

Take On Listening 1

Listening and Speaking Strategies



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Burt Gabler • Nadia F. Scholnick

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Overview

Take On Listening was developed for adult English as a Second or Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) students in either academic or adult education programs. In addition to providing intensive listening skill training, *Take On Listening* offers extensive conversation and speaking practice through the use of a variety of learning techniques.

Central to *Take On Listening* is the understanding that teaching listening involves much more than simply supplying students with a listening encounter. Students must take a proactive stance vis-à-vis listening comprehension. To become good listeners, students need to utilize specific listening attack strategies and develop appropriate attitudes towards the listening process. In other words, students must learn how to listen. *Take On Listening* facilitates the acquisition of effective listening skills by creating a language laboratory in the classroom where trial and error and risk taking are encouraged through self-directed techniques that train students to develop an ongoing pattern of prediction, negotiation and renegotiation.

LISTENING ATTACK STRATEGIES

Take On Listening focuses on the use of seven specific listening attack strategies. They are:

- Using What You Already Know
- Scanning for the Main Idea
- Scanning for the Important Points
- Inferencing (Making Intelligent Guesses)
- Scanning for Specific Pieces of Information
- Using Context Clues
- Using Structure and Intonation Clues

Listening comprehension is presented within a context of realistic and familiar topics. The content of the dialogues is relevant to and is something to which students can relate their personal experiences. Students at the high beginning or intermediate level of language learning have not yet developed the basic language skills necessary to successfully process materials heavily laden with unfamiliar information or subject matter. These high-beginning to low-intermediate level students, whether they are in an academic or nonacademic learning environment, are concerned with basic communication skills, both active and passive. They are not ready or able to tackle subjects outside their realm of experience *in addition* to developing basic language skills. By presenting listening comprehension training within a relevant and immediate context, *Take On Listening* meets the real needs and concerns of *all* students at this level of language acquisition.

Take On Listening also provides a framework through which increasingly complex information and culturally enriching knowledge are spiraled. Exercises and activities overlap, thus ensuring that past language encounters are reinforced while at the same time foreshadowing language that the student will later encounter.

Chapter Format

Chapter One can be viewed as a tutorial overview of the listening attack strategies integral to *Take On Listening*. In addition to providing listening and speaking practice, it serves to train students to develop a more proactive approach to the development of their oral/aural skills by teaching them the importance of the seven strategies. Chapter One presents these strategies in a clear, comprehensive, and accessible manner and then invites students to brainstorm speaking strategies analogous to the listening strategies provided in the text.

Below is the chapter format for chapters two through eight.

Part One Pre-Listening

Pre-listening activities anticipate the language that will be heard in the sample dialogues. Rather than have information spoon-fed by the instructor, students are divided into small groups and asked to pool information and clarify any misunderstandings within the framework of a support unit. By the time the listening activity begins, students have already retrieved a great amount of the information they already possess and will be ready to match their concepts of the issues and attitudes discussed in the situation at hand with those of the speaker(s).

Part Two Main Dialogue

The goals of the exercises in Part Two are clearly identified at the beginning of each task and are geared alternately towards extracting small pieces of specific information or towards gleaning general information; they are *never* geared toward total comprehension or recall. To help teach students how to use listening attack strategies, the main dialogue must be long enough so that students *cannot* understand everything on the first listening. Students are compensated by the fact that by the end of the unit they will have acquired a sufficient understanding of the material to make sense of the discourse studied.

Exercise 1 begins with the first sampling of the main dialogue. For the first sampling, students are asked to form a generalized picture of the focus of the conversation. They are asked to choose the main idea of the dialogue from three possible descriptions: one too narrow, one too broad, and one correct.

In **Exercise 2**, students are asked to begin negotiating, through the assistance of structured questions, the major issues (Important Points) of the dialogue. Discussion of the questions and answers allows students to share information gleaned from the discourse as well as to share the strategies they used to reach their conclusions. The instructor acts as facilitator in this process by reinforcing the notion that there are not necessarily right or wrong answers. Rather, *all* answers are encouraged because they provide the means, via renegotiation, by which listening comprehension is ultimately reached. Here, as in many other places in the book, students should verbalize their methods of arriving at correct assumptions.

