

Rationale

For many students, listening is the one skill area that causes the most concern. Students often report that they can read quite well, but struggle when processing spoken language. Students are often unaware of the fact that these problems have two distinct causes:

- 1 they may be listening to language that's simply beyond their current level. As such, they'd fail to understand it even if it was written down.
- 2 they know the language, and would understand it if they saw it written down, but fail to hear it properly in connected speech with its elision, weak forms, linking between words and so on.

Activity

Start by telling the class you're going to be talking about listening – in English. Ask students what they listen to in English outside of class – and why they choose to listen to these things. You could also tell students what **you** listen to in English – what kind of thing, why, how often, etc. Explain the role that listening has played in your own language learning. Have your listening habits changed as your level gets better? Why?

Next, tell the class they're going to read a short text on listening skills. Give out the worksheet. Let students read through the short text in A and ask about anything they're not sure of. Explain any new vocabulary (and maybe give extra examples on the board). Then put students into groups of three or four and give them a few minutes to discuss how true they think the text is – and to share examples from their own experience. As students chat, monitor and get a sense of what students already believe about listening – and what their experiences are. Once the conversation has peaked, stop the class and round up. First ask how true they felt it was, whether there was anything they disagreed with – and why.

Next, tell students to read the ideas in Exercise B and tell them to discuss how they feel about each one. After five to ten minutes, stop the discussion and round up. Ask first which idea students felt was the best / worst. You could do this by asking for a whole class vote – or by asking one or two different groups to briefly explain their ideas.

Then go through each sentence, asking what students think of each idea, and adding your own comments. The accompanying Suggested Answers sheet has some comments on these ideas, and you can also hand out or discuss the Student Advice sheet.