

CATHERINE SADOW AND EDGAR SATHER

On the Air! Listening to Radio Talk

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Ch. 2, p. 12: Boy riding bike, Paris, Jaye R. Phillips/The Picture Cube.

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Preface

On the Air! Listening to Radio Talk consists of unscripted, natural, unedited listening material from high-interest radio broadcasts, designed for intermediate students (adaptable for advanced students). This book is designed to give intermediate students experience in listening and responding to unedited, natural English speech. And since that speech is usually fraught with linguistic and lexical complexities, it is necessary to prepare students for that listening.

The unique and primary feature of this book is its pre- and postlistening exercises, which make accessible to intermediate students the radio talk that they will be hearing in this course.

Fourteen chapters have been included, more than are usually found in an ESL listening program, as well as a large variety of activities, with the expectation that teachers and students will choose chapters and activities that they are most enthusiastic about and that will lead to student confidence in listening to and understanding authentic English.

The fourteen chapters of this listening program have at their core excerpts from conversations from National Public Radio's *Fresh Air, Morning Edition*, and *Talk of the Nation*. In addition, there are two excerpts from WRKO—The Talk Station and one from *Car Talk*. Two radio advertisements also are included.

We have selected a variety of radio talk to give a cross section of U.S. personalities and the far-ranging issues about which they speak: former president Jimmy Carter talks about the event that inspired a poem he wrote; Chris, a high school student, would like to take time out to ride a bike around the world; rich and famous TV star Roseanne claims that she is still "working-class"; Charlie calls *Car Talk* because he is concerned about a noise in his car's engine.

In each chapter, key vocabulary is introduced through the pre-listening dictation exercises. Additional text is introduced in "Listen Again: Check What You Hear." Then it is recycled in other exercises following the taped conversation. Through these exercises, intermediate students are exposed to and prepared to deal with what is usually considered to be advanced listening material.

Too often students at all levels of English language development tune out completely when listening to language that is "too fast" and "too real" because no one has ever asked them to listen to it. Teachers who have used these materials experimentally in the classroom have found that English-as-Second-Language students can learn to cope with authentic material at an intermediate level and, given appropriate exercises, make good progress toward dealing with unedited speech.

Believing that students will make progress during the semester and that there is varying listening ability within any classroom, we have made an effort to arrange the chapters in order of difficulty. The first five chapters are the easiest; the last three the hardest; those in between are at a medium level of difficulty.

Organization of Chapters

"Introduction" and "Talk It Over"

An introductory reading ("Introduction") sets the stage, introducing the personality and the topic to be highlighted in each chapter. This reading is also on tape.

"Talk It Over" gets students thinking about matters related to the chapter topic as they continue anticipating and being introduced to what they are going to hear. This exercise presents opportunities for rich crosscultural discussion and observations, when students share their own topic-related knowledge and experience before listening to the tape. For example, here are some questions from Chapter 4: "How did your mother and father meet?" "How do people in your country usually meet the people whom they eventually marry?"

This introduction to the chapter heightens interest in the upcoming conversation.

XII PREFACE

Pre-Listening Dictations

"First Pre-Listening Dictation" leads to recognition of and familiarity with key vocabulary, phrases, and sentences that the students will be hearing in the conversation. After the students have filled in the blanks with the words they have heard on tape, they attempt to guess the meaning of new words and the sentence as a whole. The teacher assists if necessary.

"Second Pre-Listening Dictation" repeats some of the sentences of the first dictation, sometimes omitting different words to be filled in. If the equipment is available, students then tape these dictation sentences after practicing the pronunciation with the teacher.

Listen to the Conversation

In "Take Notes," students listen to the entire excerpt and make notes of details, words and phrases, and the general gist of the conversation. Some students with limited comprehension may hear only the dictation sentences and little more. After this listening exercise, students review the conversation together, reconstructing as much of the tape as they can.

Listen Again to the Conversation

In "Check What You Hear," students listen to the excerpt again. They have in front of them sentences from the conversation in the order that they appear on the tape, as well as some sentences not contained in the conversation. They check off the sentences as they hear them and follow up this exercise with a discussion. The teacher provides any linguistic or lexical explanations that may be needed.

Check Your Understanding

This section of each chapter gives students an opportunity to assess their comprehension of the conversation.

"True or False" appears in all chapters and in most instances is a listening exercise in which students respond with T (for true) or F (for false) to statements related to information in the conversation.

"Recycling the Information" requires students to choose the correct words or phrases to complete a series of sentences that form short paragraphs. When completed and read together, these paragraphs give a summary of the conversation. "Recycling Key Vocabulary" is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding of the vocabulary and then use it in a discussion.

"Questions for Discussion" allows students to summarize the information they have heard in the chapter.

