

---

# UNIT 5 TEACHING LISTENING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

---

## Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Why is Listening Important?
  - 5.2.1 Listening and Other Language Skills
  - 5.2.3 Learner Concerns
  - 5.2.4 Need for Modelling Good Listening Behaviour
- 5.3 Understanding Spoken Discourse
  - 5.3.1 Bottom Up Processing: Decoding
  - 5.3.2 Top Down Processing
- 5.4 Listening Across the Curriculum
- 5.5 Different Kinds of Listening\*
  - 5.5.1 Passive or Marginal Listening
  - 5.5.2 Alternative Listening
  - 5.5.3 Responsive Listening
  - 5.5.4 Listening for Specific Information
  - 5.5.5 Appreciative Listening
  - 5.5.6 Creative Listening
  - 5.5.7 Analytical or Critical Listening
  - 5.5.8 Listening for Gist
  - 5.5.9 Listening for Detail
- 5.6 Listening Strategies
- 5.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.8 References and Suggested Readings

---

## 5.0 OBJECTIVES

---

After completing the unit you will be able to:

- state the need for listening and explain what the listening process comprises;
- recognise and identify features and techniques and concepts within a listening text;
- understand and explain how these features and concepts make the meaning of the text;
- identify the main idea and supporting details of spoken reports or points of view and summarize them;
- identify and develop subject-specific activities to develop the requisite listening skills;

---

\* This section have been adapted from <http://orelt.col/org/module5>

- select listening activities suitable to different subjects at the secondary level and transact listening activities with the different stages of a listening lesson in view;
- create or use listening activities with the aim to develop or consolidate subject specific vocabulary and forms of expression; and
- organise listening lessons to ensure motivated listening.

---

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

---

Effective listening incorporates the ability to comprehend spoken words and separate relevant from irrelevant information. Listening is basic to learning and language learning. Much of the information we acquire is through listening whether it is during a lecture, through the media, through social interactions in the form of stories and anecdotes, instructions and directions, suggestions and advice or academically through various activities at school. It is a well-established fact, and we have discussed this in the earlier Block, that language use contributes to and is a prerequisite for cognitive development. Listening helps a person to acquire a language. It also helps to develop a person's spoken competence which gets enriched with new grammatical structures when a speaker uses expressions that are new to the listener. Listening exposes a person to the contextual vocabulary of the speakers, helps the listener to acquire new vocabulary, new sound patterns and enables the person to derive meaning using other indicators like stress, tone, expression and body language of the speaker.

In our day to day life, there is a growing change in our communication patterns which has made the skill of listening more important than ever. There are BPO's, Helplines and Customer Care centres, where we have access to recorded information or live problem-solving on issues regarding to sales and services over the telephone. This makes it imperative that we learn to listen well and negotiate the meaning as efficiently as we can. Similarly, we need to listen and respond intelligently during a formal conversation with a professional or during an informal chat with family, friends or acquaintances.

In this Unit, we will discuss the need for focused listening which has made a beginning in our classrooms, and the strategies to listen to a particular text. *There is, however, no planned or focused listening to content or text in other subject areas, apart from teacher talk.* Unfortunately, listening has not been adequately exploited and honed in the language class, much less in the classes of other subjects. Most of the listening is done in an artificial set up, and is hastily concluded as a mandatory activity spelt out in the textbooks as part of skill development. The listening that learners do naturally in the class is to instructions and explanations, description of processes and experiments, simple transacting of information and a little of classroom conversation which includes description of acceptable and non - acceptable classroom behaviours. Many entrance tests in language contain questions on reading, writing and grammar, but none based on the skill of listening. Similarly, entrance tests in other subjects especially in science or social science have short objective type tests that may test recall of information, logical thinking, inference or interpretation but none on listening to the specific language that characterizes the subject.

---

## 5.2 WHY IS LISTENING IMPORTANT?

---

Listening is an important skill, however, as we discussed, it has been neglected in schools. The reasons for neglecting this vital skill are various.

- Language teachers felt that it was more important to present new language items to the class. They used listening only to practise those items. They focused on emphasizing those skills that require more systematic instruction and evaluation like grammar, reading and writing.
- Subject teachers, however, did not focus on the content specific vocabulary much in a conscious way. The students learnt them as and when they occurred during the classroom explanations, discussions or through illustrations in the textbook.
- Listening has been viewed as a passive skill which is difficult to assess and evaluate. The outcome of listening is not tangible like that of writing or speaking.
- Teachers believe that listening activities take up a lot of teaching- learning time.
- Some believe that this skill will be automatically picked up through exposure to the target language, it can be acquired naturally in response to the spoken word as with L1.
- For subject teachers reading and learning of facts is more important than listening to recorded descriptions, talks, interviews or discussions on various aspects of content. And very much like the language teachers, these take up a lot of classroom time with little tangible evidence of the quality of intake.

