i. Extensive: The listening material may be lengthy, but the learner listens for pleasure and is not expected to note every tiny detail for completion of a specific task. Listening to radio broadcasts and TV programmes are popular methods of enhancing extensive listening. Such extensive listening may take place inside or outside the formal classroom settings.
- ii. Intensive: The learner listens very carefully and with full concentration. The listening material is short and the learner is expected to complete a special task or worksheet designed on the material. The material is designed in such a way that the learner is motivated to note minute details for completion of the assigned task. Such a listening activity usually takes place within the formal classroom settings with the help of well designed, carefully graded and planned tasks. The material is usually compact and the learner is allowed to make short intermittent responses during the process.

Again based on the purpose of listening, the tasks can be classified as follows

- i. Listening for perception: The learner must be able to perceive correctly the different sounds, stress and intonation patterns of the target language and thus the listening activity is focused on aural perception. In such activities comprehension is of secondary importance and no visual inputs are given, so that the learners are compelled to concentrate on the phonological aspects of the language. Listening for perception may be practiced in the formal classroom setting with the help of the following exercises:
 - a. Use of tape recorders to make the learners repeat certain pronunciations, in tandem with prompt feedback.
 - b. Preparation of necessary worksheet to enable the learners to differentiate sounds of various words. The teacher may also pronounce certain words that the learners would find from the given worksheet.
 - c. Sentences may be uttered or recorded versions may be played in the card with stress being put on different words of the same sentence. The learners may be urged to identify the meanings conveyed by the sentence according to the stress laid down on the words. For instance, *I* want to do this (only I and not others want to do this) / I *want* to do this (a sense of urgency and determination) \ I want to do *this* (importance upon the task to be accomplished).

- d. Rising and falling tones may also be used to teach the learners to distinguish between various intonations.
 - e. Picture activities are effective, where the teacher utters sentences or words and learners immediately identify the related pictures.
 - f. Small texts may also be read allowed to enhance the listening perception of the learner.
-
- ii. **Listening for comprehension:** The listening material is based upon a particular context and the learner is given practice in specific areas of listening, according to his or her needs. Quick responses are an integral part of the listening exercise. An element of critical thinking and problem solving marks such a listening activity. The learners may be urged to respond to the instructions given by the teacher which calls for focused listening. The learners may also be urged to colour pictures or make designs according to the verbal instructions given by the teacher. Relevant worksheets may be handed out where the learners have to identify contexts uttered by the teacher in the class. The learners may also be asked to supply information in given grids with the help of summarization of the facts or concepts read out by the teacher.
 - iii. **Listening for specific details:** This is listening with a purpose, a variant of intensive listening, in which every uttered sound is listened to attentively to locate specific details.
 - iv. **Gist listening:** General lectures, speeches, seminars, conversations or talks are listened to with simultaneous critical thinking and reflection, in order to understand the gist or the thematic focus of the whole. Every minute detail may not be noted but the main points or the thematic crux of the entire speech is grasped.
 - v. **Listening to identify emotion/attitude:** Learners listen to identify the mood and attitude of certain speakers.
 - vi. **Listening to recognize context:** Learners listen to aural and contextual clues to identify where the conversation takes place, who is speaking, etc.
 - vii. **Listening for inferring relationships:** Learners may be urged to listen to identify who the people are in the recording and what the relationship is between them.