Other Exercises

Most chapters include a TOEFL-type multiple-choice exercise on tape using vocabulary from the chapter or information related to it. In almost all of the chapters these exercises include several short conversations, each followed by a question; a longer conversation followed by several questions; or a short lecture followed by several questions.

In some chapters, students are asked to write or record on tape five things they have heard in the conversation.

Some chapters include a choral reading using the idiomatic language of the conversation for the students to recite in pairs or groups. These are on tape.

Other miscellaneous exercises are included in some chapters.

For the Teacher and Transcript

The answer keys for chapter exercises and the transcripts of the conversations are at the back of the book. Students should be encouraged not to look at them until they have finished a chapter. In addition, a separate teacher's manual contains suggestions for teaching and notes about the context and language of each chapter.

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Contents

		Preface xi
CHAPTER 1		Car Talk: The Magliozzi Brothers
	©	Introduction 2
		Talk It Over 2
	<u></u>	First Pre-Listening Dictation 2
		Second Pre-Listening Dictation 3
	00	Listen to Car Talk 4
		Take Notes 4
	00	Listen Again to Car Talk 4
		Check What You Hear 4
		Write Five Things 5
		Check Your Understanding 6
	00	True or False 7
		Recycling the Information 7
		Recycling Key Vocabulary 8
		Questions for Discussion 8
		Short Conversation 9
		Greetings, Responses, and Farewells 10
	22	Choral Speaking 11
CHAPTER 2		Taking Time Off: Chris from La Mesa12
	00	Introduction 13
		Talk It Over 13
	00	First Pre-Listening Dictation 13
		Second Pre-Listening Dictation 14
	00	Listen to Chris 14
		Take Notes 14

	00	Listen Again to Chris 15 Check What You Hear 15 Check Your Understanding 15 True or False 15 Recycling the Information 16 Recycling Key Vocabulary 16 Questions for Discussion 17 Short Conversations 17	
CHAPTER 3		The Common Cold: Health Expert Jane Brody Has Some Ideas	19
	00	Introduction 20 Talk It Over 20	
	<u>o</u> o	First Pre-Listening Dictation 21	
	<u>O</u> O	Listen to Jane Brody 22	
		Take Notes 22 Listen Again to Jane Brody 22 Check What You Hear 22 Write Five Things 23 Check Your Understanding 24 True or False 24 Recycling the Information 25 Recycling Key Vocabulary 25 Questions for Discussion 26 Short Conversations 26 Thank You and Good-bye 27	
CHAPTER 4	ത	Choral Speaking 29 Are You Game?: Tony from Tyson's Corner	30
	00	Introduction 31 Talk It Over 31	
	©	First Pre-Listening Dictation 31 Second Pre-Listening Dictation 32	
	<u>o</u> o	and the control of th	
	@	Listen Again to "Are You Game?" 33 Check What You Hear 33 Write Five Things 34	

	©	Recycling the Information 35 Recycling Key Vocabulary 36 Questions for Discussion 37	
CHAPTER 5		Standing on the Moon: Alan Shepard, Astronaut	40
	00	Introduction 41 Talk It Over 41	
	00	First Pre-Listening Dictation 42 Second Pre-Listening Dictation 43	
	<u>o</u> o	Listen to Alan Shepard 43 Take Notes 43	
	©	Listen Again to Alan Shepard 43 Check What You Hear 43	
	<u> </u>	Check Your Understanding True or False 44 Recycling the Information 44 Recycling Key Vocabulary 46	
	<u> </u>	Questions for Discussion 46 Short Conversations 47	
CHAPTER 6		Two Radio Ads: Cellular Phones and Airlines	48
	00	Introduction 49	
	00	1. Cellular Phones Talk It Over 49 First Pre-Listening Dictation 50 Second Pro Listening Dictation 50	
	00	Second Pre-Listening Dictation 50 Listen to the Cellular Phone Ad 51	
	00	Take Notes 51 Listen Again to the Cellular Phone Ad 51 Check What You Hear 51	
		How Well Do You Hear Numbers? 52 Check Your Understanding 52 True or False 52 Recycling Key Vocabulary 53 Questions for Discussion 54	
	00	Choral Speaking 54	