### *Listening is an important skill*

- Listening is the foundation of literacy during infancy and early childhood (emergent literacy).
- Listening vocabulary is the first vocabulary of any child which she acquires through listening to what the caregivers and other people in the social network speak. Exposure to new words through reading comes much later.
- There would be no language without the aural/oral component. A large part of communication is aural and oral and often non-verbal.
- We need skills in listening for the very business of living, study and work, even to run businesses and governments, educational excursions and interaction with experts, watching videos and listening to professionals make learning active, memorable and retainable.

The aim of teaching a language is to equip a learner to be able to receive and produce it meaningfully in academic, formal or social situations. The skill of listening is a significant part of the business of daily living and needs to be practised extensively. This will help to ensure effective listening beyond the classroom.

### 5.2.1 Listening and Other Language Skills

Listening is inextricably linked to the exercise and development of the other language skills. Listening is directly linked to speaking. Although listening is an internal encounter yet we can get an idea of the extent of comprehension when the listener encodes his/her response in the spoken form, whether in a conversation or while answering questions in different formal and informal situations.

Though an oral response is a significant way to measure comprehension while listening, it may be borne in mind that many attentive listeners do not express their understanding in the spoken form. Exercises like gap-filling, cloze, selection and sequencing can help the teacher to assess how well these learners understood the spoken/recorded text.

***Listening and reading are both decoding skills.*** Listening depends upon sounds and is an aural experience whereas reading depends upon the written text and is a visual experience (depending upon graphemes). In fact *listening provides the foundation for reading:*

- *Decoding and auditory discrimination is the first step in reading where beginner readers try to sound out the words.*
- *Non-linguistic clues like pauses, voice variation and inflection can at later stage provide clues to meaning while reading.*
- *A child utilises her listening vocabulary as a basis for reading and those with a limited listening vocabulary may have limited reading and writing vocabulary.*

Thus it is necessary that students be provided with an opportunity to exercise all of the above skills through graded tasks.

We all know that writing is nourished by the other skills of the language and that our listening vocabularies and the language we listen to influence the skills of writing in content-based subjects.

### 5.2.2 Learner Concerns

Most learners when asked of their area of difficulty often cite listening as the area about which they feel most insecure. The reasons may be:

- *They do not have concrete evidence that they are making progress in the skill.*
- *Listening happens in real time, which means that it is supposed to be understood at the moment in order to make a suitable response. One cannot play it back in one's mind to decipher its meaning.*
- *They haven't learnt to separate the grain from the chaff i.e. focus on key words and expressions or discriminate between fact and opinion.*
- *They have little practice in noticing the strong and weak forms of words.*

### 5.2.3 Need for Modelling Good Listening Behaviour

During different oral encounters with the young, many adults fail to provide a model of active listening which involves making eye contact, showing interest, responding with short comments, asking questions to clarify or summarizing what the child said in order to clarify understanding. In such cases the young too often tend to switch off or are unable to concentrate when asked to listen or when they are exposed to spoken texts.

### Activity 1

1. Why is it important to develop the skills of listening?
2. In what way does listening contribute to an individual's linguistic competence?
3. What are the difficulties in teaching listening?
4. What are the different ways parents and teachers can model good listening behaviour to encourage children to listen?

## 5.3 UNDERSTANDING SPOKEN DISCOURSE

In real life listening tends to be a more difficult skill than reading since the listening text is not permanent and there is little possibility of playing it back or referring to the text again. One can however, negotiate meaning by asking the speaker for clarifications or asking the speaker to repeat what he or she said or to say it slowly.

*Comprehension of a heard discourse involves two kinds of processes very much like reading.*

*Top-down processing starts from the reader or listener.* It assumes that the learner brings to the text certain knowledge – of the world, of texts (including how certain types of conversation typically unfold), and of language. This knowledge is likely to be useful in understanding a text (whether written or spoken), but it often needs to be activated, and activities such as discussions, questionnaires, quizzes, brainstorming, and vocabulary-anticipation can all be used to do this.

*Bottom-up processing starts from the text.* It assumes that by working on a combination of different aspects of the written or spoken text, the learner can increase their ability to comprehend it. These might be very “micro-” elements, such as the fact that we tend to insert a “w” sound between certain vowels; or they could be at a more “macro-” level, such as searching for synonyms within a text. The key idea here is decoding.

