

How to develop Listening Skill?

Listening and its Importance:

According to Rivers and Temperley: " the time that adult spend in communication activities, 45 per cent is devoted to listening, only 30 per cent to speaking, 16 per cent to reading, and mere 9 per cent to writing." This

shows the importance of listening in our life. We listen to be able to communicate with the speaker. We listen to get information. We also listen to derive pleasure from the language through TV's, radios, recordings and music.

Unfortunately, listening is the skill that is most neglected in our schools. It is presumed that listening is something 'natural'; there is no need to learn it. The teacher supposes that the student already knows it. This is a mistaken view. Our students find it difficult to understand modern English spoken at natural speed. We must remember that listening is a process that involves not only our ears but minds also. It is a skill that must be learnt through practice. This practice should be regular, frequent, graded and interesting.

Activities to develop this Skill:

1. Word Identification Exercises: The teacher will give the students a list of the group of two words of nearly same sounds. He will speak out a word and ask the students to tick the word they listened to. The groups of words can be like these: pull, pool; hat, hate; bed, bad. This exercise gives practice in catching the correct pronunciation of words in a speech.

2. Dictation: Dictation is basically a test of writing. But it can be successfully used as an activity to develop listening. The teacher will speak or read out a passage and the listeners will write it down. This exercise can be simple or difficult, quick or slow according to the level of

the class. A continuous exercise of this type will improve the listening skill.

3. Listen and Do Exercises: The teacher will ask the students to listen to him carefully and do as instructed. He can proceed like this: Draw two circles on the right of your page. Draw a square around them. Draw a bigger circle on the left of the square. Write your name above the square.

4. Check-list Exercises: The teacher will give the students a list of some random words or phrases. Then the students will listen to the passage read out by the teacher. They will be asked to check the list and give numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, to the words as they occur in the passage.

5. Picture Identification Exercises: The students will be given a sheet of paper with pictures of persons, things, or numbers on it. They will listen to a passage read out by the teacher. On the basis of their listening, they will be asked to identify the pictures.

6. Question-Answer Exercises: The teacher will give a list of questions to the students. Then, he will read out a passage to them. After this, he will ask them to answer the questions verbally or in writing. For this exercise, the teacher can use different types of questions such as Yes/No-Questions, Multiple Choice Questions, Correct-incorrect sentences, True-false statements.

7. Cloze Exercises: "Cloze" is a German word which means a 'gap' or 'missing part'. In this exercise, the teacher will give the students a list of words. Then he will read out a passage to

them. After this he will give them the same passage in written form with blanks (missing words) at regular intervals. Every 5th, 7th or 9th word may be deleted. On the basis of their listening, the students will fill in the blanks.

8. Information Transfer Exercises:
Information Transfer means changing the information from one form into another. The students will receive information in verbal form and transfer it into the form of diagrams, graphs, lines on the map, labels, outlines, and study notes.

Listening Skill and the Use of The Information Transfer Exercises

The Transfer of Information:

When we listen to someone, we receive some message or information. Sometimes, we are asked to reproduce that information in another form. This is called the transfer of information. So, Information Transfer means receiving information in verbal or written form and transferring it into the form of diagrams, graphs, lines on the map, labels, columns, and outlines. This process can be carried out in the reverse direction also. For example, we can transfer information given in the form of a graph into the form of a paragraph. The Information Transfer Exercises can be used to develop listening, reading and writing skills. Of the many types of

exercises used to develop listening, Information Transfer Exercises are the most useful. Before conveying information to the students, the teacher informs the students beforehand what they are to do after listening.

Types of Information Transfer Exercises:

1. Maps and Labellings: The teacher gives an account of a journey from one place to another. The students listen to him carefully. Then, they are given a map, and are asked to mark the route on the map, and label the important places.

2. Contrastive Columns: The teacher gives a description of two different persons. The students listen to him carefully. Then, they are asked to make two columns and put in them separately the activities, qualities, possessions, and appearances of the two persons.

3. Diagrams: The teacher describes a process before the students for example 'polishing shoes'. The students listen to him carefully. Then, they are asked to illustrate the sequence (order or series) of activities in the form of a diagram.

4. Outlining: The teacher reads out a passage to the students. The students listen to him carefully. Then, they are asked to write the information in the form of an outline, giving first their main points and then their sub-points or supporting details.