		Talk It Over 55
	\odot	Pre-Listening Dictation 55
		Listen to the Northwest Airlines Ad 56
		Take Notes 56
	\odot	Listen Again to the Northwest Airlines Ad 56
		Check What You Hear 56
		Check Your Understanding 57
		True or False 57
		Recycling Key Vocabulary 58
		Questions for Discussion 58
	00	Short Conversation 58
CHAPTER 7		Labor Day: Jim, Postal Carrier 60
CHAPTER 7		Labor Day. Jim, 1 Ostar Carrier
	O	Introduction 61
		Talk It Over 61
	\odot	First Pre-Listening Dictation 61
		Second Pre-Listening Dictation 62
	00	Listen to "Labor Day" 63
		Take Notes 63
	O O	Listen Again to "Labor Day" 63
		Check What You Hear 63
		Check Your Understanding 64
	©	True or False 64
		Recycling the Information 65
		Recycling Key Vocabulary 66
		Questions for Discussion 66 Short Conversation 67
		Short Conversation 67
		Former President Jimmy Carter:
CHAPTER 8		Jimmy Carter, Poet 68
When the control of t		
	00	Introduction 69
		Talk It Over 70
	\odot	First Pre-Listening Dictation 70
		Second Pre-Listening Dictation 71
	\odot	Listen to Former President Carter 71
		Take Notes 71
	© (0)	Listen Again to Former President Carter 71
		Check What You Hear 71

2. Northwest Airlines

	Q Q	Recycling the Information 72 Recycling Key Vocabulary 73 Questions for Discussion 74 Suggested Activity 74 Lecture 74 English Nursery Rhymes 75	
CHAPTER 9		Parking in Tokyo: A Migraine Headache	77
	(10)	Introduction 78	
	ത	Talk It Over 78 First Pre-Listening Dictation 79	
	00	Second Pre-Listening Dictation 80 Listen to "Parking in Tokyo" 80 Take Notes 80	
	<u> </u>	Listen Again to "Parking in Tokyo" 80 Check What You Hear 80	
		Write Five Things 82	
	00	Check Your Understanding 83	
		True or False 83 Recycling the Information 83 Recycling Key Vocabulary 84 Questions for Discussion 85	
		Short Conversations 85 Choral Speaking 86	
CHAPTER 10		Rosalynn Carter, Former First Lady: Rosalynn Carter, Caregiver	87
		Introduction 88 Talk It Over 88	
		First Pre-Listening Dictation 89	
		Second Pre-Listening Dictation 89	
		Listen to Rosalynn Carter 90 Take Notes 90	
	00	Listen Again to Rosalynn Carter 90 Check What You Hear 90	
İ	ത	Check Your Understanding 91 True or False 91 Recycling the Information 91	

Check Your Understanding 72

72

True or False

 \odot

<u> </u>	Short Conversations 94	
CHAPTER 11	Husbands and Wives: A Caller from Northbridge	95
<u> </u>	2 Introduction 96	
	Talk It Over 96	
(O)	First Pre-Listening Dictation 97	
	Second Pre-Listening Dictation 98	
<u>@</u>	Listen to "Husbands and Wives" 98	
	Take Notes 98	
<u> </u>	Listen Again to "Husbands and Wives" 98	
	Check What You Hear 98	
	Check Your Understanding 100	
0		
	Recycling the Information 100 Recycling Key Vocabulary 100	
	Questions for Discussion 101	
Q	Short Conversation 101	
	Choral Speaking 102	
	. 3	
CHAPTER 12	Chucking it All: Mike from Rockford	103
	Chucking it All: Mike from Rockford	103
	Introduction 104	103
©	Introduction 104 Talk It Over 104	103
©	Introduction 104 Talk It Over 104 First Pre-Listening Dictation 104	103
© G	Introduction 104 Talk It Over 104 First Pre-Listening Dictation 104 Second Pre-Listening Dictation 105	103
© G	Introduction 104 Talk It Over 104 First Pre-Listening Dictation 104 Second Pre-Listening Dictation 105 Listen to Mike 106	103
© c	Introduction 104 Talk It Over 104 First Pre-Listening Dictation 104 Second Pre-Listening Dictation 105 Listen to Mike 106 Take Notes 106	103
© c	Introduction 104 Talk It Over 104 First Pre-Listening Dictation 104 Second Pre-Listening Dictation 105 Listen to Mike 106 Take Notes 106 Listen Again to Mike 106	103
© c	Introduction 104 Talk It Over 104 First Pre-Listening Dictation 104 Second Pre-Listening Dictation 105 Listen to Mike 106 Take Notes 106 Listen Again to Mike 106 Check What You Hear 106	103
© c	Introduction 104 Talk It Over 104 First Pre-Listening Dictation 104 Second Pre-Listening Dictation 105 Listen to Mike 106 Take Notes 106 Listen Again to Mike 106 Check What You Hear 106 Write Five Things 107	103
© C	Introduction 104 Talk It Over 104 First Pre-Listening Dictation 104 Second Pre-Listening Dictation 105 Listen to Mike 106 Take Notes 106 Listen Again to Mike 106 Check What You Hear 106 Write Five Things 107 Check Your Understanding 108	103
© c	Introduction 104 Talk It Over 104 First Pre-Listening Dictation 104 Second Pre-Listening Dictation 105 Listen to Mike 106 Take Notes 106 Listen Again to Mike 106 Check What You Hear 106 Write Five Things 107 Check Your Understanding 108 True or False 108	103
© C	Introduction 104 Talk It Over 104 First Pre-Listening Dictation 104 Second Pre-Listening Dictation 105 Listen to Mike 106 Take Notes 106 Listen Again to Mike 106 Check What You Hear 106 Write Five Things 107 Check Your Understanding 108 True or False 108 Recycling the Information 108	103
© C	Introduction 104 Talk It Over 104 First Pre-Listening Dictation 104 Second Pre-Listening Dictation 105 Listen to Mike 106 Take Notes 106 Listen Again to Mike 106 Check What You Hear 106 Write Five Things 107 Check Your Understanding 108 True or False 108 Recycling the Information 108	103
© C	Introduction 104 Talk It Over 104 First Pre-Listening Dictation 104 Second Pre-Listening Dictation 105 Listen to Mike 106 Take Notes 106 Listen Again to Mike 106 Check What You Hear 106 Write Five Things 107 Check Your Understanding 108 True or False 108 Recycling the Information 108 Recycling Key Vocabulary 109	103
© C C C C C C C C C C C C C C C C C C C	Introduction 104 Talk It Over 104 First Pre-Listening Dictation 104 Second Pre-Listening Dictation 105 Listen to Mike 106 Take Notes 106 Listen Again to Mike 106 Check What You Hear 106 Write Five Things 107 Check Your Understanding 108 True or False 108 Recycling the Information 108 Recycling Key Vocabulary 109 Questions for Discussion 110	103

