

Loop dictation

A loop dictation is a simple technique which gives variety to reading lessons by adding some listening. It's quick to prepare and requires no additional materials. It provides learners with intensive listening practice, developing their ability to recognise words and structures in rapid, natural speech.

How does it work?

- 1 Imagine you're about to do a reading from your coursebook, for example:

How to set yourself on fire

1 My stunt career started in 1961. There was no training in those days. I was a black belt in judo, and went down to teach an actor in a big film. That's how I got into it.

2 When you do a fire stunt, you put a special gel on your skin, and then you wear a fireproof suit under your clothes. Your clothes are set on fire and normally stay alight for about 15 seconds. Fire goes upwards so it's always up around your face and the back of your neck. If it starts to hurt, then you're in trouble.

3 It does get very hot, and you have to do it with two or three people ready around you, so if you have a problem you can fall down on your hands and knees and they will put you out using fire extinguishers, spraying you headfirst all the way down to your feet. Then they wrap a big wet towel around you because sometimes you're so hot that you can re-ignite. You're

in control and you know that if you've had enough, or if it gets too hot, you can just lie flat down and they will put the fire out. If you're going to do a longer fire-burn, you need some breathing apparatus, so you wear small bottles called 'breathers' inside your suit so you can last a bit longer. The air gets burnt around you during a fire stunt, using up the oxygen.

4 Over the years, I've done about nine or ten fire jobs. They're special, not an everyday occurrence in a stuntman's career. You might have to do one every couple of years. For my first fire job, I was very anxious – and very pleased when everything was all right. It was in a film called *The Last Valley*, where I was set on fire and thrown onto a bonfire – a full body burn. I had a very nasty accident while filming Michael Winner's *Death Wish 3* in 1985, when I was seriously injured due to a mistake by the crew.

It was a big fire job, jumping out of an exploding building, and I got badly burnt because I wasn't actually supposed to be on fire.

5 My family are always anxious and want to make sure I'm all right. I have to phone them before and after a job so they know I'm OK. They never try to talk me out of it – after all, I've been doing it for over 40 years. Anyway, I'm now a stunt co-ordinator, so I don't do as many stunts. It's a young man's job being a stuntman.



▲ Rocky Taylor has been a stuntman for more than 40 years, working on almost all of the James Bond films and, more recently, *The Da Vinci Code* and *Stormbreaker*.

English Unlimited Intermediate, Unit 12

You've decided to do a loop dictation with the first paragraph.

- 2 Make sure all your learners have their books closed.
- 3 Say the first paragraph aloud quickly and naturally while learners listen and try to write down exactly what you say.

Tip: Write any difficult proper nouns (e.g. places or people) on the board before doing the reading.

- 4 When you get to the end of the text, go back to the beginning and start again. Keep repeating the text in a continuous 'loop'.

Important: Don't be afraid to read the text at natural speed. This will give your learners valuable exposure to features of fluent, connected speech. A loop dictation should make learners concentrate hard and listen times before they're confident they have a perfect version of the text.

English Unlimited Teaching Tips

- 5 The first learner who thinks they have the correct text shouts 'Stop!' As soon as this happens, put learners into pairs or groups and ask them to compare and complete the texts they've written down.
- 6 Finally, for feedback, simply ask learners to open their books on the appropriate page and compare their texts with the original.

Option: now that learners are familiar with the first paragraph of the text, you could ask them to use this as a basis for prediction. Ask: 'What do you think the rest of the text will say? What questions do you have about the text?' Then the learners read the rest of the text to check their predictions or try to find answers to their questions.

When can I use it?

You can use a loop dictation with other kinds of text from your coursebook, such as:

- the last paragraph of a reading text (rather than the first)
- questions or statements for discussion
- instructions for a game or activity
- comprehension questions or true / false statements, e.g.

14.2

Fair play?

14.2 goal
tell someone about a news story

READING

- 1 Discuss the questions.
 - 1 Do you think fair play is important in sport? Why? Why not?
 - 2 Read the dictionary entry. How do you think genetic engineering could be used in sport?

genetic engineering
► *noun* changing the structure of the genes of a living thing in order to make it healthier or stronger or more useful to humans. *Scientists have used genetic engineering to create two sheep that are exactly the same.*

- 2 a Do you think these statements are true or false? Talk together.
 - 1 More and more drugs are being banned by sports authorities.
 - 2 Scientists believe genetic engineering may become an alternative way to improve athletes' performance.
 - 3 Professional athletes have never been permitted to use drugs.
 - 4 In the future, researchers may be able to correct weak genes to make people healthier.
 - 5 Genetic engineering is already a major problem in sport.

b Read the article to check.

Genetic engineering for athletes

1 Cyclist Alain Such has been suspended from the Ingotel cycling team for two years after a positive drugs test at the Institute of Drug Free Sport. "I am still in shock," said Didier Garcia, from Team Ingotel. "Alain joined our team last month and we had no idea that he was being investigated."

marathon after receiving an injection of strychnine (and some brandy) in the middle of the race. In fact, the first dose didn't revive him for long, so he was given another and, as a result, he collapsed soon after finishing. Another dose may well have killed him. Things are very different today. Drug tests and bans

genes in young people, and then money could be invested in children who have the most promising genes.

5 The fact that WADA (the World Anti-Doping Agency) is taking it seriously shows that genetic engineering in sport could become a major problem. However, there is another view in the genetic

English Unlimited Intermediate, Unit 14