http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/grammar/pron/unit1/start.shtml

Listening Skills

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LISTENING AND HEARING.

Widdowson ( 1978) has made a useful distinction between hearing and listening. He uses "hearing" to refer to the listener's ability to recognise language elements in the stream of sound and, through his knowledge of the phonological and grammatical systems of the language, to relate these elements to each other in clauses and sentences and to

. understand the meaning of these sentences. He refers 'listening' to the ability to understand how a particular sentence relates to what else has been said and its function in the communication. It is at this stage that the listener selects what is relevant to his purpose and rejects what is irrelevant. The difference between the two is thus of recognition level and selection level. A teacher cannot teach a student how to listen. He/she can point out various characteristics of speech which help comprehending an utterance and encourage students to practise and learn. This will provide learners plenty of opportunities to practice listening and develop confidence in their ability to interpret without any interruption from the teacher.

DISCRETE AND GLOBAL LISTENING.

Discrete listening skills are those which focus on the se.parate elements of listening such as individual sounds, words and separate sentences. Global listening skills, on the other ~ourage to interpret an utterance in the wider context. The listener docs not have to understand every single word. Both discrete and global listening activities play their role in developing the l i st cn i n g skill. In the past discrete listening activities were given more importance in the class but now the move is towards the global approach.

INTENSIVE AND EXTENSIVE LISTENING.

In intensive listening the listener tries to understand everything thathe hears. For this purpose, fairly short texts are chosen and specific tasks are set by the teacher e.g. answering questions, making non-verbal responses etc. Extensive listening does not focus on any particular language point. It gives learners general practice and increases their exposure to the language. Extensive listening activities include the following:

Main point/gist of the message.

The topic of the passage.

Specific point of information within the passage.

Opinion or attitude of the speaker.

Radio plays, films and stage plays are good for extensive listening purposes provided they are not very lengthy. Authenticconversation also serve the same purpose.