

LISTENING

UPPER – INTERMEDIATE



Oxford University Press
Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford New York Toronto
Delhi Bombay Calcutta Madras Karachi
Petaling Jaya Singapore Hong Kong Tokyo
Nairobi Dar es Salaam Cape Town
Melbourne Auckland

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Oxford University Press

ISBN 0 19 453420 0

© Oxford University Press 1987

First published 1987
Third impression 1991

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Set by Promenade Graphics Ltd, Cheltenham

Printed in Hong Kong

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Thanks to Rod Pryde of the British Council,
for his part in the 'Hot Stuff' interview.

FOREWORD

This series covers the four skill areas of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing at four levels — elementary, intermediate, upper-intermediate and advanced. Although we have decided to retain the traditional division of language use into the 'four skills', the skills are not treated in total isolation. In any given book the skill being dealt with serves as the *focus* of attention and is always interwoven with and supported by other skills. This enables teachers to concentrate on skills development without losing touch with the more complex *reality* of language use.

Our authors have had in common the following principles, that material should be:

- creative — both through author-creativity leading to interesting materials, and through their capacity to provoke creative responses from students;
- interesting — both for their cognitive and affective content, and for the activities required of the learners;
- fluency-focused — bringing in accuracy work only in so far as it is necessary to the completion of an activity;
- task-based — rather than engaging in closed exercise activities, to use tasks with pay-offs for the learners;
- problem-solving focused — so as to engage students in cognitive effort and thus provoke meaningful interaction;
- humanistic — in the sense that the materials speak to and interrelate with the learners as real people and engage them in interaction grounded in their own experience;
- learning-centred — by ensuring that the materials promote learning and help students to develop their own strategies for learning. This is in opposition to the view that a pre-determined content is taught and identically internalized by all students. In our materials we do not expect input to equal intake.

By ensuring continuing consultation between and among authors at different levels, and by piloting the materials, the levels have been established on a pragmatic basis. The fact that the authors, between them, share a wide and varied body of experience has made this possible without losing sight of the need to pitch materials and tasks at an attainable level while still allowing for the spice of challenge.

There are three main ways in which these materials can be used:

- as a supplement to a core course book;
- as self-learning material. Most of the books can be used on an individual basis with a minimum of teacher guidance, though the interactive element is thereby lost.
- as modular course material. A teacher might, for instance, combine intermediate *Listening* and *Speaking* books with upper-intermediate *Reading* and elementary *Writing* with a class which had a good passive knowledge of English but which needed a basic grounding in writing skills.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TEACHER

This book contains fifteen units, (seventeen different listening passages) which have been designed to give students experience of a variety of speech styles. There is a range of exercises which will help students strengthen their language abilities and encourage them to apply useful strategies to the sorts of listening situation they might reasonably be expected to start coping with in real life.

The speech styles and listening situations are:

- informal conversations and discussions, particularly those involving the telling of a story and hearers' reactions to it;
- informative talks and interviews of the sort often heard on British radio or the BBC World Service.

Academic lectures are not covered, although the sort of information-extraction exercises given in this book may be relevant to developing the skills to apply to such lectures.

Features of the spoken language

These two main types of listening situation have been chosen because of their general usefulness to a wide variety of students. The exercises draw students' attention to features of English speech which it is useful for them to be able to handle, not only as listeners, but as participants in discussions or conversations.

Features such as interruption, capturing attention, hesitation, 'tone' of voice are brought into focus for the student as listener.

Work involving the other three skills

As speakers, readers, and writers, there are ample exercises for the students to do, aimed at either giving them a starting point from which to confront the listening with more confidence, as in the case of the pre-listening reading or discussion exercises, or providing consolidation or extension work after a listening passage has been tackled.

Work on grammar and vocabulary

Language work consists of both vocabulary and grammar exercises, some to be done before listening as part of the process of setting up expectations that will help the students with what they hear, others to be done after listening as consolidation of the language the students may have come across in the passage itself. Although the purpose of the listening passages is definitely not to act as a mere quarry for 'new language', the exercises nevertheless ensure that the 'language potential' of listening experiences is not ignored.

