

English for
Academic Study

New edition

Listening

Teacher's Book

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Book map

	Unit title and topics	Skills focus	Microskills
1	Listening and lectures <i>Problems of listening</i> <i>Differences between academic cultures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Listening in different languages ■ Issues in understanding spoken English ■ Listening to lectures 	
2	Introductions to lectures <i>Migration</i> <i>Britain and the European Monetary Union</i> <i>Globalization</i> <i>Magistrates' courts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Thinking about introductions ■ Functions and language of lecture introductions ■ Listening to lecture introductions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Word stress
3	Identifying key ideas in lectures <i>Franchising</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Thinking about key ideas ■ Identifying key points in a lecture ■ Distinguishing key points from examples ■ Signposting and highlighting key points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Word families (1)
4	Note-taking: Part 1 <i>Britain's traffic problems</i> <i>The East-Asian economic miracle</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reasons for taking notes ■ Principles of note-taking ■ Note-taking practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sentence stress
5	Note-taking: Part 2 <i>Language learning</i> <i>Changes in the world economy</i> <i>Health in the UK</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Returning to your notes ■ Using abbreviations and symbols ■ Organizing your notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Word boundaries
6	Introducing new terminology <i>Embedded words</i> <i>European Union: regulations and directives</i> <i>Market dominance and monopoly</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introducing new terminology ■ Introducing terms and concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Weak forms of function words
7	What lecturers do in lectures <i>Doing market research</i> <i>Social learning</i> <i>Contestable markets</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Macrostructure of lectures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Word families (2)
8	Digressions <i>Social learning</i> <i>Questionnaire design</i> <i>Integrated rural development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reasons for digressions ■ Identifying digressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Common expressions in lectures

In this unit students will:

- discuss the different situations in which they have to listen
- identify what factors influence their ability to understand
- learn about features of lectures in different academic cultures

Task 1 Listening in different languages

The aim of this task is to get students thinking about the different types of listening, and about the notion that we vary our listening strategies according to what we are listening to.

- 1.1 You can either do this task as a discussion among the whole class, or in pairs/small groups before summarizing with the whole class.

Students should come up with some of the following points.

- When you are involved in a conversation, you can check your understanding, while you cannot for the other contexts. This means that you probably do not need to concentrate as hard.
- When people listen to the radio, they tend to tune in and out depending on how interested they are in the topic. There may well be a difference in attention level between listening to music on the radio while you do the ironing, and listening to a penalty shoot-out involving your favourite football team.
- When you listen to announcements at a railway station, you are generally listening for specific information; you are probably listening for your destination, the platform number, arrival time, and whether or not your train is on time.
- When listening to an academic lecture, there is likely to be more 'close listening' than for the other contexts, but, in fact, students will be applying different skills at different points in the lecture. They might be listening for specific information at the beginning if, for example, they expect to hear a deadline for an assignment; they might 'tune out' and listen for gist during a digression.

For lower-level students or less talkative groups, you could write the above notes on cards and ask students to match them to the situations.

Task 2 Understanding spoken English

The aim of this task is to highlight the problems of listening for students while they discuss points and listen to each other.

- 2.1 Students are likely to cite factors like unfamiliar vocabulary, accent and lack of listening practice in their previous education as factors causing problems when listening to English.

This activity could be done as a class questionnaire to increase the background noise, and range of accents, and to focus the students' listening.

- 2.2 ► **CD1: 1** This listening activity raises some of the fairly predictable issues affecting comprehension, and then goes on to look at two specific problems of decoding spoken English. In later units there will be more detailed analysis and practice recognizing unfamiliar word forms and word boundaries.

After students have read the questions, play Track 1.

Answers:

1. The teacher discusses the factor of the speed at which someone is speaking. She does not discuss background noise.
2. She also talks about topic and specialized vocabulary as factors affecting comprehension.
3. The two additional problems she discusses:
 - the problem of word boundaries (understanding where one word ends and another begins)
 - recognizing words pronounced in an unexpected way

Students who have studied English primarily through the written medium are likely to have listening problems and fail to recognize words or phrases that they would otherwise recognize in the written form.

- 2.3 ► **CD1: 2** In the second part of the talk, the teacher illustrates the two problems she has introduced. Before you play Track 2, check that students understand they have to write down a phrase which is dictated during the talk.

After you have played Track 2, elicit the phrase *words they hear in natural speech* and write it on the board.

Ask students to explain why this phrase is difficult to decode. Using the written phrase on the board, guide the students to the following responses: the linking (*hear_in_natural*) may cause difficulties, in addition to the elided vowel in *natural* /nætʃrəl/.

Extension activity

Discuss this question as a class, or with weaker groups explain how the phrase in 2.3 illustrates the lecture.

- 2.4 ► **CD1: 3** You may need to play Track 3 two or three times before students complete the excerpt. Students can either check their answers by referring to the transcript in the Course Book, or you can elicit the answers onto the board or a visual aid showing the gapped text (see Appendix 1a, page 17).

Answers:

So what is the solution to these two problems? Well, firstly, you need to get as much practice listening to natural speech as possible. Listen to extracts from lectures and try to develop your understanding of how words and phrases are really pronounced, not how you expect them to be pronounced. And secondly, you need to accept that when you listen you may misunderstand what is being said. So you need to be ready to change your mind about your understanding of the meaning, if what you hear doesn't make sense compared to what you understood before. And this means taking a flexible, open-minded approach to listening.

