Developing receptive skills

Anna Voronina, Pearson teacher trainer.
anna.voronina@pearson.com
Seminar questions:

• Receptive skills;
• Real life listening;
• Teaching reading to young kids;
• Reading and listening strategies;
• Activating prior knowledge for making listening and reading clear;
• Reading and listening: how they work together;
• Listening strategies;
• Managing the listening lesson;
• Preparing students for receptive skills exam tasks.
“We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.” ~ Epictetus
Listening
Real life listening
Can animals listen? What do they hear?

Animals listen either to stay safe or to get food:
• Frogs can hear predators and other frogs;
• Kangaroos can hear the scales of a rattlesnake scraping on sand;
• Bats find their dinner by squeaking and listening to the echoes bouncing off nearby insects.
Real life listening

• What:
  • Different sounds (car signals, babies crying for food);
  • To each other when talking;
  • Radio broadcasts;
  • Airport announcements;
  • Music and actors performing;
  • Lectures;
  • Grand speeches.
Real life listening

• Why:
• Unlike animals humans have another reason to listen: sounds can stimulate our imagination and enrich our lives;
• To react appropriately (Car signals, baby’s cry);
• Getting information;
• Empathy, assessment or criticism
• For pleasure;
• Have to.
What is listening

- 50% listening
- 50% reading, writing, speaking
What is reading

Reading is the ability

• to receive,
• attend to,
• interpret,
• and respond emotionally to written messages.
What we bring to reading

Using existing knowledge
What we bring to reading

- **Knowledge of the topic (schema)**
- **Knowledge of the format**
Do you remember how you learned to read in English?
Teaching reading to young kids
what do we start with?

• Reading books contain voices, so start reading by listening.
• Listen and use pictures to help with understanding.
• Listen and follow the text with your finger.
• Find words for people, activities and things.
• Listen and repeat (read aloud) parts of the text.
Teaching reading to young kids

- Talk about your opinions and feelings about the book.

- Think about the next part of the book.
- Read books again and again.
- Draw, colour, write and share your own books.
There’s a town.

It’s fantastic here. Look. There’s a town. Look at that big house and swimming pool. There’s a park and a river. The trees.

Find and number.

the town 1
the park
the river
the swimming pool
the playground
the children
Depending on the text we are reading, we generally use one of these strategies:

• identify the topic;
• predict and guess;
• read for general understanding;
• read for specific information;
• read for details;
• interpret or make inferences.
Activating the students' prior knowledge of the topic.

- the teacher is getting the students to think about the subject of the reading they’re about to do.
- The teacher is activating their pre-existing knowledge, so that when they read they’ll have more of an idea about the topic.
First reading.

Reading for general understanding
Second reading and engaging all of the students

- Thumbs up, thumbs down
Reading for specific information:

• Give your examples on this type of reading;
• look up a word in a dictionary;
• read the gate number on a boarding pass;
• look at the amount we owe when we receive a bill. We don't read from the first to last word; our eyes go directly to the information we need.
• This type of reading is also known as scanning.
Expanding the reading to include critical thinking and speaking.

- interpret,
- infer,
- or read between the lines in order to answer the true/false questions.
What can be difficult for understanding a text?

• Language;
• Topic and genre;
• Comprehension tasks.

What we can do as teachers to facilitate comprehension.
Ways to get students interested:

• Predict the content from the title;
• Use pictures or cartoons;
• Plan a discussion;
• Use agree / disagree statements;
• Find out what students already know;
• Assign a short passage related to the topic
• Use quotations;
• Use charts and statistics;
• Brainstorm.
Dealing with unknown vocabulary

• We should let them struggle through the reading and work out the meaning for themselves or

• We should pre-teach key vocabulary:
  ➢ Giving definitions:
    ✓ Synonyms;
    ✓ Fill-in-the-blank;
    ✓ Matching words to pictures.
  ➢ Grouping similar words:
    ✓ Cross out words that don’t belong;
    ✓ Put words into categories..
“Discuss this article with four other students”
Make this task concrete, appropriate and achievable.
Read the following article.
1. Do you agree or disagree with the writer? Why, or why not?
2. Discuss your opinion with a partner.
3. Ask two other students if they agree with the writer’s opinion.”
When we read a story, and then, listen to someone telling the same story, how will these two versions differ?
Dealing with a text

• Can cows fly?
• Read the text and think of the story ending.
The Flying Cow

One afternoon a famous television news-reader drove very fast in his open-topped car along a big road. Suddenly there was a strange noise … THUD! “What’s that?” he thought. He stopped, turned round and looked – there was a cow in the back! It was dead.