Helping students develop listening strategies

In many units there is also a section or sections on 'Hints on listening' which draw the students' attention openly to strategies they might

use, or features of the spoken language that they should listen for and which may help them make their burden less heavy. The likelihood that a speaker talking spontaneously will repeat himself is one example. This means that the student need not panic if he or she misses something the first time around.

Helping students 'hear' English more easily

Because many students listening to English have problems with *hearing* the words, let alone understanding them, there are sections devoted to techniques of helping students develop their ability to 'hear' better. Noticing the difference in pronunciation between stressed and unstressed syllables is a basic starting point, and various techniques are used to help students 'guess from the context' what the less distinctly pronounced words might be.

Allowing students to see a transcript of what they have listened to used to be anathema to many teachers. It can, however, be very useful: *after* the main listening exercises have been done, both as a means of supporting students' attempts to 'hear' better, and as a way of letting them study the language of what they have just heard at more leisure and in more depth.

Exercises such as 'Reading with rhythm' fall into the category of helping students 'hear' better. Exercises in which they listen with the transcript to underline examples of a particular language feature (e.g. hesitation noises) are an example of use of the transcript to help them study the language itself in more depth. For this reason the transcripts have been printed in the back of the book. Of course this poses the problem of the temptation to 'cheat' by looking at the transcript ahead of time. If, however, you can convince students that their listening lessons are *lessons* and not *tests*, that they are therefore not expected to get everything right first time and that you, the teacher, will not be checking their interim answers at every moment in an inquisitorial way, they should see the point and not go to the back of the book prematurely because they hope to impress you with their 100 per cent correct, first-time answers. In any case, since much of the work concerns the *way* in which words are said, which cannot be represented accurately on the printed page, they will be wasting their time!

Tasks to perform while listening

These are concerned with both *challenging* and *helping* the students extract the important information from what they hear. They are usually in the form of short questions, frameworks for note-taking or simple grids to fill in with the information required. The principle has been to ask the right questions using the fewest words possible, and to impose the least burden of writing possible upon the students. If, when they answer, students can demonstrate understanding by putting a tick in the right place, it is useless to ask them to write a whole sentence!

There is some progression through the course from heavily-guided information extraction questions towards those in which the student decides for him or herself what information he or she should write down. Guided note-taking thus takes its place alongside the grid-filling type exercises.

There is a table on page ix showing the type of listening texts and listening skills practised in each unit. It may also be useful to look at the general 'shape' of a listening lesson.

Each lesson has 3 main phases:

- 1 Pre-listening
- 2 Listening
- 3 Follow-up.

The purpose of Pre-listening work can be:

- 1 to arouse a general interest in the subject and increase motivation.
- 2 to provide some input, language or information, which will help the students understand the listening passage better.

The function of the Listening phase is:

to help the students get what is important out of the passage.

This does not mean *only* 'The *main* information'. A view of listening which contents itself with the students vaguely understanding the gist of what they have heard may be too superficial. Very often a detailed understanding is necessary. Imagine being happy with just 'understanding the gist' of what your doctor told you to do with a potentially dangerous new medicine! The listening exercises *can* therefore concern the main outlines of what is said, but are *also* likely to go on to challenge the student to listen for particular points which may require careful listening and detailed understanding.

The Follow-up phase has two main functions:

- 1 Consolidation, i.e. to allow students time to reflect on what they have heard and maybe to collect examples of language use that it may help them in future to be able to handle.
- 2 Extension, i.e. to use the listening passage as a starting point for other language work, discussion, further reading or written production.

Within these three phases the different exercises fit. A discussion for example may come in the Pre-listening or the Follow-up phase and its purpose will be different in each case.

Methodology of the book

The sequence of work for most exercises goes from the individual to the pair to the whole class mode. This is to ensure that students have the chance to make up their own minds (and are forced to try) by themselves initially. They then have the support of comparing their results with a colleague, rather than being directly interrogated by

the teacher. They also often have the stimulus that is derived from finding out that one's colleague has got a completely different answer from oneself! Students in this position are highly motivated to listen with great attention at the next opportunity in order to find out who was right and who was wrong.