- 2.5 Focus the students' attention on the words they misheard or did not hear at all. Try to get them to explain why they had problems. Did they have problems identifying word boundaries? Were there words they knew in the written form but did not recognize in the spoken form?

Make it clear that, during the course, the microskills work will focus on some of the problems of decoding.

For lower-level groups, scaffold this activity by giving students a list of possible answers to the questions for them to discuss in groups.

Task 3 Listening to lectures

The aim of this task is to raise awareness of the variety of lecture styles across cultures.

This talk is based on a tracking study (where a sample of students were followed for a period of time) carried out by the speaker. It is important to demonstrate to students that they will have to adjust to a system where the lecture delivers less of the course content than they may be used to; they will have to do a lot more background reading around the lectures. Students will also have to recognize for themselves what the important points are.

- 3.1 Check what students understand by the term *lecture* and that students have attended lectures elsewhere. If you have a class that includes a large proportion of students who will be studying at a university for the first time, then they probably will not be able to discuss the topics in Ex 3.1. If this is the case, it might be better to describe what kind of lectures they might be attending in an English-speaking institution:
- generally between 45 and 90 minutes' long
 - traditional lecture (questions at the end) vs 'interactive' lecture (questions at any point)
 - lecturer generally speaks from notes, but occasionally lectures are fully scripted or delivered from memory
 - visual support (e.g., PowerPoint, handouts, none)

You could use the information above as a true/false activity.

3.2 ► **CD1: 4 Sample notes (see Appendix 1b, page 18):**

- *Main interest = diff bet Ch & Br ac culture esp. lectures – how organized/ presented + role of lecturers*
- *Info from: tracking study w/ Ch sts – PG Uni of Reading
Interviews w/ each st every term*
- *The survey small sample – 12 students.*

- 3.3 When students have discussed these questions in pairs, elicit ways of writing down the information concisely, e.g., omitting function words, using key words and symbols. Show students the sample notes and highlight the features of note-taking. Tell the students that they will learn more about abbreviations and symbols in later units.

- 3.4 Students could predict the differences as a pre-reading task. If you have Chinese students, they could tell other nationalities what lectures are like in their experience.

► **CD1: 5 Sample notes (see Appendix 1c, page 19):**

China	UK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ a lot of course content delivered through lectures ■ lecture information sufficient to pass exams/course ■ not interactive – no questions/comments from students ■ lecturer points out key points ■ based on one course book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ most course content not delivered through lectures ■ lectures give overview or background info ■ students have to read around lectures ■ can be very interactive – depends on number of students

3.5 Students compare their notes and discuss ways of reducing the word count of their notes. With higher-level groups you could give them a word limit for each idea/point.

3.6 You may wish to give students time individually to review their notes and think about their answers to the questions before discussing in groups.

If you do not have students from China, omit question 1. The discussion can be organized in mixed-nationality groups.

After the discussion, ask students to report back to the whole class. You may wish to focus on their answers to questions 5 and 6 to help them prepare for the lecture cycle and ultimately their own academic courses. You may also want to check that they have mentioned the following:

- reading any handouts given before the lectures
- reviewing own notes
- checking notes with peers
- discussing the content with peers, etc.

With less talkative groups, this activity could be done as a class survey. After a specific time for questioning, pairs could discuss what they found out from their class members.

Unit summary

You may wish the students to complete the unit summaries in class or in their own time. If they complete them out of class, make sure you get some feedback during class time. Whatever you choose, it might be beneficial to set up some of the activities in class, either to clarify what to do, or to help students start thinking about the topics.

Some of the items can be done individually and others are best done in pairs or groups. When working outside the classroom, encourage students to find the time to meet with others and complete any pair or group activities.

The activities in Unit 1 are based mainly around student reflection. Encourage them to think carefully about the way they answer and to share their conclusions with other students.

You could set up reflection groups in the class and make sure students record their discussions in some way. You can encourage students to be reflective in creative ways such as diaries, blogs, visual images, reflective journals, audio/video. This type of reflection does not need to be teacher-led.

Appendix 1a

Answers:

So what is the solution to these two problems? Well, firstly, you need to get as much practice listening to natural speech as possible. Listen to _____ and try to develop your understanding of how words and phrases are really pronounced, not how you _____ pronounced. And secondly, you need to accept that when you listen you may misunderstand what is being said. So you need to be ready to _____ about your understanding of the meaning, if what you hear _____ compared to what you understood before. And this means taking a flexible, open-minded approach to listening.

PHOTOCOPIABLE

Appendix 1b

- Main interest = diff bet Ch + Br ac culture esp. lectures – how organized/ presented + role of lecturers
- Info from: tracking study w/ Ch sts – PG Uni of Reading
Interviews w/ each st every term
- The survey small sample – 12 students.

PHOTOCOPIABLE

Appendix 1c

China	UK
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ a lot of course content delivered through lectures■ lecture information sufficient to pass exams/course■ not interactive – no questions/ comments from students■ lecturer points out key points■ based on one course book	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ most course content not delivered through lectures■ lectures give overview or background info■ students have to read around lectures■ can be very interactive – depends on number of students

PHOTOCOPIABLE