### 5.3.1 Bottom up Processing: Decoding

The decoding process is the process of translating the sounds (acoustic input) that the listener receives into standard forms of language (words, phrases or sentences) using clues like pronunciation and inflection. Hence a piece of speech is reshaped into larger units of language. **Bottom - up Processing** involves the use of the micro-skills to:

- Scan the input for familiar lexical items
- Segment the stream of speech into its constituent parts
- Use phonological cues (sounds, stress and intonation) to identify the information focus in an utterance
- Use grammatical cues to organize the input into constituents (sense groups).

The listener's ears receive the phonemes of the language which are clustered into syllables and the syllables into words. The words fall into familiar clusters as in phrases and clauses or that are frequently encountered like formulaic language.

The decoding happens at the phoneme level, syllable level, word form level and chunk level. Then it happens at syntax level and intonation level and lastly at the meaning level- followed by the response of the listener.

***Decoding processes take place at:***

- *Phoneme level:* identifying the different consonants and vowels
- *Syllable level:* recognising the syllable structure by paying attention to the variation in stress, recognizing that weaker syllables are normally found in the structure words
- *Word level:* identifying word boundaries (where they begin and end in connected speech, i.e. *Whatdoyousay?*= *What+do+you+say?*) matching sequences of sounds to words, matching words that are in their standard forms and figuring out new words
- *Syntax level:* isolating phrases and clauses, making predictions using the beginnings of phrases and clauses, and anticipating the syntactic patterns and checking hypothesis (whether what was anticipated is true or not)
- *Intonation level:* making use of sentence stress, using intonation to support syntax, recognizing chunks of language (pauses between sense groups, tone groups)

Thus a listener uses the grammatical structure of the utterance and the pattern of intonation that binds together words in order to understand what is being said. Initially these decoding routines are conscious and require effort but as the listener becomes more efficient these routines become automatic. A competent listener does not have to make a conscious effort to match the group of words in the listening input to her own vocabulary or try to recall a group of words several seconds after they have passed. Automaticity requires minimal mental attention.

***Sub-skills exercised in the decoding process are***

*Perception skills*

- Recognizing individual sounds
- Discriminating between sounds
- Identifying reduced forms in connected / fast speech (elision and assimilation)
- Identifying stressed syllables
- Identifying stressed words in utterances
- Recognizing intonation patterns

*Language Skills*

- Identifying individual words and groups and building up possible meanings for them
- Identifying discourse markers which organize what is being said, for example, *then, I was saying, as a matter of fact, to start with etc.*

### 5.3.2 Top-down Processing

In order to understand the import of an utterance a listener does not need the decoding processes alone, although these seem to dominate in the early stages. To arrive at a full meaning of the speaker's message, the listener uses various non-linguistic clues and a range of contextual information that may be **independent** of the actual words used. The following comes into play for arriving at the real meaning of what a speaker is saying:

- *Listener's knowledge of the world*
- *Knowledge of the speaker*
- *Knowledge of what has been said so far*

According to Goodith White, using *knowledge of the world* includes the processes below:

- *Connecting groups of words to non-linguistic features such as expressions, gestures, or objects, in order to get clues for meaning*
- *Using knowledge of a topic to guess what the speaker might be saying about it*
- *Using knowledge about the patterns that certain oral interactions typically take in order to predict what is being said- ordering in a restaurant, making a telephone call etc.*

It is important for the listener to decide whether the piece of information he or she is receiving is important or not and how it relates to the previous piece of information or the context. It is also important to see how it relates to the interests of the listener.

When we use *Top-down Processing*, we use the macro-skills and:

- Use background knowledge to comprehend the message
- Identify an interaction as belonging to a particular event i.e. storytelling, joking, praying, complaining, arguing etc.
- Assign places, persons or things to categories
- Infer cause and effect relationships
- Anticipate outcomes
- Infer the topic of discourse
- Infer the sequence between events
- Infer the missing details

***Top down processing is***

- Using the knowledge of the context (topic, social situation, cultural knowledge and comparing with earlier similar encounters etc.)

- Deriving meaning: storing the literal meaning of an utterance and accepting an approximate meaning and checking understanding
- Adding to the meaning by making inferences, conjecturing where things not clearly stated and dealing with pronouns to make connections
- Selecting information and recognizing redundant information
- Integrating information by connecting ideas, carrying information obtained so far and noticing the connecting words used by the speaker.