A final check with the whole class is not always necessary, but it is an option that allows you to summarize the points you think are important as well as gaining a general impression of how the class fared with a particular exercise.

When there is discussion or re-telling to be done, it is often a good idea to let students work in pairs first so that they can practise and gain confidence for the greater strain that speaking to the rest of the class later puts upon them. Speaking to the rest of the class is worthwhile in spite of the strain because it is in this way that interesting similarities and differences between students' experiences or in their interpretations of a passage come to light.

Mode of working

The normal situation that is presupposed is a teacher with a cassette recorder that he or she controls, and the whole class listens to. Instructions to the students in this case such as 'Listen again if you want to' mean that you have to assess (or take a vote on) whether the class needs to hear a tape again.

In cases where there is a minilab or a full language laboratory available, you can use the course with it, provided the students have space to move out of the listening positions in order to meet their colleagues for the discussion and follow-up work. You need of course to make sure that the students have been trained to use the controls on their machines to the best advantage, so that they can decide for themselves how to work — using the pause and rewind buttons frequently, or simply playing the whole tape through and listening again.

Jigsaw work

Some of the units have been designed so that they can be used for jigsaw work. This means that you split the class into different groups and that each group hears only one recording out of a set. Members from different groups then meet to exchange information on what they heard, in order to build up a wider picture of the topic or story. In this course, the following recordings are 'combinable' for jigsaw work. Worksheets for these units have been included on page 89 and may be photocopied without a formal request for permission. (The rest of the book is under the normal copyright protection.)

1 Unit 5 (Home computers), Parts 1 and 2 may be listened to by two different groups. The information is essentially the same, but the circumstances in which it is given are very different, as are the personalities of the two main speakers.

2 Unit 5 (Home computers). Parts 1 and/or 2 and **Unit 11 (My computer makes me sick!)** may be listened to by two or three different groups, the focus being on the benefits and the dangers of home computer use.

3 Unit 8 (Bottoms up!) and Unit 15 (The tree climbers of Pompeii) are spontaneous stories concerning either free or improvised food. The single worksheet allows the two groups of students to collect and share information about similar themes.

4 The recordings for Unit 12 (Mummy dust), Unit 13 (Scientific studies) and Unit 14 (Rameses II) can be listened to simultaneously by three different groups, who then pool information before going on to hear the whole interview right through.

Map of the book

Unit	Title	Listening texts	Listening skills practised	Topic/theme
1	Cold toads	Monologue, informative, humorous	Listening for the main ideas Listening for detail Recognizing comparison Listening for unstressed words Listening/reading with the transcript Recognizing speaker's intentions	Toads — people's reactions to them, their place in folklore, their mating habits
2	Job stereotypes	1 Short monologues, expressing indignation, irritation or protest 2 Interview, informative	Listening for the main ideas Listening and note-taking Listening for detail Recognizing contrast	Job holders' complaints about popular images of their work Results of a survey into children's attitudes to different professions
3	Hot stuff	Conversation (two people), spontaneous story-telling	Listening for the main ideas Listening for specific vocabulary Recognizing speaker's way of talking	One person's experience of growing her own food
4	Old birds	1 Mini-dictation 2 Interview, informative 3 Intonation exercise	Mini-dictation Listening for detail Recognizing certainty and uncertainty Recognizing intonation	Longevity in the bird world