“I must get it out of here,” he thought. “A dead cow isn’t good for my nice clean car.” But the cow was very heavy and he couldn’t move it. So he drove to the nearest town and looked for a garage. He wanted the people in the garage to help with moving the cow. But before he arrived at the garage he stopped at a bar for a drink. When he went into the bar the people said, “Oh look, it’s the famous news-reader on TV. Why is he here?” Then he told them about the cow from sky.

“Never! It can’t be! Is it a story for TV?” the man behind the bar asked.

“No, it happened only twenty minutes ago, the news-reader said. A man in the corner started to laugh. “Twenty minutes ago …
The Flying Cow

Compare your stories with the real one.

Taken from “Stranger than Fiction”, Penguin readers
How do reading and listening complement each other?
Read & listen

Let’s go back to the same story and read it as you listen to the recording.

After the recording is finished, take 2 mins to write down words or phrases that describe how you felt during this second reading.
Listening vs. Reading

Spoken Language

- Tends to be informal and colloquial,
- Text is gone quickly; so you often can't refer back to check it,
- Often unplanned and unorganized with repetition, hesitations, and interruptions,
- Vagueness and ambiguity are allowed and often preferred,

Written language

- Tends to be more formal,
- Text stays on the page; you can refer back to it,
- Usually planned and organized with little repetition,
- Precision and clarity are preferred, and often required,
Listening vs. Reading

Spoken Language
• Use of weak forms and contractions make some parts hard to perceive;
• Stress, intonation, and pauses show emphasis and groupings of ideas;
• Body language (e.g. facial expressions and gestures) helps understanding.

Written language
• All text is equally visible on the page. There are no strong and weak forms;
• Punctuation and spaces between words show word, sentence, and paragraph boundaries;
• Text often has little or no visual support.
Listening to …

How many vehicles could you see? Do you remember particular types of cars?
How many vehicles could you see?
Do you remember particular types of cars?

*Fluent speech is like a heavy motorway traffic.*

“I scream for ice-cream”

«скрипка – лиса»
или
«скрип колеса»?
Listening challenges

• Recognising the word boundaries;
• The spelling system of English does not help: “Mr Clough from Slough bought enough dough”;
• Simply mishearing;
• Unknown words, lexical density, complex grammar structures;
• Not enough knowledge of the topic…
How to make it easier?

Keeping the learner active
Clues to help a listener:

- Vocabulary;
- Intonation and tone;
- Visual clues;
- The global background knowledge (personal experiences, culture) that we use to understand – Schema;
Describing the process of activating schemata.

• Imagine I say that I am going to the bank.

• I walk up to the bank, put on my ski mask, pull out my shotgun and shout “Everybody hit the floor! This is a stick-up!”

• “Hand over the money!”

• “I forgot my line. Can we do that again?”
Context and contextual clues

- the setting
- facial expressions
- gestures and body language
- the tone and volume of voice
- the choice of vocabulary and grammar
Receptive or productive? Passive or active?

• Listening comprehension is an active and conscious process in which the listener constructs meaning by using cues from contextual information and from existing knowledge, while relying upon multiple strategic resources to fulfill the task at hand.
Listening strategies

• predicting information and ideas,
• focusing on main ideas,
• focusing on key information,
• inferring or guessing missing information,
• recalling or constructing a complete memory of the text,
• asking and responding.

Reading strategies?
Some listening sub-strategies

• asking for clarification,

• detecting supporting ideas, generalization, and examples,

• evaluating the message for logic,

• figuring out relationships such as causes and effects,

• guessing the meaning of words from context,

• inferring implied information,
Some listening sub-strategies

• inferring links and connections between people and events,
• relating information to personal experience or knowledge,
• responding by providing verbal and non-verbal feedback,
• restating or paraphrasing to clarify the message,
• using nonverbal clues to interpret meaning.
Listening strategies can be used as a basis for while-listening activities
Solutions

• Include a lot of listening practice
• Assigning appropriate tasks
• Activate schematic knowledge
Listening lesson sequence
Pre-listening activities

• Ask students their opinions on the topic. Ask them to:
  - agree/disagree with statements;
  - discuss questions;
  - discuss quotations;

• Brainstorm on topic ideas or vocabulary;

• Discuss charts, graphs, maps, or statistics;