### **Activity 2**

1. *Explain bottom up processing or the decoding process in a few sentences.*
2. *What are the different ways a listener negotiates the meaning of what is being said?*

### **‘Knowledge of the World’ and ‘Schema’**

Listening comprehension is strongly believed to be a process of interaction between the listener’s background knowledge and the expected knowledge in the spoken text. In other words it means that, listeners employ all relevant previously stored knowledge to comprehend the incoming input. The role the background knowledge plays in comprehension has been formalised as ‘schema theory’ (Rumelhart, 1980). In the light of the notion of schema theory, it becomes essential to trigger the learners’ background knowledge and utilise this knowledge to fully comprehend the listening text.

Most people would agree that we use a combination of the two approaches when we are processing a text. We tend to switch from one to another as is needed. But whereas it used to be thought that we revert to bottom-up processing when we are unable to use top-down (for example, if we are unable to predict the content, we have to listen to the actual words!), research suggests that in fact the reverse is true. If you are in a noisy café, and can’t “decode” what your friend is saying (bottom-up), you tend to fill in the gaps with your knowledge of the world, or your friend’s usual speech habits.

Within this framework, the idea of “*comprehending a text*” is important which needs to employ both approaches discussed above. Although practice in decoding is essential, top down processing must not be ignored even in the early stages of language learning, for these are cognitive processes and help to develop thinking amongst the learners. The teacher needs to decide which process she wishes to practice but these processes can be clubbed so that they feed into one another. Efficient listening also requires discourse skills which can be developed through conversation and extended talk. In conversation, social interaction is more obvious as each short turn responds to previous turns and contributes to the development of the talk.



---

## 5.4 LISTENING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

---

### *Goals of listening across the curriculum :comprehending the aural text*

- *To listen sensitively and critically to the ideas of others.*
- *To listen for comprehension and appreciation at varying levels through: · recall of facts · interpretation · application · analysis · evaluation*
- *. To listen with an increasing span of concentration to others, and comment on what has been said*
- *To listen and respond to materials read aloud, expressing opinion on what has been heard*
- *To demonstrate a grasp of sequence, cause and effect, reasoning, clarity of argument, appreciation of relevance and irrelevance.*
- *Segmenting the stream of speech into meaningful units (words and phrases)*
- *Recognizing word classes (grammatical units)*
- *Relating the incoming message to one's own background knowledge*
- *Extracting gist encoded information from the remaining aural text*
- *Using our background knowledge and knowledge of the world to get the drift of the utterance or the handling of a topic.*
- *Predicting what the speaker might say next.*

Developing fluency and accuracy in speaking is an important goal of listening across the curriculum. Just as speaking, listening too has its own fluency and accuracy without which communication may break down.

- **Fluency:** acquiring the patterns of listening like paying attention to the keywords, using non-linguistic clues by attending to visual signs ('viewing' H.J. Vollmer) and attending to physical movements ('watching' H.J. Vollmer) to arrive at the meaning, not having to listen word for word (meaning-making skills)
- **Accuracy:** ability to decode pieces of connected speech, word by word, noticing word boundaries and an understanding of prefixes and suffixes (decoding skills)

Hence teachers in the classroom need to provide practice with particular goals and processes in mind. It is important to note that certain skills cannot be devoted exclusively to certain levels. Everything can be practised at every level of language learning or acquisition. We shall read more about them as we proceed.

---

## 5.5 DIFFERENT KINDS OF LISTENING

---

During the course of daily living we listen to a variety of things in various formal and informal situations. The things we listen to range from polite exchanges and

enquiries to listening to talks, news and lectures. We may have discussions on serious or non-serious issues or seek consultation and guidance from different kinds of professionals. Some of these require a response from the listener for communication to continue while some do not offer any scope for the listener to respond in real time.

Listening may be reciprocal or non reciprocal or it may be academic or conversational. Each situation requires different skills of listening.

A brief discussion on kinds of listening follows. It is necessary to understand the different kinds of listening that occur in communication. This will help the teacher to organise activities so that different kinds of listening skills are practiced and developed.

### 5.5.1 Passive or Marginal Listening

This kind of listening happens when our attention is partially divided like when children are doing their homework with the television turned on in the background, or when students are discussing in groups within the classroom and are able to hear what the students in the next group are saying. There is a momentary ‘tuning out’ but there is enough consciousness to return to the activity on hand. In the classroom the teacher’s voice alerts students to attention. This happens on many occasions in real life.