Unit	Title	Listening texts	Listening skills practised	Topic/theme
5	Home computers	1 Conversation (four people), spontaneous story-telling 2 Conversation (two people), spontaneous story-telling	Listening for the main ideas Listening and note-taking Listening for detail Recognizing speaker's way of talking	Experiences with a home computer
6	Glasses that hear	Interview, informative	Listening for the main ideas Listening for unstressed words	Devices to help the deaf and hard-of-hearing
7	A post-industrial industry	Discussion (two experts and a chairperson), informative — experts competing and in conflict	Listening for the main ideas Recognizing tone and attitude Listening for detail Recognizing hostility Judging performance Dictation	Malaysia's rubber industry — facts and figures, changes and innovation
8	Bottoms up!	Conversation (two people), spontaneous story-telling	Listening for the main ideas Listening for more detail Recognizing speaker's way of talking	Food for free
9	Art or technology?	Monologue, informative	Listening for the main information Listening and note-taking	A history of the cheese-making process
10	How disgusting!	1 Conversation (three people) 'capping' each other's stories 2 Traditional rhyme for reading with rhythm	Identifying the speakers Recognizing tone and intention Listening for detail Recognizing ways of capturing attention Listening/reading with the transcript	Different types of cheeses
11	My computer makes me sick!	Monologue, informative, giving advice	Listening for the main information Listening for detail	Health hazards involved in using computers
12	Mummy dust	Monologue, informative	Listening for the main ideas Listening for specific information Listening and note-taking Listening for the most important theme	Egyptology and an introduction to the idea of mummification

Unit	Title	Listening texts	Listening skills practised	Topic/theme
13	Scientific studies	Interview, informative	Listening for detail Listening for the main information	More detail on recent scientific investigation into mummies
14	Rameses II	1 Interview, informative 2 Poem for reading with rhythm	Listening for detail Listening and note-taking Listening for specific language Listening/reading with the transcript	The life and times of Rameses II and the adventures of his mummy
15	Tree climbers of Pompeii	Conversation (two people), spontaneous story-telling	Listening for the outline of a story Listening for detail Recognizing 'echoing' Recognizing surprise and puzzlement Listening/reading with the transcript	Pine-nut 'farming' in Italy

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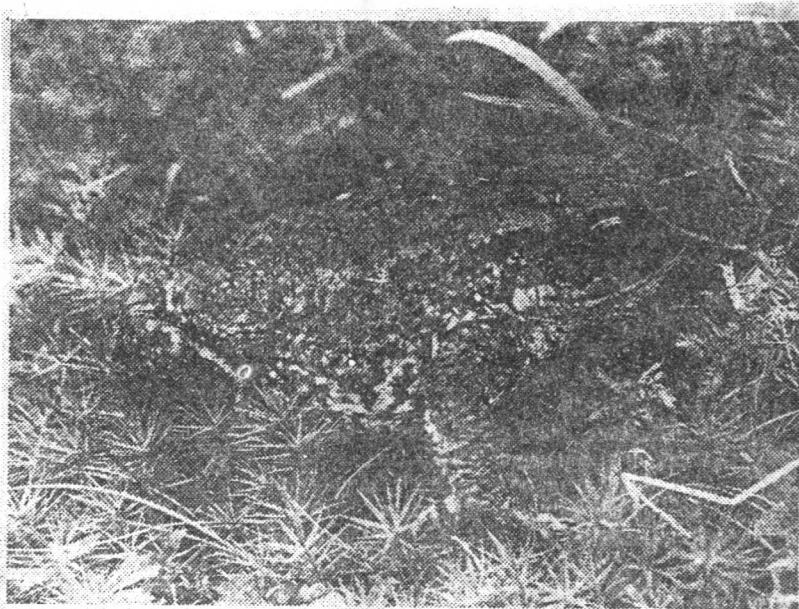
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Cold toads

1 Pre-listening

Task 1 Vocabulary

This is a picture of a toad.



What is your reaction to it? Tick the answer you choose.

- ☐ positive
- ☐ negative
- ☐ mixed

Here are some positive and negative reactions you might have. Choose some that are close to your own feelings, and add any more that you want to.

positive
amusement
interest
affection

negative
disgust
fear
distaste

.....
.....

.....
.....

Task 2 Expressing reactions

Tell the rest of the class what your reactions to toads are, for example

My usual reaction is one of **amusement and interest.**
disgust.
fear and distaste.

Task 3 Discussion

Are there any stories or beliefs about toads in your country? Tell the rest of the class anything you know about toads.

Task 4 Reading

Read the text.

Frogs and toads (toads are the ones with the dry bumpy skin, and they don't *jump* like frogs do. They just walk.) appear in a lot of European legends and folk tales.

At one time people believed that toads had a precious stone hidden inside their heads.

