

## Developing English listening skills of secondary school students

У статті розглядається проблема навчання аудіювання на уроках англійської мови в загальноосвітніх навчальних закладах. Проаналізовано різні види аудіювання та відповідні тексти. Описані засоби навчання аудіювання, наведено приклади вправ для навчання кожного виду аудіювання та способи контролю рівня розуміння прослуханих текстів.

**Ключові слова:** англійське аудіювання, види аудіювання, тексти для навчання аудіювання, вправи для навчання аудіювання, загальноосвітній навчальний заклад.

**Осипенко К.Л.** Обучение аудированию на уроках английского языка в общеобразовательных учебных заведениях

В статье рассматривается проблема обучения аудированию на уроках английского языка в общеобразовательных учебных заведениях. Проанализированы разные виды аудирования и соответствующие тексты. Описаны средства обучения аудированию, даны примеры упражнений для обучения каждому виду аудирования и способы контроля уровня понимания прослушанных текстов.

**Ключевые слова:** англоязычное аудирование, виды аудирования, тексты для обучения аудированию, упражнения для обучения аудированию, общеобразовательное учебное заведение.

**Osypenko K. L.** Developing English listening skills of secondary school students

The article deals with the problem of developing English listening skills of secondary school students

Different types of listening and texts for listening comprehension are analysed. The means of teaching listening are described, examples of exercises for teaching listening comprehension and tests for controlling the level of understanding oral texts are given.

**Key words:** English listening, types of listening comprehension, types of texts for developing listening skills, exercises for teaching listening, secondary school.

### I. Introduction.

English occupies an important place in the world today. It seems obvious that it is impossible to teach all the knowledge, skills, methods, techniques, which are of potential use to teachers. It seems advisable to teach the teachers and caregivers in such a way as to strengthen their dispositions go on learning, to be resourceful and to be inventive. Teaching language is hard work. One must make an effort to understand, to repeat accurately to manipulate newly understood language and use the whole, range of known language in conversation or written composition. The effort is required at every moment and must be maintained over a long period [2].

### II. Setting Objectives

The main aim of the article is to study the problem of developing listening comprehension skills at secondary school. For this purpose the main tasks are: 1) to describe types of oral comprehension and listening skills; 2) to characterize different means of developing listening skills and oral texts in particular; 3) to give examples of various types of activities for developing listening comprehension skills.

### III. Results

Good listening is as important as good speaking. It is a skill that you can practice and learn. When you really listen, you pay close attention and think about what you hear. Different occasions call for different ways of listening. When a person listens to a teacher explaining a complicated assignment, he is listening for information. When a person listens to a commercial for a new product and tries to decide whether he should buy it, he is practicing critical listening. When a person listens to a friend describing a funny incident, he is engaged in conversational listening. Sometimes we can combine these ways of listening. Each kind of listening requires a particular approach on our part. Whenever we listen, our purpose is to understand the assignment, to judge the new product, or to enjoy and respond to a friend's story. Listening for information, critical listening, and conversational listening all require us to be an active listener. We need to put an effort into our listening and to think what we hear about. Passive listeners, in contrast, do not work at listening. They let their minds wander and do not hear all that is said. They do not make an effort to understand and weigh the information. As an active listener, we are more likely than a passive listener to be able to tell the difference between fact and fiction. We can distinguish between reliable and unreliable information and between information that sticks to the point and information that wanders [1].

*Getting ready to listen.* A good listener starts with a positive attitude. Before he begins to listen to a speaker, it is important to have comfortable surroundings. The person should be settled and free to concentrate. In a conversation with a friend, the person should look at the person who is speaking, and avoid being distracted by activities taking place around. In listening to a more formal presentation, such as a speech, the following strategies will help to improve the setting for listening:

- to be ready on time;
- to have enough time to prepare and settle down before the presentation begins;
- to have materials ready ahead of time;
- to have pencil and paper ready;
- to sit in a comfortable but alert position and to watch the speaker, not the people around;
- listen politely, quietly, avoiding distracting habits;
- to concentrate on what is being said, and put aside other thoughts.