Recycling Key Vocabulary 92 Questions for Discussion

93

CHAPTER 13	Social Classes: Roseanne, TV Star	113
00	Introduction 114	
	Talk It Over 114	
	First Pre-Listening Dictation 115	
60	Second Pre-Listening Dictation 115 Listen to Roseanne 116	
latina di la	Take Notes 116	
00	Listen Again to Roseanne 116	
	Check What You Hear 116	
	Check Your Understanding 117	
<u></u>	True or False 117	
	Recycling the Information 117	
	Recycling Key Vocabulary 118	
60	Questions for Discussion 119	
(0,0)	Lecture 119	
	A Life-Changing Event:	
CHAPTER 14	Brent Staples, Editorial Writer	121
00	Introduction 122	
0.000	Talk It Over 122	
@0	First Pre-Listening Dictation 122	
	Second Pre-Listening Dictation 123	
<u>@</u>	Listen to Brent Staples 124	
	Take Notes 124	
00	Listen Again to Brent Staples 124	
	Check What You Hear 124	
	Write Five Things 125	
	Check Your Understanding 126	
00	True or False 126	
	Recycling the Information 126	
	Recycling Key Vocabulary 127 Questions for Discussion 128	
(10)	Short Conversations 129	
	127	
	A	
	Answers and Transcripts for the Teacher 131	

CarTalk The Magliozzi Brothers



What's that strange noise coming from your car's engine? Why does the horn honk when you put your foot on the brake?

If you have a car problem, you can call the weekly radio program of brothers Tom and Ray Magliozzi, and they'll give you their expert opinions about what's wrong.

1

Can you believe this? One of the most popular radio programs in the United States is about automobile repair. The program is called *Car Talk*. Thousands of people want to know answers to questions such as these: What is that strange engine noise I hear when I'm driving thirty miles per hour? What is the best car to buy in Vermont, where there is a lot of snow in the winter? I've had my car for seven years, and it needs seven hundred dollars' worth of repairs. Is it better to get a new car, or should I go ahead with the repairs?

Men and women from all parts of the United States call to tell the program hosts, Click and Clack, about the problems they are having with their cars. Click and Clack (their real names are Tom and Ray Magliozzi) have had many years of experience repairing cars. They listen to the car problems of the callers and then give their wise advice.

You are going to hear a sample of one of their Saturday morning *Car Talk* programs. Charlie from Los Angeles telephones the radio station to describe a problem he is having with his car. What is the problem? What advice do Click and Clack give? Why do you think the program is so popular?

Talk It Over

DIRECTIONS: In pairs or groups, discuss the following questions.

- 1. Do you own a car? Is your car important to you? Why?
- 2. Describe any problems you have had with your car.
- 3. What do you do when you have a problem with your car? Can you give an example of an experience that either you or a friend has had?

Solution First Pre-Listening Dictation

DIRECTIONS: The following sentences are from one of the broadcasts of the radio program *Car Talk*. After you fill in the blanks with the words or phrases on the tape, or as your teacher reads the sentences to you, discuss the meaning of each sentence.

2 ON THE AIR!