After arriving at a general understanding of the main dialogue, students are asked, in **Exercise 3**, to listen to the dialogue one more time, but this time only for discrete pieces of information (Specific Pieces of Information). Here students are taught to focus their attention on specific aspects of the dialogue and to learn how to filter out extraneous information.

Exercise 4 aids students in refining their understanding of some of the more difficult utterances of the conversation. Specific words and phrases are highlighted and students are asked to negotiate meaning by using context clues.

Exercise 5 provides closure and ensures that all students are satisfied with their understanding of the materials. The questions in this exercise encourage students to discuss some of the more ambiguous notions that arise in the dialogue and provide them the opportunity to articulate personal feelings and experiences suggested by the topic. After students have worked in groups, they reconvene as a class and compare answers.

Fluency Journal Homework Assignment

Each chapter in the text will have a fluency journal assignment. This is not a composition exercise! Rather the focus is to work on student fluency and provide a channel for communication between students and teacher. The journals can be assigned at the beginning of the lesson to reinforce the pre-listening practice, or at any other point in the lesson according to the sequencing needs of the instructor.

In addition to stimulating fluency development, fluency journals will help reinforce students' repertoire of language within topic areas covered in each chapter. The emphasis should be on fluency and not discrete grammar points. How well does the student express her/his ideas? This assignment should provide an opportunity for students to take risks in their communication.

Part Three Expansion

This section of the chapter focuses on topics introduced in the main dialogue. Expansion exercises make use of short readings, maps, diagrams, and so on as suggested by the chapter theme. Students are given an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of relevant topics through group discovery. Additionally, Expansion activities allow students to utilize listening attack strategies through a less controlled approach. In addition to pair and group discussion activities, each section of the expansion contains at least one listening exercise.

Part Four Focus

Focus begins with an examination of how various discrete points of grammar, syntax, or aspects of the suprasegmentals of English can be exploited to further aid in listening comprehension. This portion of the chapter is not meant to introduce new structures. Rather, students are taught to utilize their pre-existing knowledge of grammar, syntax, stress, pitch, and intonation as an additional tool to decipher unknown language. Students are shown that, despite difficulties with vocabulary, speed of speech, or other perceived impediments to comprehension, a great deal of meaning can be gleaned through exploiting the clues provided by specific points of grammar, syntax, and suprasegmentals.

Part Five Listening Practice

The Listening Practice section of each chapter has four exercises designed to reinforce all of the strategies, techniques and topics previously encountered. Although the format of the exercises varies in Chapter 5, the exercises in the rest of the chapters follow a consistent format. In the first exercise, students are asked to choose appropriate responses to questions that they hear. In the second, students are asked to select sentences that are correct based on the meaning of what they hear. In the third, several dialogues, each preceded by a question, are presented. This exercise requires that students make inferences based on information contained in the dialogue. In the fourth, students hear sentences that reflect various vocabulary words and idioms covered in the chapter. They are asked to choose either the correct new vocabulary term or a definition of the word they hear. The Listening Practice section of each chapter should be presented in a listening lab format. These exercises are not intended to serve as chapter tests! Like other exercises in the text, the Listening Practice exercises do not all have strict right or wrong answers. Rather, it is important that teachers help students identify the specific strategies they utilized to arrive at their responses.

Part Six Using It

In the final section of each chapter, a highly de-controlled exercise is presented. Students are asked to cooperatively work on a variety of projects that are product-oriented. That is, through the use of persuasion, negotiation, and compromise, students learn to synthesize their skills both linguistically and creatively. Typically in this section students will develop role plays for class presentation, complete contact assignments in which they must interact in real settings with native speakers, and/or complete problem solving and conceptual tasks. In all cases, students are responsible for both gathering information and presenting it to their classmates.

Group Work

Take On Listening is structured so that many activities are group oriented. Working in pairs or small groups gives students a more active approach to learning. Cooperative learning also encourages students to take responsibility for their learning experience. The tasks in *Take On Listening* require that students compare, contrast, and pool their knowledge and relevant experiences to gain necessary information while the instructor functions as facilitator.

Icons

Audio icons are placed throughout the text to indicate those portions of each chapter that are presented on tape or CD. Similarly, vocal tabs are placed on the audiotapes and CDs so that instructors can progress through each lesson easily and efficiently. Note that the instructor will need to rewind the tape for those exercises requiring a second or third playing (for example, exercises in Part Two: Main Dialogue).