### 5.5.2 Attentive Listening

There are situations in life when accuracy of comprehension is involved for the information received is vital as in directions, instructions, announcements and introductions. Failure to understand or remember any portion of the information might lead to problems. The *listener has to pay close attention* to what is being said and stop to ask questions, sum up what the speaker said in order to confirm if he/she has understood correctly or even ask the speaker to repeat what he or she said.

A teacher can develop activities based on directions and instructions to practice this kind of listening wherein the students carry out an experiment, or a task following the instructions step by step.

### 5.5.3 Responsive Listening

Responsive listening falls under the category of *reciprocal listening* for it requires a response from the listener in order to continue with the communication. Thus it is similar to attentive listening because the listener has to pay attention to the speaker’s words in order to make an appropriate response. This requires a different mindset and can be practised by creating situations where the students:

- *participate*
- *have a conversation*
- *discussion*

A teacher may provide a theme or a situation for the students to discuss after they have heard a story, read a passage or a news item. Students may also practise conversation in simulated dialogues based on different situations of life.

### 5.5.4 Listening for Specific Information

This kind of listening happens when the listener is *looking for a certain piece of information* in a part of the listening text. It also happens when the teacher explains parts of a process or material from which the students choose certain sections. The teacher may ask the students to pay attention to certain parts of the listening text, or may give a few questions beforehand so that the students know what to look for in the text and become alert when they think that portion is coming.

**Activity:** *One of the skills necessary for students to understand concepts in different subject is to identify specific information in an oral or written text. This means that while listening to the teacher or reading from a book, students should be able to look for certain points that will help them comprehend the main points easily.*

In this activity, listening for specific information, you will be able to help your students develop their scanning skills; that is, looking for specific information in an oral or written text. To be able to locate specific information in an oral presentation, one has to be very attentive and quick. This is because in real conversations, we speak fast and rarely repeat what we say, unless we want to emphasise something. The information we want to note is thus available for only a short time, and we have to both comprehend and record it instantly for future use. To prepare students for this activity, have them play this game in the class. In pairs, students have to tell each other three things they saw on the street the previous day. No one is allowed to write down the information; they will all have to report from memory. Give the students not more than three minutes per exchange. Then ask a few students randomly to report what their partners said. This exercise usually generates a lot of laughter, as people tend to forget, reword or even change the information when they report back. After the exercise, have a discussion on the importance of listening intently to look for/hear specific information. Then tell them what they have to do in the activity.

(Source: <http://orelt.col.org/module/unit/5-listening-across-curriculum>)

### 5.5.5 Appreciative Listening

*Appreciative listening is a pleasurable activity* wherein a listener settles down to enjoy a dramatization, a story or a poem. This results in some kind of emotional reaction as when the listener begins to identify with the character or shares the emotions that accompany the situations in the story.

Rendering of poems, stories on CD or told by the teacher or listening to a play can be followed by asking students' response to theme, storyline, situation, character, motives and relationships.

### 5.5.6 Creative Listening

The process of developing *new and original solutions to problems presented through the spoken word* is creative listening. It is also the act of entering imaginatively into the experiences, the setting and the feelings of the characters in a story. (Being narrated, read aloud, over the radio or stage). The listener may listen to a situation and suggest solutions or after listening to a story give the story a different end.

### 5.6.7 Analytical or Critical Listening

*Analytical listening makes a great demand on the listener because the listener needs to be careful, accurate and attentive in order to make inferences and value judgements regarding situation, process, places, persons or things. Critical listening occurs when you still want to understand what the other person is saying, but also have some reason or responsibility to evaluate what is being said to you and how it is being said.*

The listener weighs what he/she hears against personal experience and forms an opinion. While listening critically the listener is alert to the attempts of the speaker to sway his/her opinion by the devices of propaganda or through exaggeration as in advertisements.

### 5.6.8 Listening for Gist

Apart from being able to understand and locate specific information in any text, *students also need to understand the gist or main idea of a lecture, conversation or report.* In the History, Social Studies, Political Science or Literature classroom, for example, students listen to the teacher's explanation of a topic, including the chronology of events (i.e. the order in which things happened), the main arguments, the conclusions and the teacher's own opinion or viewpoint about the topic. It is obviously not possible, or even necessary, for students to note down or remember every single sentence spoken. Most often they need to understand only the substance of the teacher's discourse – that is, the gist. The same rules apply when students listen to information on TV and the radio.

