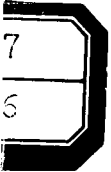


HOW to LISTEN

*An intermediate
course in listening
skills*

**MARION
GEDDES**



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BBC English
by radio and tv

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Book design: Peter McClure

Cover design: Jim Wire

Cover illustration: Alan Adler

Text illustrations: Judy Brown, Shona Cameron

Typesetting: Cotswold Graphics

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ISBN 0 946675 56 2

Printed in Great Britain at the University Printing House, Oxford

Introduction

What the course is about

How to Listen is an intermediate course in listening skills. It will help you improve your listening comprehension. It contains extracts from BBC radio programmes. You can use it in class with a teacher or on your own at home.

With this book is an audiocassette which contains all the listening extracts referred to in the book. Since the majority of the extracts were broadcast on BBC radio for native speakers they will probably be more difficult than the average listening test devised for the Cambridge First Certificate Examination. If you master the extracts and the listening skills developed through them, you will find it much easier to understand all kinds of spoken English. The audiocassette also contains a practice listening test of the kind that students are asked to do in the Cambridge First Certificate and Proficiency tests. The test is on pp. 63-8.

What the book contains

There are nine units in the book. I suggest you work through each unit in turn and then do the practice test. A full answer key and complete audiocassette transcripts are at the end of the book. Each unit has four sections:

Listening skills

This section includes listening tasks and explains the principles behind the skill you are practising. A cassette symbol shows you when to listen to the tape and gives the number of the relevant extract; this symbol means that you should listen to extract 1.



Test yourself

This section tests what you have learned with a listening task which is similar in style to those used in the Cambridge First Certificate Examination.

Language study

This section helps you check your understanding and expand your vocabulary by focusing on a few words and phrases from the extracts you have heard.

Use your own radio

This section suggests extension listening tasks using your own radio. These tasks are based on programmes broadcast on the BBC World Service, but they can be adapted to any radio station broadcasting in English.

Using How to Listen

- ★ Work through the exercises in units 1 to 9.
- ★ Do the test paper on pp. 63-8. This will show you how to use what you have learned in an examination context.
- ★ You can check your work with the answer key and transcripts at the end of the book.

Some points to remember:

- ★ Don't worry if you don't understand all you hear. Part of the skill of listening is to be able to respond even if you don't understand every word.
- ★ Practice is the key to good listening. Keep listening to the radio, even if you don't understand everything. Listen to English on the radio, on TV; listen to pop records, to people talking in the street - whatever is available.
- ★ Use a good-quality radio and audiocassette player. An external loudspeaker may help improve the sound quality.
- ★ Enjoy yourself! Listening to a foreign language is like reading a detective story. You understand a few words and phrases and you have to piece them together intelligently to understand the whole message - rather like a detective solving a crime.

Self-study aids

If you are studying by yourself you will need:

- ★ An audiocassette recorder.
- ★ A notebook for your answers.
- ★ A dictionary. If you can understand this book you should try and use an all-English dictionary, not a bilingual one. Use it to look up unfamiliar words and expressions. I recommend either the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (Longman, revised edition, 1987) or the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* by A.S. Hornby (Oxford University Press, third edition, 1974).

Good luck and good listening!

To the teacher

Using How to Listen in class

How to Listen is aimed both at students in class and at those studying on their own. To use the course in class I suggest the following structure:

- 1 Go through the Introduction with the class.
- 2 Go through each unit with the class, starting with *Listening skills*.
- 3 The students can do the *Test yourself* activity in class, or at home if they have their own cassette. They should always hear the cassette extract twice before answering the questions.
- 4 In class, go through the answers to *Test yourself*.
- 5 Do the *Language study* tasks. As part of *Language study*, play each of the extracts, pausing at appropriate points, and study them in detail. You can also refer to the transcripts.
- 6 Do any discussion or role-play tasks you wish, based on the extracts.
- 7 Go through *Use your own radio* with the class and encourage them to listen to the radio at home. Organise a wallchart like the one opposite in the classroom, and invite the class to write in details of what they have listened to. Once a week get the class to report orally on what they have listened to.

Name of listener	Programme	Service and wavelength	Item	Like (1) to dislike (5)	Easy (1) to difficult (5)
Georges	Outlook	BBC World Service	Interview with Colonel Gaddafi	2	4

When to use How to Listen

How to Listen is supplementary material for listening comprehension. Allow one hour every week, or two weeks, per unit, with an extra half hour for follow-up activities. Some units may require two hours' work.

Student practice at home is an important element in the success of **How to Listen**. Make sure that ten or fifteen minutes are set aside regularly for oral feedback on what the students have listened to.

Encouraging slower students

For students who find the BBC World Service hard to follow, encourage them to listen to BBC English by Radio, which offers graded programmes in English. This will give them confidence in listening to the radio.

English by Radio publishes six-monthly schedules available from:

BBC English by Radio & Television
 PO Box 76
 Bush House
 London WC2B 4PH
 England

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(30350) A900 + /25 * 1

1 Why and how we listen

In this unit you will think about the reasons why we listen and how they affect the way in which we listen.