It is well known that different types of messages are listened to in different manners, using different techniques. Let's consider each type of listening. A good speech is like a well-marked road. The speaker uses certain kinds of words and phrases to guide and to let know what is ahead. A good listener remains alert and watches for signs and signals. To understand better what you are hearing is possible when you know the speaker's purpose and how the speech is organized, to recognize the main ideas in the speech, how they relate to one another, and what facts or details support them. There are different kinds of listening, they are: listening for the speaker's purpose, listening for the method of organization, listening for signals and transitions, listening for main ideas, listening for supporting details and taking notes. In the listening for the speaker's purpose, the student should also listen to the statements that tell you how the speech is organized. Some speeches are organized in chronological order, or time order. They start with events that happened long and proceed to events that happened recently. Sometimes a speech may start in the present and move in reverse order to events in the past. Some speeches present problems and then offer solutions to them. Some statements that are made in a speech are more important than others are. We cannot expect to remember every bit of information that the students hear in a speech. Knowing the method by which the speech is organized can also help you in listening for key points. Taking notes helps the students remember what they heard. When they take notes, they have to pay close attention to the speaker and not let their mind wander or to be distracted, the students have to think about what they are hearing, at the start of a speech the students have to listen to the instructions or read the task to understand the aim. Teaching learning materials should be more in quantity and variation. Audiovisual electronic gadgets, computers, internet should be among them. Students should be motivated. Different ways of teaching may attract them as it gives them a taste of variety. The teacher should pronounce correctly and not at a very fast pace.

To develop listening comprehension skills we use different types of means, texts and exercises as well. Teaching English at secondary school we use the coursebook Enterprise 4. Intermediate by V.Evans [3].

**Task 1.** You are going to listen to a critic commenting on a book. After listening to it, tick the adjectives she uses to describe the characters and the plot [3].

*Characters:*

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> convincing       | <input type="checkbox"/> realistic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> predictable      | <input type="checkbox"/> weak      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> well – developed | <input type="checkbox"/> original  |

*Plot:*

- |                                    |                                       |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> gripping  | <input type="checkbox"/> moving       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> boring    | <input type="checkbox"/> entertaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> involving | <input type="checkbox"/> informative  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dramatic  | <input type="checkbox"/> confusing    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dull      | <input type="checkbox"/> exciting     |

**Task 2.** Football violence has increased drastically. First, read the statements, then listen to the dialogue and fill in the gaps. Finally, listen again and talk about violence in football, and how it can be prevented [3].

**Task 3.** You are going to listen to a conversation between two friends about where they are planning to go for dinner. For questions 1 to 7, decide whether the statements are true (T) or false (F) [3].

Unit 6 *Eating Habits*

### Listening Task

You are going to listen to a conversation between two friends about where they are planning to go for dinner. For questions 1 to 7, decide whether the statements are true (T) or false (F).

- 1 They're going out on Friday night. ....
- 2 They don't choose the Chinese restaurant because the food is greasy and very spicy. ....
- 3 Steve has been to the Ethiopian restaurant before. ....
- 4 The main dish at the Ethiopian restaurant consists of various kinds of food. ....
- 5 Bouillabaisse is made with fish and vegetables. ....
- 6 The French bistro closed down last Monday. ....
- 7 Steve is going to make the reservation. ....

### Speaking Task

Compare and contrast the pictures. Think of what each place looks like, what type and quality of food is served in these restaurants, what kind of service you would expect and what prices they charge.





*Steven:* Shall we go out on Saturday night?

*Kate:* Oh yes. Let's.

*Steven:* Where do you fancy going?

*Kate:* Why don't we go out for dinner? Then we can go and see a show or something.

*Steven:* Sounds good to me. Why don't we go to that Chinese restaurant, you know, the one on the High Street?

*Kate:* Mmm. It's a bit expensive though.

*Steven:* Oh yes. You're right.

*Kate:* What about the Ethiopian restaurant?

*Steven:* I've never been there... What's the food like?

*Kate:* Oh, it's delicious. Last time I went with Bob and Carol, we shared a large platter. They give you something like a big pancake and then they put little piles of different types of food on it, which you eat with the pancake. It's very different.

*Steven:* Is it spicy?

*Kate:* Oh, yes... I forgot, you don't like spicy food. Sorry.

*Steven:* I've got it. Let's go to the little French bistro, the one with the chef from Marseilles. He makes the most fantastic bouillabaisse!

*Kate:* Bouilla... what?