General Teaching Hints

Students may request to hear a listening selection more than once. This is perfectly acceptable. Research has shown that repeated contact with a listening sample is conducive to the development of listening comprehension skills. In some cases, students might first read the choices in exercises involving multiple-choice answers before hearing the tape. It is important to remember that the exercises in *Take On Listening* are not designed to test. Every item should be viewed as an opportunity for further practice and development.

You as the instructor should control the length of pauses between exercise items in the chapters. Pauses have not been scientifically measured on the tapes, but rather present a general guideline. Feel free to stop the tape at your discretion.

Audio Program

Audiotapes and CDs accompany this text. Please contact your college bookstore to order them.

To maximize student involvement with the learning and practice of listening attack strategies and to ensure that students are not tempted to rely on rote memorization of dialogues, tapescripts are not included in this text. Tapescripts are included in the Instructor's Manual.

Instructor's Manual

The text is accompanied by an Instructor's Manual that contains the tapescript, suggested answers, teaching tips, and follow-up exercises.

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Burt Gabler
Nadia F. Scholnick

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Learning to Listen

PART ONE

PREPARING FOR THE LISTENING ENCOUNTER: QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Form groups of three or four students. Read each sentence. Circle True or False.

1. When you are listening to English, it is not necessary to first know something about the topic. **True False**
2. When you are listening to English, you must understand 100% of the words to understand the main idea. **True False**
3. When you are listening to English, you can not understand the main points when the conversation is too long. **True False**
4. When you are listening to English, you can only get information from what people say (the exact words they use). **True False**
5. When you are listening to English and you need to know a specific piece of information, you need to pay careful attention to every word. **True False**
6. When you are listening to English, you should find out the meaning of every word that you don't understand. **True False**
7. Your knowledge of grammar and **intonation** can only help you with writing and speaking, not with listening. **True False**

intonation

The way a speaker's voice changes to show meaning

You can practice your listening and speaking skills anywhere!



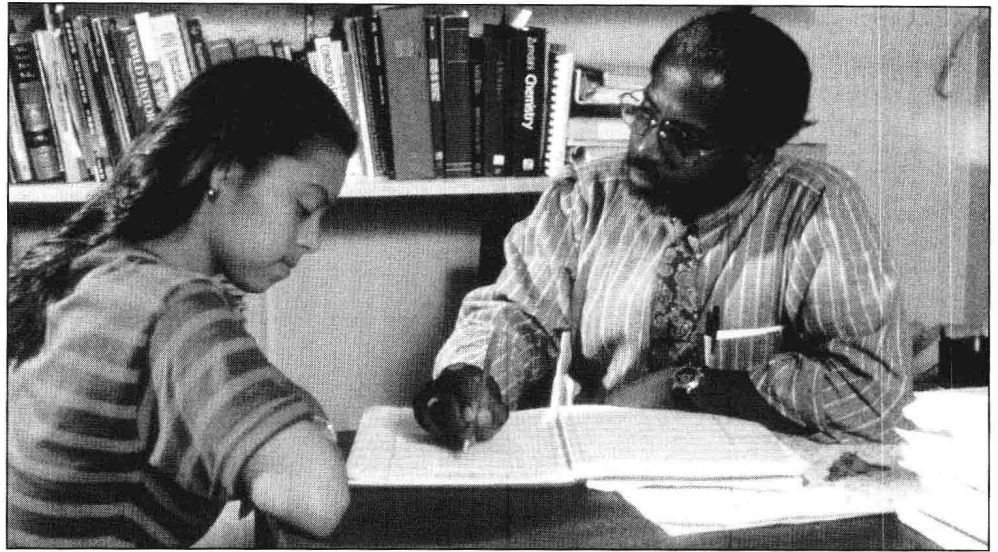
Now that you have discussed the seven statements with your classmates and teacher, you have probably figured out that all seven statements are false. If you do what these seven statements suggest, your listening comprehension will not improve.

To be a good listener, you need to use listening attack strategies. A strategy is a special kind of plan. For example, if you want your boss to give you a raise, you need to make a specific plan about how to talk to him or her about it. You need to tell your boss why you deserve the raise. You also should think about what he or she might say to you so that you can prepare good answers. To be successful, you need to have a good attack strategy.