Listening skills

1 Listen and find out.



a You are going to listen to part of *Look Ahead*, an announcement about programmes for the day on the BBC World Service.

Imagine you want to listen to *Omnibus* today. What time is it on?



b Here is the beginning of a programme called *The Glennie Determination*. Who is Evelyn Glennie? In what way is she an unusual person?



2 Read and answer.

Every day most of us *hear* a large number of different people talking - at home, at work, on the radio and TV, on the bus, in the street. However, we don't *listen* to all these people in the same way. This is because we listen for a variety of reasons. We may want to know some specific information: for example, a name or a particular fact. We wait for that information to be given and then listen very carefully to it. Sometimes we listen in a more general way, to get a rough idea of what someone is saying. Sometimes, when we are not interested in what the person is saying, we do not really listen at all. The speaker's words 'go in one ear and out of the other'. Our *reason* for listening determines *how* we listen.

a What reasons for listening were given to you in exercises 1a and 1b?

b Describe any differences in the ways you listened to exercises 1a and 1b.

What are the implications of all this for you, listening to English as a foreign language?

★ Decide what your reason for listening is.

In textbooks like this one you are usually given one or more reasons for listening: for example, you may be given some questions to answer, or a diagram to complete. When you listen on your own, to the radio, for instance, think of some questions which you can try to find the answers to as you listen.

★ Don't try to understand every word you hear - you don't need to. Listening is a process of *selecting* what is relevant to your reason(s) for listening. In this book you will learn some techniques to help you select what is relevant.

3 Listen and find out.



a You will hear another extract from *The Glennie Determination*. Listen for the answers to these questions:

How does Evelyn experience music?

What is meant by the 'Glennie determination'?



b Listen to the extract again. This time, listen for some very specific information:

How old was Evelyn when the deafness started?

In which parts of her body does she feel: the timpani? the glockenspiel? the zylophone?

What are the comments that Evelyn says have been made to her about her musical ability?

Test yourself



- 4 You will hear a recorded telephone message about what tourists can see and do in London. Look at the chart below. As you listen, fill in the starting times and places of the events listed. Listen to the extract twice.

Event	Starting time	Place
Beating the Retreat		
Summer Flower Show		
<i>The Mikado</i>		
<i>Madam Butterfly</i>		

Language study

Obviously, the bigger your vocabulary, the better you will understand what you hear. To help you expand your vocabulary while using this book, some words and phrases have been picked out of each extract for you to learn.

- 5 Match the words and phrases A-E from extract 1 with the explanations a-e.

A a humble start	a successes and failures
B fame and fortune	b become a great success
C a jerkier rise to fame	c being well known and rich
D ups and downs	d not continuous progress
E get to the top	e born into a poor family

- 6 Match the words and phrases A-F from extracts 2 and 3 with the explanations a-f.

A composer	a go slowly away
B performer	b quick to feel small changes
C complain	c a person who writes music
D sensitive	d a person who plays music in public
E fade	e nonsense
F rubbish	f say that one is not satisfied

- 7 Match the words and phrases A-F from extract 4 with the explanations a-f.

A heritage	a presentations
B pageantry	b situated
C pomp	c ceremonial behaviour
D beating the retreat	d history and culture expressed through literature, art, etc.
E displays	e withdrawing from battle
F set	f historical ceremony

Use your own radio

Read this introduction to *London Calling*, the monthly BBC World Service programme guide.

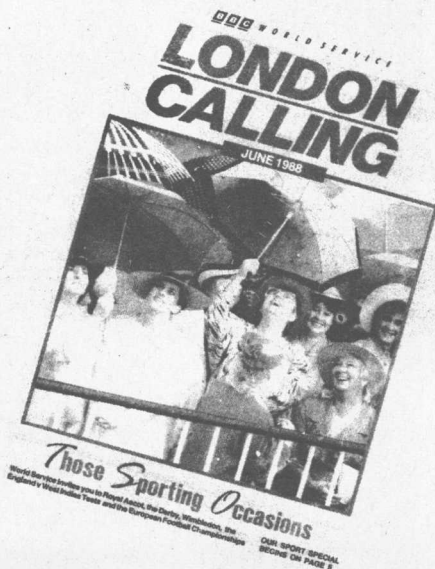
London Calling is the programme journal of the BBC World Service. To listen to our world-wide transmissions you will need, in most cases, a short-wave radio set, although in some areas we also broadcast on long and medium wave and VHF. On the frequency pages of this edition you will find a guide to the current recommended transmission and frequency times for your area. As you will see, we work in Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) so you will have to convert this to local time.

Try and find the BBC World Service on your radio. If you can't get the BBC World Service, try another network broadcasting in English. Listen to a programme and try to get a general idea of what it is about.

To get details of BBC World Service frequencies, subscribe to *London Calling*.

London Calling is available in all parts of the world. For a free copy and subscription form, write to the address below.

London Calling
PO Box 76
Bush House
London WC2B 4PH
England



2 How people speak

In this unit you will learn to recognise some of the characteristics of natural spoken English.