*Steven:* Bouillabaisse — it's a thick soup made with fish and vegetables. It's really tasty. Oh hang on — I've just remembered, that place closed down last month.

*Kate:* Well, we can't go there then, can we? Oh, where shall we go?

*Steven:* Tell you what — let's go to that Italian restaurant. It's cheap, it's near here and I know you like Italian food.

*Kate:* Ah yes, Marcello's — mmm.

*Steven:* Okay. I'll book a table. Is 9 o'clock all right?

*Kate:* Fine... Now what show shall we go to afterwards?...

Before doing the next listening activity a teacher should remind students of techniques to be used to handle this listening task.

**Task 4.** You are going to listen to five people talking about the events which they attended. For questions 1-5, choose from the list of statements (A – F) which statement applies to which speaker. Use the letters only once. There is one extra letter you do not need to use.

Unit 5 *Festivals / Celebrations*

### Listening Task

You are going to listen to five people talking about the events which they attended. For questions 1 - 5, choose from the list of statements (A - F) which statement applies to which speaker. Use the letters only once. There is one extra letter you do not need to use.

- |   |           |                          |
|---|-----------|--------------------------|
| A This speaker has been to an international sports event. | Speaker 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B This speaker attends an event in his birthplace.        | Speaker 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C This speaker had a new experience.                      | Speaker 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D This speaker was involved in the preparations.          | Speaker 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E This speaker attended a music event.                    | Speaker 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F This speaker tasted a variety of foods.                 |           |                          |

### Speaking Task

Look at the two pictures and compare and contrast them. When is each event celebrated? What is the reason for their celebration? What preparations are made and what activities take place on the actual day?



*Tapescript for Listening Task*

*Speaker 1 (female):* The annual dance performance organised by my ballet school was an exciting occasion. Months before, we selected and taped the music that was to be played and I even choreographed a routine based on the music. We made our own costumes which were greatly admired by everyone. I spent many afternoons in the dance hall practising my first solo, trying to perfect it. It was worth it though, because after my performance the audience applauded for five minutes.

*Speaker 2 (male):* My village in Kent has a fair every year at the time of the apple harvest. On that day, there is always a parade. A marching band is followed by a float with an "Apple Queen" - always a local girl - on it. In the evening, there are races for the children and all sorts of contests involving apples. I don't live in the village any more, but I always go back for the festival because it makes me feel like a child again.

*Speaker 3 (male):* I'd never been to a horse race before, so when my uncle offered to take me, I jumped at the chance. When we arrived, the track was already crowded. Everyone began shouting loudly as soon as the race started. One of the horses was called "Honeytime" and everyone was excited when it won the race. The owner of "Honeytime" was photographed standing next to it, smiling proudly. Watching a horse race for the first time was fascinating. It was one of the most exciting days of my life.

*Speaker 4 (female):* The spectators started cheering and some were waving flags. The final lap was very exciting. Sweating and straining, the Ethiopian runner was trying not to lose his place in the lead but at the last minute the Moroccan overtook him and claimed the medal. It really was a day to remember.

*Speaker 5 (male):* The best music event I've ever been to was the Reggae Festival in London, last July. Famous reggae musicians from all over the world came to participate. It was very hot the day I went. The whole place was crowded with people sitting around on picnic blankets. There were stalls selling tropical fruit and traditional dishes. The music was brilliant and the dancing and singing went on until well after sunset.

**Key:** 1. D 2. B 3. C 4. A 5. E

**Task 5.** You are going to listen to a news bulletin. For questions 1 – 7, choose the correct answer A, B, or C. (A teacher should remind students of techniques to be used to handle this type of Listening Task)

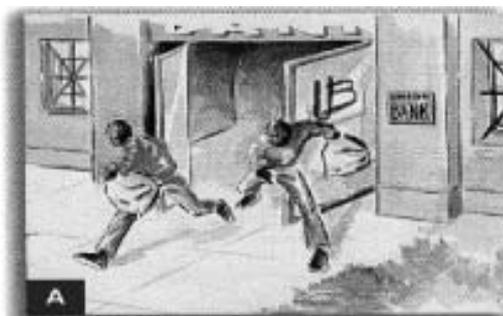
**Listening Task**

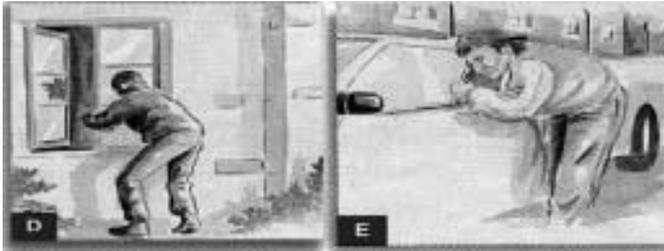
You are going to listen to a news bulletin. For questions 1 - 7, choose the correct answer, A, B or C.

