

## Listening

The Listening strategies are deliberately similar in style to the Reading strategies in order to point up the parallels between both skills.

- Just as in Reading, making a hypothesis about meaning before listening is something that greatly enhances understanding.
- Listening for structure practises focusing on the gist instead of the details.
- As in Reading the strategy of visualisation is central to vivid recall.
- Teaching students the habit of contextual guessing is also important to help them fill-in knowledge gaps.
- Summarising both assists students to overview a listening text and acts as a bridge to the productive skills of Writing and Speaking.

### 1. Bridges

**Level** Intermediate

**Time** An hour.

**Materials** None

**Focus** To think about listening and change.

#### **State**

To help students get into an auditory mode breathe in mid- chest while giving instructions. Use auditory predicates like: it sounds, music, quiet, talk, harmony, amplify.

#### **Future-pacing**

Ask students to tell you the differences between their primary school and the present school. Sound them out on how they handled the changes.

## **Presentation**

Announce that today they're going to hear a story. Ask for a couple of volunteers. They are to leave the class during the story-telling. They will hear the story later from their classmates. Have students prepare to listen by putting their feet flat on the floor, their back straight against the chair and their head upright. They may close their eyes if that is comfortable. Present the title of the story Bridges. Ask them to predict possible content and note their ideas on the board.

## **Practice**

Remind students to picture the story in their heads:

(This story is loosely based on one by Jensen):

"Once upon a time there were two cities on opposite sides of a wide river.

They were united by an old bridge which many people used every day to go to work, to visit friends or to shop. For years people had used the same old bridge and thought it was quite adequate. However, as times changed and the number of cars increased some people called for a new bridge. They said that the old one was too narrow for so much traffic.

After much discussion the town representatives decided in favour of building a new bridge. Much planning went into the building of the new structure and the bridge was under construction for several years. The construction work forced people to go different ways to get to the bridge and this was annoying to some people. Those who had always been opposed to the new bridge pointed to the confusion and frustration. They said "We don't need a new bridge, the old one was perfectly good."

Finally the bridge was completed. Many favourable comments were heard about its elegant appearance and how functional it was. It was now much easier to cross over to the other town. The traffic between the towns increased and both cities became more prosperous. People felt good about having this new connection between their cities. The old bridge was finally demolished.

However a few people still tried to cross the river where the old bridge had been."

## **Debrief**

Invite one of the pupils who was outside during the story-telling to come in.

Get one of the listeners to tell the story again while the rest note down any discrepancies with their version. Repeat the process with the other outsider.

Get feedback on discrepancies.

**Completion** Ask students why they think there were discrepancies. Ask what interpretation they would give to the story.

## 2. Doors

**Level** Any

**Time** One hour

**Materials** None

**Focus** Teaching of sense predicates through dictation.

### **State**

You need to match, pace, then lead into an auditory mode. Use auditory predicates like : it sounds ... ; music; quiet; talk; harmony; amplify ...

### **Future-pacing**

Continue to lead students into the auditory state suggesting that they'll have no trouble keeping in tune: "As you listen carefully in this class you will gradually hear what sounds just right for you. Relax and let the music of the words bubble into your ears. I'll be talking slowly. Listen carefully and note down all you hear."

### **Presentation**

Students need pencil and paper for this activity. Say and write the title of the dictation on the board: Doors

You read it through once, dictate it slowly, then re-read at the end.

"In our lives we open, step through and close many doors. The door of my parents' house was painted in a bright colour with a black letter-box in the middle. It made a funny clicking sound when you turned the small key to open it. I remember the cool touch of that little key.

The doors of my school were double, varnished in a brown oak colour. When they opened you could smell the polished floor inside; when you entered you felt that a large animal had swallowed you up. They always closed with a definitive bang.

I have sliding doors in my house now. They look like windows and open at a push. The dog likes them because he can see everyone in the street."

## **Practice**

Check the correct spelling of words. Note the students who have obvious spelling difficulties because it is probable that they are using a non-visual recall strategy. Cleveland has published a simple spelling strategy to help poor spellers. Students now underline and explain the different sense references in the passage, for example 'step through' (kinesthetic); bright colour (visual); clicking sound (auditory).

## **Debrief**

Tell students to note which predicates attracted their attention most. Tell them that these probably represent their favoured senses. Ask students what they have learned today. (Spellings; comprehension of a text through the sense Information; favoured senses ... )

## **Celebration**

Get the students to say which they believe is their preferred sense. (Listen carefully - there's a wealth of Information here!)

### 3. Trance-formation

**Level** Pre-intermediate

**Time** 30 minutes

**Materials** None

**Focus** Visualising and guessing to enhance Listening skills.

#### **State**

Play some soft, relaxing music, perhaps New Age, as students come in and settle down. Breathe low in your stomach when talking to lead them into a physiologically relaxed state.

#### **Future-pacing**

Elicit orally and write on the board that "to have a drink" in English refers to imbibing alcohol. When you overdo this you are "drunk". That qualifies you as "a drunk". All of you know probably what a drunk is and you'll have no problem with today's class which is to write out the story of someone who has a drink, gets drunk and qualifies as a drunk. Not to be imitated ... Write up the title of the story: The 12 bottles of whisky.

#### **Presentation**

Ask them to prepare for this class by sitting comfortably: feet flat on the floor, hands flat on thighs, back straight against chair and head upright. They may close their eyes if that is comfortable. Say these lines\*:

**I feel where my foot touches the floor, now my other foot.**

**I experience the contact of one hand on my leg, now the other hand.**

**I sense my back touching the chair.**

**My head is light, high and clear.**

Pause.

## **Practice**

Tell students you will read out a story a couple of times. Remind them to visualise the scene and to guess words from the context. They can ask for translations after the reading.

"I had 12 bottles of whisky and my wife told me to empty the contents down the sink. I said I would. I opened the first bottle and poured the content down the sink - but I drank one glass. I then opened the second bottle, drank one glass and poured the contents of the bottle down the sink. I opened the third bottle with some difficulty, poured out one glass, drank it and put the rest down the sink. I then opened the fourth sink which I poured down the glass and drank it. I opened the next glass drank one sink out of it and poured the contents down the glass. I opened the next glass poured the sink down the bottle and drank the contents. I poured the open, drank the rest and sank the glass bottle.

When I finished I put one hand on the wall to keep the house up and I counted the glasses, bottles and sinks. The total was twenty-two. I counted them again. This time there were eighty-two. As they all began to dance the paso doble I counted every one again, except one house and a sink which I drank."

Call students out of their relaxed state and go on to debrief.

(\* You induce relaxation through biofeedback: concentrating on what students can sense at that very moment. If there are extraneous sounds which appear to interrupt the relaxation incorporate them into your suggestions. The relaxation method was suggested by Davis & Rinvolucris in their book on dictation.)

## **Debrief**

Briefly translate any words students want to ask. Ask then if they have a clear picture of the events. Invite them to describe their pictures.

## **Completion**

This can be followed up by Reading the text out loud, Oral reproduction of the scenes, or Written work.