**Classroom Activity :** *In this activity, you will be able to familiarise your students with the gist of a topic by helping them listen efficiently, paying attention to only the main points.*

*Before they listen to the main topic, they must understand what we mean by the term **gist**. For this, you can prepare your own set of paragraphs on different topics for students to find the gist. The students' task is to match the passages to their gist. This will familiarise them with the style of a gist. During the feedback session, draw their attention to the main aspects of a gist; it contains the main idea/main point, it leaves out unnecessary details or illustrations and it is written in short and concise form.*

*Write a few passages on separate sheets of paper, fold them and keep them on your table. Ask a few students to come up one by one, select one passage and read it aloud for the class. The class will have to listen carefully and note what the topic is about, in just one or, at the most, two sentences. After all the passages have been read, ask the students to read out their summaries/gists. You can have a discussion and pick the best gist. Wind up the activity by reviewing the main features of a gist.*

*(Source: <http://orelt.col.org/module/unit/5-listening-across-curriculum>)*

### 5.6.9 Listening for Detail

One of the most important study skills needed by student is *understanding detail in a lecture or a passage*, and applying this in a course-related activity. For example, students need to listen carefully to the process of conducting experiments in the Laboratory. Teacher reads out aloud the preparation of oxygen using potassium chlorate.

Classroom Activity: *Listening for detail*

**Preparation of oxygen using potassium chlorate.** *omposition of potassium chlorate. You will need: hard glass test tube, gas jar, trough, delivery tube, one-hole rubber stopper, clamp stand, burner, beehive shelf, water, potassium chlorate and manganese dioxide. Potassium chlorate on heating liberates oxygen gas. This being a very slow reaction manganese dioxide or a catalyst is used.*

*Arrange the apparatus as shown here.*

*Take a mixture of potassium chlorate and manganese dioxide in the ratio of 4:1 by weight in a hard glass test tube. Heat the test tube. Oxygen gas is liberated. Oxygen gas is collected in the gas jar by the downward displacement of water. Take care. The experiment should be conducted carefully. It can be dangerous if the heating is not done gently and cautiously. The reaction that takes place is displayed on the screen. Manganese dioxide is a catalyst in the reaction.*

*For safety:*

- *Wear a protective mask.*
- *Wear hand gloves.*
- *Avoid eating while working – you might inhale poisonous fumes or maybe your food could cause a chemical reaction and trigger something unpleasant.*
- *Remember also never to add water to acid: instead, always add acid to water. That's all for today!*

*How to make oxygen gas in a laboratory (worksheet)*

Fill the sheet below with the details of the experiment your teacher has just told you about.

1. Names of materials needed to prepare oxygen in a laboratory.

.....  
.....  
.....

2. The procedure of preparing oxygen gas involves the following steps:

i. ....  
ii. ....  
iii. ....  
iv. ....

3. Conducting experiments in the lab can be very dangerous. So the following precautions must be taken to avoid injury or even death:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## 5.6 LISTENING STRATEGIES

In this section, we will discuss how teachers can devise activities in different subject areas in order to support their students in developing their listening skills. In all these activities it is important to think about how the activity can be made accessible and meaningful to students. These listening activities should link to other activities in the textbook or to events and experiences in your students' lives. In all the activities the teacher needs to carefully listen to and observe how the students respond so that he/she can intervene to direct and facilitate learning for all students in the class.

*Read the Table given below carefully and write your opinion on the suggested activities. Suggest some activities for listening in your subject not given in the Table.*

**Table: Strategies to activate the 'schema'**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>How to do</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<i>Brainstorming</i>	<i>Call out related words or phrases to be put on board or OHP</i>	<i>These knowledge oriented activities aim to prepare students by encouraging them to activate stored schemata or acquire relevant types of world knowledge which will facilitate top down processing.</i>
<i>Mind -mapping</i>	<i>Write down words or draw simple pictures in a web</i>	
<i>Discussion</i>	<i>Discuss similar or related issues based on prompt questions or pictures</i>	
<i>Games</i>	<i>Simple word or information -gap games</i>	
<i>Guide -questions</i>	<i>Guess answers to questions on the text</i>	
<i>Picture/Diagram</i>	<i>Complete illustrations with simple drawings or words</i>	
<i>Predictions</i>	<i>Predict content, characters, settings or sequence of events</i>	
<i>Elimination</i>	<i>Identify the odd one out from a group of pictures/phrases</i>	
<i>Skimming</i>	<i>Read a related short text for gist</i>	

*Source: Zeng, Ya-jun (2007), "Schema theory and its application in teaching listening for non-English major undergraduates", Sino-US English Teaching, 4(6): 35.*

### Classroom Activity

Follow the steps below and try using this activity in your classroom:

1. Go through the following text. It is divided into different paragraphs, some small, some big. Look at the first paragraph. Could you ask some interesting questions about it?
2. Tell your students that you are going to read a text aloud and they should listen to it to find the answers to the questions.
3. Read the first paragraph aloud. Make sure your students do not see the text.
4. Write the questions on the board, tell your students to discuss the answers to the questions in pairs.
5. Read the subsequent paragraphs. Write two or three questions about each paragraph on the board.
6. Students discuss the answers and write them after each paragraph.

