

Exploiting listening scripts

Most coursebooks these days include listening scripts at the back of the book. Here are some ideas for exploiting this often under-used resource.

Finding the answers

Instead of going through answers to a listening task orally as a class, have learners read the script at the back of the book and check the answers for themselves. This is a useful technique for checking answers to more 'open' listening tasks, such as note-taking, where there are no set answers. It also is preferable to traditional oral feedback, which can sometimes be difficult for learners to follow. You can see an example of a task like this in exercise 2 below:

I'll have published ...

LISTENING



Eamonn from Ireland

- 1 3.33 Listen to Eamonn and Liliya talking about their lives.
 - 1 Who likes planning things? Whose approach to life is more spontaneous?
 - 2 Who mentions these topics – Eamonn, Liliya or both?
money work home children flying holidays writing
- 2 3.33 Eamonn and Liliya each mention three predictions or hopes. Listen again.
 - 1 What are they?
 - 2 What details do they give about each one?



Liliya from Russia

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A useful procedure to follow here is to ask learners to listen and make notes > they compare their notes in pairs or small groups > they read the script to check their notes, make corrections and add details.

Not only does this technique give learners the answers to the listening, it also helps them practise reading. As with any reading, learners should have a clear task and time limit. Here the task is obvious; and you can decide on an appropriate time limit taking into account the length of the script, the nature of the task and your learners' reading ability.

Jigsaw reading

This is a variation of the above, particularly suited to longer scripts which are divided into two or more parts. After listening, ask learners to read different parts of the script. For example, with the listening above, Learner A would read Eamonn's script and Learner B would read Liliya's:

EAMONN I tend to be quite spontaneous in terms of the decisions I make because I'm of a really emotional nature and so I usually react to circumstances, react to the way things are going. And I don't find it's very useful to plan everything because when the plans don't work

LILIYA I like to plan ahead because then I have a long time to look forward to things and also I can make sure everything's in place so things will go smoothly. They don't always turn out as I plan ... but that doesn't stop me planning! For instance, I'm a member

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Then learners get into pairs, Learner A + Learner B, and take turns to tell each other about what they've just read and check their notes from the listening. Encourage learners to ask each other questions about details they think they may have missed or are unsure of.

Listen and read

When learners have completed all the listening tasks in the coursebook and are happy with the answers, have them listen once more, this time following the script in the back of the book.

This can provide a satisfying way of rounding off a series of listening tasks. It helps raise learners' awareness of how the English words and expressions really sound in rapid connected speech.

Intensive listening

Give learners a handout of the listening script with certain expressions blanked out. Choose collocations, and expressions which you think would be particularly useful for your learners to learn. Take care not to choose expressions which are too close together. For example:

EAMONN I tend to be quite spontaneous in terms of the decisions I make because I'm of a really emotional nature and so I usually ¹_____, react to the way things are going. And I don't find it's very useful to plan everything because when the plans ²_____, you get really upset. However, I do have a few ideas about how my future might go. ³_____, I'm a writer, so hopefully I'll have published

Answers

1. react to circumstances
2. don't work out
3. For one thing

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Learners listen to the recording and try to fill in the blanks. Be ready to pause the recording from time to time to allow learners time to write the expressions. Give learners the chance to listen more than once if they wish. Finally, learners compare their answers in pairs or small groups before going through the answers as a class.

This type of activity is still focused on listening, but the emphasis has switched from overall comprehension of meaning to practice in the essential skill of **decoding**: simply hearing words and expressions in the stream of fluent connected speech.

You can make this activity less challenging by breaking up the underlines (_____) to show how many words should go in each gap (_____ = three words).

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Lead-in to language focus

This is a variation on the activity above, but the aim is different. The aim here is to create a 'bridge' into the next part of the lesson, where the coursebook focuses on some language from the text.

For example, in *English Unlimited Upper Intermediate*, the listening with Eamonn and Liliya is followed by a grammar focus on future progressive and future perfect. Give learners a handout of the listening script with examples of the grammar blanked out:

might go. For one thing, I'm a writer, so hopefully ¹ _____ another novel by the end of next year – ideally a bestseller. And, erm, yeah, let me see ... erm, I think in about ten years' time, my wife and I ² _____ in Portugal, maybe in the Algarve. And by that time, ³ _____ enough money to buy a place with a sea view. It's something I've always wanted. And, erm, I guess that's all. I'm fairly sure about those three things but as I said, I usually act on the spur of the moment.

Answers

1. I'll have published
2. will probably be living
3. I'll have saved up

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Learners listen to the recording and try to fill in the blanks, then compare their answers in pairs or small groups before going through the answers as a class. They're now ready to go back to the coursebook and explore the meaning and form of the grammar.