In many stories a handsome prince is changed into a frog or a toad by a wicked witch or magician, and can only resume his human shape if a beautiful girl will kiss him. Since toads are not often particularly attractive to young women, the poor prince usually had to wait many years before an obliging girl overcame her distaste, kissed him and broke the spell. Her reward, of course, was the chance of marrying the handsome prince.



"At least you've got a chance. Whoever heard of a princess kissing a duck-billed platypus?"

Are there any similar stories from your culture of magic spells changing people into animals or birds?

Tell a partner about any story like this that you know, then tell the rest of the class, for example

In my country there's a story about a who is changed into a by a

2 Listening

The radio talk is about how ordinary toads (not disguised princes) try to make themselves more attractive. More precisely, it is about how male toads behave when they are looking for a mate.

Task 1 Predicting information

Try to guess some of the things the speaker might say. This will help you to understand more when you hear the passage.

Have you any ideas about what might make a male toad attractive (to a female toad, that is!).

Choose what you think is probable and add any ideas of your own.

- ☐ colour
- ☐ size
- ☐ smell
- ☐ texture of skin

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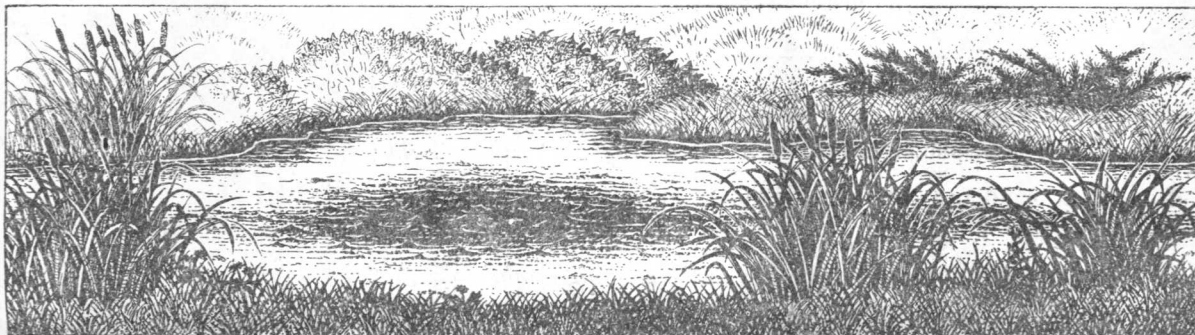
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Tell the rest of the class what you think.

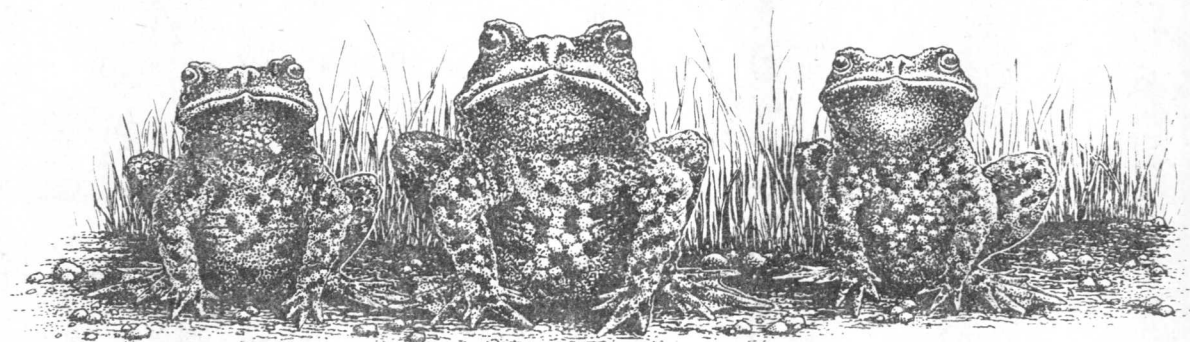
Task 2 Getting the main ideas

-  Do not worry about the detail at this stage. Listen straight through as often as you need in order to answer the questions below. Read the instructions carefully and make sure you understand what to do before you start.