### Listening Frame



#### Similarities and Differences in Mohenjo-daro and Harappa Civilizations

Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, of the Bronze Age, depict an era that boasts of human development in architecture and city planning. A civilization that was hidden underground for many years was accidentally found, and excavations started. Both the cities are a part of the Indus Valley Civilization.

The Mohenjo-daro and Harappan civilization is testimony to a rich cultural history that was found by the Britishers when they ruled India, during an excavation for laying down of a railway line. These two cities of the Indus Valley Civilization were traced and later preserved as ancient heritage.

It all started with the efforts of Archaeologist and Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India, John Marshall, who was majorly responsible for the excavation of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. Both these cities were found at different locations. However, their resemblance concluded that both were part of the Indus Civilization.

#### Similarities Between Mohenjo-daro and Harappa

A comparison of the artifacts of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro by Marshall proved that they both belonged to the same culture and were of the same age. They are both known as a part of the Indus Valley Civilization. Both the sites are enlisted in the UNESCO World Heritage, as of today.

#### Architecture and Layout

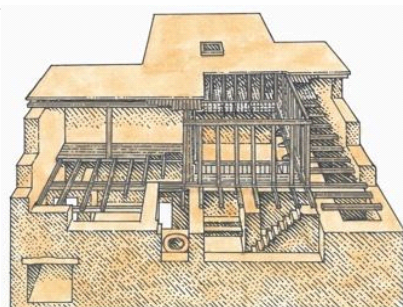


Illustration of a House in the Indus Valley Civilization

This is the major point of similarity that has led to the conclusion that both the cities belonged to a similar civilization, which is now referred to as the Indus Valley Civilization. Both cities had extremely planned structures that was well-equipped with a good drainage and sanitation system. They boasted of architecture that is progressive with well-defined and meticulously planned towns with streets. Archaeologists were in awe of this awesomely planned structure and detailing.

The houses were built of burnt bricks, and had drainage pipes connected to them. There are also evidences of public swimming pools built along with changing rooms.

What is important to note about this civilization is that there appears to be very less instances of class differences. It seems to be a society which survived on the basis of equality and provision of good facilities to its citizens.

### **Excavation Site at Harappa Depicting a Well and Sewage System**

The Great Bath of Mohenjo-daro is one of the most famous sites in the Mohenjo-daro civilization. There are many wells found in the Harappan city too, thus proving that both had a sophisticated hygiene and sewage system.



### **Language**

Archaeologists and scientists are yet trying to decipher the language of the Indus valley. Many seals and artifacts excavated contain symbolic language, and efforts are still going on to decode them.

### **Sculpture**

Though there are some differences in the sculptures, many artifacts have been found that are similar, such as the zebu bull, the unicorn, pottery, etc.

### **Occupation**

Both proved to be agricultural economies. There is evidence of a granary at the Harappan excavation site in Mound F. Archaeologists have found structures which look similar to the granary at Mohenjo-daro too.

### **Achievements**

Surveying and measurement instruments were found at the sites, that were probably used for measuring sections of the horizon and the tidal dock. Bricks used in construction were evidence that the Indus Valley civilians were adept in the science of measurements. The sophisticated building structures indicate their expertise in architecture.



## Religion

There is no evidence of any temples or idols of deities found at both the excavation sites. Swastika symbols were found on some seals.

## Economies

Both the economies seemed to be rich and flourishing, with evidences of trade activities with other civilizations. It seems to be a civilization wherein there was economic equality, and it was a rich, flourishing economy. Pottery pieces have been found at both the excavation sites. It was an agricultural economy, with rice, wheat, etc., being the major trading products. Other than that, cotton was a major trade item. Thanks to abundant water supply from the river, the economy was rich.

There has been evidence that suggest trade activities with Mesopotamia. In fact, artifacts found at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro have been found at sites at Mesopotamia, suggesting trade activities between them.