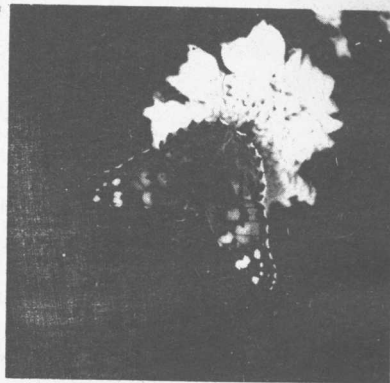
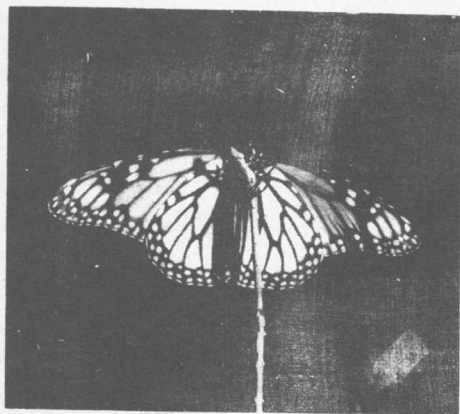
Listening skills

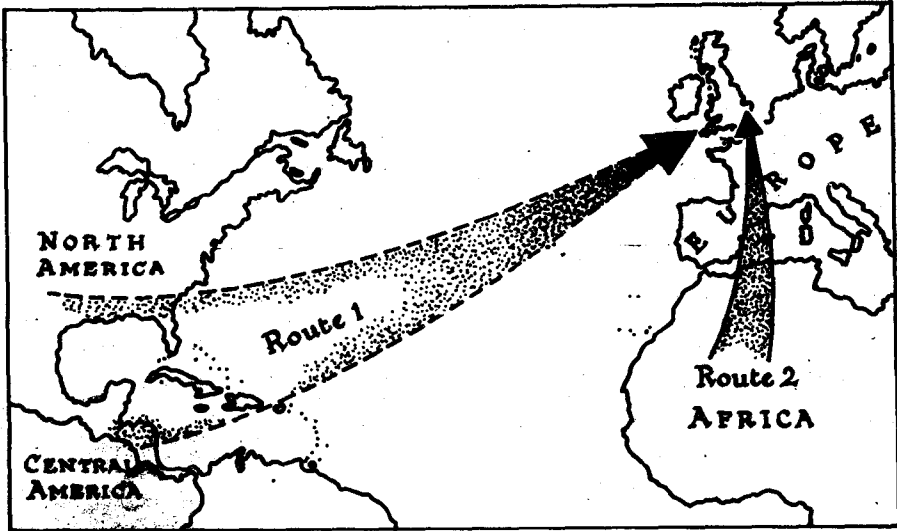


1 Listen and find out.

Here is part of a talk about butterfly migration (travel from one part of the world to another). Listen and answer these questions.

- a Which route does the monarch butterfly (below left) take?
- b Which route does the painted lady (below right) take?
- c How do butterflies manage to travel such long distances?





2 Listen and summarise.

Listen to the talk again. Summarise it in one short sentence (up to ten words).

3 Read and compare.

Here is the same information in a reading text. Read it and then read the transcript of the talk below.

Although several species of butterfly migrate very long distances, it has not yet been established how they manage it. The classic example is the monarch butterfly from North and Central America. It has been known to fly across the Atlantic to the south-west of England. The painted lady migrates from North Africa to Britain, and several species cross the English Channel.

Um, butterflies migrate long distances and we don't know exactly how they do it, um, how they actually get there. Now, er, a classic example of this is the monarch butterfly. Now the monarch butterfly, er, it, it flies across the Atlantic and from North and Central America, and it, er, and it ends up, er, in this country, in the south-west of England. Now no one knows, er, how this happens. Um, another example is the painted lady, and that, er, comes from North Africa to here. And there are, indeed, er, several species which cross the English Channel. Now, the point is, er, no one yet really knows how, how they do it.

Now answer these questions:

- a Which text uses the most words?
- b Which text contains the words: 'um', 'er', 'the point is'?
- c Does either text contain unfinished sentences? If so, which sentences?
- d Does either text contain repetition or rephrasing? If so, give examples.

4 Read this explanation.

When people speak naturally they know *what* they want to say. But they decide *how* they are going to say it as they are speaking. This means their speech may contain some or all of these features:

★ Hesitations and fillers. When people are thinking of what they want to say, they use expressions such as 'er', 'um', 'well', 'I mean', 'actually', and so on.

★ Unfinished sentences. If people change their mind about how they are going to say something they may start a new sentence without finishing the previous one.

★ Repetition and rephrasing. People think about what they want to say as they are saying it, and then sum up and repeat the most important point at the end.

★ Grammatical errors. People want to communicate an idea or information. As they do so, they may make grammatical mistakes.

Because of these features, natural speech generally uses more words than scripted speech to communicate the same information. What should the listener do?

Don't concentrate on the language. Concentrate on what the speaker is trying to communicate. Be aware of the characteristics of natural speech so that when you hear them they will not worry you.