

Outcomes

Better Listening Outcomes

Learner Training 4 Suggested Answers

1 Learn lists of as many new words as you can

Learning more vocabulary will obviously help you hear better. The students with the best listening ‘skills’ are usually the ones who know the most language! However, you need to do more than learn lists of single words. You need to know how the word is said both on its own and with other words it’s often used with, so making a note of pronunciation is helpful. It’s also important to learn some common collocations and some typical examples of how the words are used, as this will help you hear the word in action.

2 Read – and listen to what you’re reading at the same time

This works particularly well with graded readers pitched at the same level – or maybe slightly higher – than the student’s. It can also work with the audioscripts in the back of the coursebook, if students have the audio files as well! It’s always best to read first, check you understand everything – looking up / asking about new language where necessary – and then read again whilst listening. Students could add a third stage where they read aloud while playing the audio. They can see if they read at the same speed as the audio, or use the audio as a pronunciation prompt. They can listen to individual sentences and try to copy them.

3 Do pronunciation exercises

This is always a good idea, especially if the exercises are focused on aspects of connected speech rather than discrete individual sounds. Doing pronunciation won’t necessarily help you speak better – but it may well help you hear better, as you’ll get more used to the way spoken language works: the weak forms, the linking, the elision, etc.

4 Listen to the radio / watch TV in English

Unless you’re already an advanced learner, this may not be the best idea. Most radio and TV shows will contain a huge amount of new vocabulary, much of which may not be that useful to you yet, and which will make listening much harder. You’d probably be better off listening to podcasts designed for learners, or audio CDs that accompany graded readers. If you really do want to watch TV or films in English, try to watch things with subtitles.