This is a picture of a pond showing the temperature of the water in different places. The darker the colour, the colder it is. Mark the place where you would sit if you were a male toad looking for a mate.



According to the speaker, which of these three male toads would be the most attractive to a female (in the dark!)?



a 25°

b 25°

c 30°

Write the letters in the correct spaces.


most attractive

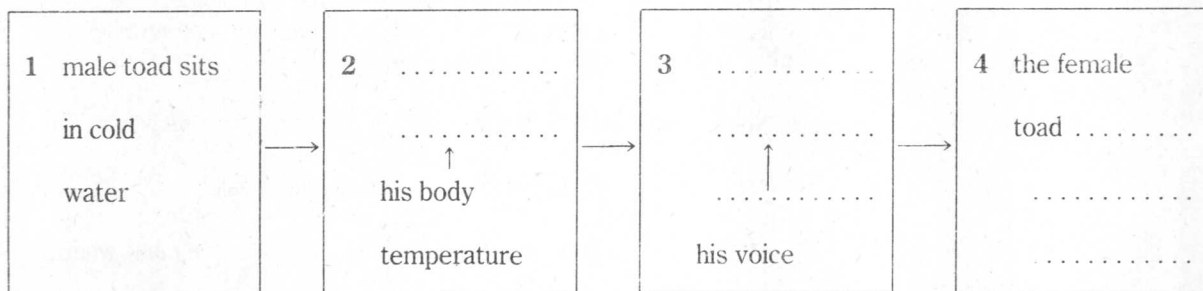
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least attractive

Check your answers in pairs and listen again if you want to.
Tell the rest of the class what you thought.

Task 3 Listening for detail

 What exactly does the male toad do to make himself more attractive?
Listen again and fill in this chart to show the chain of cause and effect.




3 Follow-up

Task 1 Expressing comparison

The passage is full of expressions of comparison, e.g.:

The bigger the toad, the deeper his croak.

A cold toad gives a deeper croak.

-  Listen to the passage again and complete these sentences to collect more examples


Many of the toads are forced right out of the pond and are obliged to sit on the bank where (since it is out of the water than in, even in North Carolina) the small toads' croaking becomes even and enticing.

Task 2 Hearing exactly what the speaker says

a Fill in the gaps to show the details about the research on toads and where the speaker heard of it. The purpose of this exercise is to give you practice in writing down unfamiliar names and words in English.

The speaker heard about the research.


From L. who read it in The which got it from Dr. of University, North Carolina

-  b Listen again and complete this extract from the end of the passage with the words you hear. The purpose of this exercise is to help you hear unstressed words more easily.


But there is still some consolation the warm weaklings. For in order get into pond, the females do, course, have run the gauntlet the bank where, says Dr Fairchild, small males make the most their opportunities. It should not long before large toads learn lurk on the bank and shut up.

Compare your answers in pairs and listen again if you want to. Then check your answers by looking at the transcript on page 75.

Task 3 Reading with rhythm

-  Now look again at the last section of the transcript on page 75. The syllables which the speaker stresses are underlined. Play this part of the tape again and read aloud, keeping time with the speaker. Trying to match your stresses to his stresses will help you!

Task 4 Recognizing intentions

-  Listen again, if you want to, and give your impressions of the speaker's intentions when giving the talk, and the tone he uses. (You can choose more than one alternative in each case.)

Do you think he wanted to

- ☐ amuse
- ☐ instruct
- ☐ frighten
- ☐ disgust
- ☐ interest his listeners?

Is his tone

- ☐ serious
- ☐ shocked
- ☐ angry
- ☐ amused
- ☐ depressed
- ☐ ironic?

Discuss your answers in pairs and then tell the rest of the class what you thought?

Task 5 Speaker's way of talking

Why did you choose your answers to Task 4? What influenced you? Was it the:

'quality' of his voice: warm, rich, thin, cold, harsh, tense, etc.

speed: fast, slow, 'normal'

volume: loud, quiet, 'normal'

type of words used: formal, everyday, slang, mixture of types.

Hints on listening

There will be more work on speakers' personality and attitudes in the rest of this course. It is as important to judge these well as it is to understand the actual words used.