- The first news item is about
  - a murder
  - a kidnapping
  - a robbery
- Richard Steen's wife is believed to
  - be dead
  - be searching for her husband
  - have gone to another country
- Glenda Branston was kidnapped
  - as she was arriving at her office
  - as she was leaving home
  - as she was leaving work
- The vandals were aged between
  - six and thirteen
  - eight and thirteen
  - eight and thirty
- The parents of the vandals
  - were given a warning
  - had to pay for the damage
  - had to buy new cars
- What did the Paterson family first think was causing the noise?
  - the water system
  - a ghost
  - an animal
- When did Rosie the Chimp disappear from the Zoo?
  - three weeks ago
  - four weeks ago
  - this morning

**Speaking Task**

What crimes are these people committing? Discuss in pairs -*what* precautions should *be* taken so that these crimes can be avoided.





### ***Tapescript for Listening Task:***

*J:* Good evening. This is the six o'clock news bulletin with Jeremy Craig.

*L:* And Lucinda Thorpe.

*J:* Police are still searching for the killer of 36-year-old Richard Steen, whose body was found on the beach at Rockton-on-Sea last night. Steen had been shot through the head and although the reasons for his death are not clear, the police believe that his wife Michelle Steen might have been involved as she seems to have left the country.

The wife of business tycoon Roger Branston was safely returned to her home in Clankton this morning after police raided the house where her kidnappers were holding her.

Gienda Branston was kidnapped last Wednesday as she was leaving her office in Castle Street by two men who told her husband that they would kill her unless he gave them £100.000.

Fortunately, Mrs Branston was able to phone the police while her kidnappers were sleeping and they were able to rescue her and arrest the two men.

*J:* A group of six vandals aged between eight and thirteen were caught by police last night as they were leaving a city centre indoor car park after causing damage to several cars. The children were given a warning by the police and their parents have been ordered to pay for the damage to vehicles involved. As a result, the city council promised to install security cameras and increase the number of security guards in all of its indoor parks. And now on a lighter note. After three weeks living in fear of the strange noises coming from attic in the middle of the night, the Paterson of Glenwich Close in Clankton can finally sleep in peace

again. When James Paterson first heard sounds coming from his attic he was convinced there were problems with his water system, ever, after his plumber told him that everything was in perfect working order. James and his wife started to worry that they might have a ghost up there. Eventually, the Patersons decided to set up a video camera to try and catch the culprit. To their amazement, when they played back the tape the next day, they discovered that their ghost was in fact a chimpanzee. Gideon Shaft, one of the zookeepers from Clankton Zoo went to collect Rosie the chimp from the Patersons' attic this morning. He told reporters that Rosie must have moved into the attic after disappearing from the Zoo four weeks ago. He added that he was delighted to have her back safely.

*J:* Well, that's all for this evening. We hope you will join us again at the same time tomorrow. So until then, goodnight.

*L:* Goodnight.

**Key:** 1. F 2. F 3. F 4. T 5. T 6. F 7. T

### **IV. Conclusion**

To sum up, in the article we studied the types of listening comprehension. For learners listening is important because it is through this sense they receive information on vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, spoken word order, as well as the stress patterns of words, phrases and sentences. Through listening the learner picks up vital clues, some consciously, others subconsciously, about what constitutes idiomatic spoken English. The learner may also register and retain words and phrases which, having heard them from a native speaker or their teacher, they know to be acceptable for their own use later on. Listening is not only crucial for the learner to understand how to learn the language, for example via instructions in the classroom or via audio devices, but also because it is a core life skill. Called *Active Listening*, it involves not only the sense of hearing, but also being aware of body language and being able to empathize with the speaker to ensure that the message being transmitted is received correctly. Without the skill of listening, there can be no language learning and sense no communication – surely the most important interaction human beings are involved in.

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