## Differences Between Mohenjo-daro and Harappa

### Discovery Dates

- Mohenjo-daro was first discovered by D.R. Bhandarkar in 1911-12, and later R.D Banerjee carried out the excavations during 1921-22.
- In 1826, Charles Mason made the first discovery of the Harappan city. It was first excavated by Sir Alexander Cunningham in 1872-73, and later on by many other British officers with pre-independence Indian officers.

### Behind the Name

- Mohenjo-daro is a city of mounds. In Sindhi, it means 'Mound of the Dead'.
- Named after a modern village around the excavation site with a similar name.

### Geographical Position

- Located on the banks of the Indus River, in the Larkana district of Pakistan.
- This site extends from the portion of Punjab province in Pakistan. It is located to the southwest of Sahiwal, and is around 150 miles away from Lahore, and 250 miles from Karachi.

**Note:** Today, the entire site of Mohenjo-daro is located in Pakistan, whereas, there are few parts of the Harappan site which are still located in India. Other sites like Dholavira, Lothal, etc., are located in India.

### Sculptures Found

- Sculptures found: 2 statues of 'The Dancing Girl' and eleven other pieces that include sculptures of seated men, and an infamous sculpture of a man who has been referred to as 'The Priest King'. However, there are no indications to prove that he is either a priest or a king. There are no inscriptions on these sculptures, though the dancing figurines indicate that they were inclined towards art.

- There are some stark differences in the artifacts found. For example, the red jasper stone and gray stone torso found at the Harappan site are quite different from the sculptures found at Mohenjo-daro.

Thanks to the efforts of many archaeologists, these ancient cities were discovered, and it proves that architecture and art was well advanced during ancient times. The reason for the decline of the civilizations in both the cities are yet to be known, though there are theories that they were either invaded by the Aryans, or the Indus river changed its course. Sadly, these excavation sites are facing a threat today, due to environmental hazards and inadequate restoration. This rich history still has many secrets, and also a language which is yet to be deciphered. While efforts of archaeologists continue, we marvel at this wonderful history which exhibited such sophisticated and modern amenities. With time, more and more interesting facts of this civilization will be revealed.

At the end of the activity, ask the students to fill the details in the following box:

*General description*  
*Discovery*  
*Geographical position*  
*Evidences*  
*Architecture and planning*  
*Concept of health and hygiene*  
*Art and sculpture*  
*Artifacts*  
*Economy (agriculture)*  
*Knowledge of science*  
*Religion (Evidence/No evidence)*

### Classroom Activity: Unstructured Tasks

Ask the students to

- listen to a radio or TV discussion on a topic of their choice and summarize it in their own words;
- listen to lectures in your subject on you-tube and write the gist;
- listen to a riddle or a joke related to a subject being taught at school.
- listen to news in the class and discuss the main points with student.

### Activity 3

- *What are the different kinds of listening you would like to practise in your classroom and why?*
- *Write a script for*  
*Listening for detail*  
*Listening for gist*  
*Specify the differences between the two.*
- *Which approach to teaching listening would you like to use in your classroom?*

---

## 5.7 LET US SUM UP

---

Listening is the foundation of literacy and aids acquisition of the child's language. Listening vocabulary is the first vocabulary of any child. A child acquires the vocabulary she listens around her. Listening is basic to language learning as a large part of communication is oral and aural. In daily life too we need the skills of listening for living, study, travel and work. Though the most basic and essential skill in language learning, listening has been neglected due to various reasons in the classroom, the most important being the teacher's belief that it need not be taught formally but can be picked up. The time consumed in conducting listening tasks and the difficulty in assessing the extent of the learner's progress has been an inhibiting factor. The teacher today, is aware of the need for listening and makes a conscious effort to practise the skill in the classroom.

Since listening is one of the basic skills in language acquisition and learning, a teacher needs to be familiar with the processes and kinds of listening. The Unit emphasizes on the need of the teacher to be apprised of the different approaches to teaching listening so that she may develop focused tasks for listening. It is of utmost importance to remember that the language teacher alone does not teach language. Language is in fact taught by different subject teachers as well as they teach their subject specific vocabulary and the word formation and discourse markers. A skill that runs through all subject classes is the ability to handle information and process it.

---

## 5.8 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

---

While, Goodith (1998) *Listening Resource Book for Teachers*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rumelhart, D.et.al.(1980) *Parallel Processing. Explorations in the microstructure of cognition Psychological and Biological Models*, Volume 2, MIT: "A Bradford Book"

Zeng, Ya-jun (2007) "Schema theory and its applications in teaching-listening for non-major undergraduates", *Sino US English Teaching*, 4(6):35.