To improve your listening comprehension, you also need to use good attack strategies. In this book, you will learn about the following seven listening attack strategies:

1. Using What You Already Know
2. Scanning for the Main Idea
3. Scanning for the Important Points
4. Inferencing (Making Intelligent Guesses)
5. Scanning for Specific Pieces of Information
6. Using Context Clues
7. Using Structure and Intonation Clues

Now, take a few minutes to discuss what you think each of these listening attack strategies means. Part Two will give you more information about each strategy and show you how each strategy works.



PART TWO

LISTENING ATTACK STRATEGIES

1. Using What You Already Know

It is very important to use all of the information that you already have about a topic when you listen to English. This will help you prepare for what you may hear. For example, if you know that you will visit your school counselor on the first day of school, you should first think about the kinds of things you will probably discuss.

Prepare a list of some of the words that you might hear when you talk to your counselor. Add to the list below:

| | | | |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------------|
| <u>program</u> | <u>major</u> | <u>placement</u> | <u>appointment</u> |
| <u>application</u> | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

EXERCISE 1



Directions: Now, listen to a short conversation between a student and counselor. Look at your list above as you listen. Circle all the words that you hear.

You probably circled many of the words on the list because these are common words for this situation. Notice how much easier it is to understand when you already have an idea about what the topic is.

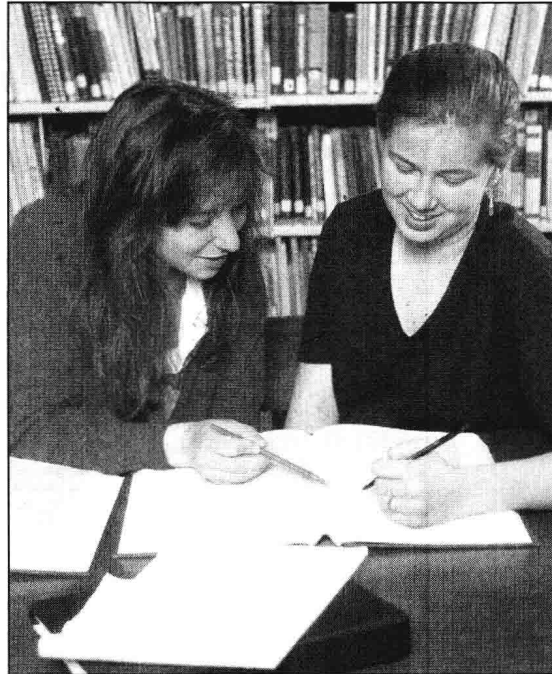
EXERCISE 2

Directions: Pretend that you walk into the school library and sit down across from the two people in the photograph below. Before listening to their conversation, try to guess what they are talking about and write your guesses on the lines below.

1. They are talking about their homework.

2. _____

3. _____



Now, listen to what they say.

**DID YOU GET
IT?**

Were any of your guesses correct? Using what you already know about the world is an important listening attack strategy.

2. Scanning for the Main Idea

Sometimes you might become nervous or upset when you hear a very long dialogue or speech in English. You might feel that it's impossible to understand any of it and might give up and stop listening. However, listening for the main idea is a listening attack strategy that can help you better understand what you are hearing.

Good listeners do not worry about the meaning of every word or phrase they hear. They concentrate on trying to understand the speaker's ideas. When you are listening to speech in your native language, you can not always understand every word that is spoken. But, you usually have no problem getting the main idea. You need to use this same listening attack strategy in English.

EXERCISE



Directions: Listen to the conversation to find the main idea. The two speakers have a problem. What is it? In the blank spaces, write down the main idea and any words that help you guess what the problem is.

Main Idea: _____

Key Words:

Food machines _____

DID YOU GET
IT?

You can understand the main idea of a conversation without knowing many of the words.

3. Scanning for the Important Points

In addition to understanding the main idea of a speech or conversation in English, you also need to understand all the small ideas or points being discussed. Scanning for the important points is a listening attack strategy that helps you identify the smaller pieces of a conversation. For example, if two students are talking about their school experience, the main idea of the conversation is school. The students might discuss homework, registration, testing, grades, teachers, and so on. Each of these important points will usually have examples, and the information will be repeated in different ways.

A good listener will listen for these examples and repetitions in order to identify the important points. Scanning for the important points is an important listening attack strategy.