• Discuss pictures, photos, or cartoons;
Pre-listening activities

- Discuss their personal experiences;
- Discuss what students know about a topic;
- Predict what text will be about (from title, pictures etc.);
- Pre-teach key vocabulary and/or grammar;
- Read a short text related to the topic.
Exploiting the listening text

Tasks to use while listening

• Check topics, events, pictures discussed
• Complete a chart or diagram
• Complete a gap fill
• Follow a route on a map
• Identify errors in a script
Exploiting the listening text

Tasks to use while listening

• Answer multiple choice questions
• Number topics, events, pictures in order discussed
• Form questions and give short answers
• Take notes
• Answer true/false questions
While listening tasks

- Listening for gist;
- Listening for detail:

Give your examples of tasks

1. Bingo
2. Times, dates, numbers;
3. Spot the differences;
4. A story told twice (with some changes to notice);
5. Mixed focus (students listen several times for different information).
Post-listening activities

- Discuss ideas or cultural points in the text
- Discuss interpretations and opinions
- Learn new functional language taken from the listening
- Link listening with another skill (speaking, reading, or writing)
- Review pre-listening vocabulary and teach new vocabulary
- Set up awareness-raising activities, for grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation
- Set up out-of-class research or interview projects
9 2.37 DVD 6 Look at the photos (1-2) above and listen to or watch the dialogues. Answer the questions.

1 What do they argue about (dialogue 1)?
2 What do they agree on (dialogue 2)?

10 2.38 DVD 6 Listen to or watch the second dialogue again. Which expressions in bold in the Talk Builder:

a express opinions?
1 b agree?
c disagree?
d ask for opinions?
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Getting your students prepared for listening / reading exam task
Listening strategies

• General tips

1. Take advantage of the time before the recording starts.

• Read the instructions carefully. You will find out what kind of text you are going to hear, who is going to speak and what they will speak about. Try to imagine what they might say.

• Read the questions and the available answers in order to find out what kind of information you need to extract from the recording.

• Think about specific words which might appear in the recording, e.g. synonyms of the words or phrases used in the questions.
Listening strategies

• General tips

2. The same content will be expressed in the recording and in the question using different words. This may be done by using synonyms, e.g.: He works for the army. = He’s employed by the military.
I managed to persuade her. = I succeeded in convincing her.
or through the use of antonyms, e.g.: They were narrow-minded. = They were not very tolerant.

Grammatical paraphrases may also appear, e.g.: They haven’t met for ten years. = The last time they met was ten years ago.
Listening strategies

• General tips

3. If the same word or phrase appears in both the recording and the question, it could be a trap. In these situations, ask yourself, ‘Is the meaning of the whole sentence really the same in the question and in the recording?’

4. The questions are always about the content of the recording. If a statement makes sense according to your general knowledge or experience, that does not necessarily mean it is the correct answer in the exam task. Remember that the correct answer is the one which agrees with the content of the recording.
Matching

EXAM TIPS

1. The essence of this task is identifying the gist of each recording, or the element which makes it different from the others.
2. Always listen to each recording to the end before matching it to an answer.
3. When you listen for the first time, note down the answers you are relatively sure of. When you listen for the second time, check those answers and complete the remaining ones.
True / False / Not stated

1. The order of the sentences corresponds to the order in which the information necessary to answer them appears in the recording.

2. A statement is false when the statement and the recording contradict each other: they cannot both be true at the same time. We can say there is no information when the statement could be true, but the recording does not say so.
Multiple Choice.

**EXAM TIP**

The recording may contain words which appear in the incorrect options. Hearing an individual word is not enough to choose the correct answer. Listen for words and phrases associated with the answer you choose, and think about why the remaining options are wrong.
Multiple Choice. Exam tips

1. The order of the sentences is the same as the order in which the relevant information appears in the recording.

2. Every question requires you to eliminate incorrect answers. These are in some way similar to the content of the recording, so you have to notice what it is that makes them false, for example:
   a. the option is too general and suggests that something ‘always’ happens, while the recording says that it happens ‘often’ or ‘frequently’;
   b. the answer contains one of several points mentioned in the recording, but not the most important one, while the question requires you to find the ‘main’ or ‘most important’ point;
Multiple Choice. Exam tips

c. there is a similar statement in the recording, but it refers to something or somebody else;
d. the answer seems correct according to your experience or general knowledge, but it does not agree with the content of the recording.
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I remind myself every morning: Nothing I say this day will teach me anything. So, if I’m going to learn, I must do it by listening. – Larry King
Thank you!

Anna.Voronina@pearson.com