Can you repeat that?



EAE Learning objectives for this lesson

Learn techniques to improve your listening comprehension and expressions for telephone conversations.

Activity One: Discussion questions:

1/ Do you understand well when you speak in English on the phone?

2/ What techniques do you use in this situation?

3/ Are you a good listener in general?



Activity Two: Listen to the noises and identify them…

Activity Three - What does that sound like?
Make a sound and everyone else has to guess what it is.

Activity Four - **Active and Passive Listening - Read and discuss.**

Have you ever noticed that if you are listening out for something because it annoys you, then you hear it even more. For example, if the road is noisy near your house, or it irritates you to hear people chewing, or if you are trying to concentrate and someone is clicking on their phone… **(What noises annoy you?).** Well, it's the same with listening comprehension, if you listen out for something, or listen actively then you will hear it, and adversely, if you are trying to listen to everything all at once, you might not hear anything that makes any sense…

So, listen out for key words and try not to get stuck on the words you don't understand. Listen for the words which are spoken more slowly or louder (English is a stress timed language so this is important). Try to listen for information and general meaning rather than for each individual word. Try not to translate into French, think about the meaning instead.

There are contradictory arguments about active and passive listening techniques in language learning. Some methods encourage only passive listening. Some people even say that if you listen to a language in your sleep you will learn it. Other methods encourage active analysis of audio, writing down each word you don't know, and learning it, repeating something again and again until you understand each word.

Probably the best idea is to do a little of both. When you are listening to English try to understand the general meaning but also try to write down new words and learn them.

What do you all think about this and what methods do you use to improve your listening comprehension?

Activity Five - **A note about understanding:** *(Read together).*



When you are in an English speaking country or with native speakers who are talking at normal speed, there are no subtitles, you can't press pause and you have not time to stop and use the dictionary. Furthermore, people will not choose their words especially so that you can understand. So, you will need to find a way to understand the general meaning of what is being said even if you don't understand every word. This might entail changing your way of thinking and will probably mean changing your expectations. Instead of expecting to understand everything and then saying you understand nothing, expect to understand generally and feel good when you do! So, how can you do this?

First of all you need to listen for the key words and important words, the ones that are pronounced more clearly, or spoken more slowly. Then, you should use the context and trust your judgement about what the context tells you. You should also continue to listen attentively, actively, even when there is something that you didn't hear or didn't understand. Forget it and move on, or you will get lost.

The best way to perfect your listening comprehension skills is to get a lot of exposure to the language so that you learn to distinguish the different sounds even when there is background noise or different accents. This is something we work on in the lessons, but this is not enough. You need regular practice and so watching films or TV shows in English is really the best way to do this.

See this article for some ideas. **http://www.easyaccessenglish.com/blog/2014/10/09/conseils-apprendre-anglais-films-series-television/**

Activity Six - When all else fails!



Of course there's no problem telling someone that you didn't understand, but sometimes it gets a little repetitive if you have to say it several times, so here are some different expressions you can use:

Polite expressions when you don't understand

- ☑ *Would you mind saying that last part again*
- ☑ *Would it be possible to repeat that please*
- ☑ *Please could you say that again, I'm afraid I didn't catch everything*
- ☑ *May I ask you to speak a little more slowly*
- ☑ Please could you say that again?
- ☑ I'm sorry I didn't quite catch that.
- ☑ Could you repeat that please I didn't understand.
- ☑ Would you mind speaking more slowly as I didn't understand everything.
- ☑ I'm not sure if I understood that. Could you please repeat that?

Activity Seven - Practice dialogues.

Act out both of the following telephone conversations with your partner - use the expressions from activity six.

A/ You call a supplier as there is a problem with your printer. They say something really complicated and you have to ask for them to slow down.

B/ You answer the phone to someone who is asking for information. They speak very fast and you need to ask for clarification in order to understand what they really want.

Activity Eight - Listening Comprehension test.
Listen to your teacher. Then answer the questions. Then see how much you understood. Auto-evaluate your level of comprehension.

Activity Nine Read the information with your partner and summarise it:

'GONNA WANNA WHATCHA' *Read the information about intonation and about 'contractions' in English.*

Have you ever wondered where the words 'gonna' or 'wanna' come from? You may realise that they are the contractions of going + to, and want + to but do you know why there we use such contractions in spoken English? Let's find out more.

We use contractions very frequently when we speak (not so much when we write). Sometimes they have more than one meaning, for example 'I'd' can mean 'I had', or, 'I would'.

Some can be difficult for French people to pronounce, like 'It'll', (it will), or aren't, (are not), 'oughtn't', (ought not) or mightn't, (might not).

Other contractions, such as 'gonna' and 'wanna' are in fact informal words which represent the spoken language but which we never, ever use in writing and are 'officially' incorrect English. It's important to recognise and understand these shortened words because this is actually the way we speak English. When someone says 'What are you going to do?' it sounds like 'Whatcha gonna do?'. When we say 'Do you want a cup of tea' it sounds like 'D'you wanna cup of tea?'.

So why do we use all of these contractions? Well, it's because English is a stress based language and we stress the important words in each sentence and 'swallow' or say quickly the less important. There is a certain regular rhythm when we speak caused by the stress pattern, so we have to say some words more quickly than others. This is why we 'swallow' some words. This could also be why you feel you don't understand 'everything'. In fact you don't have to understand 'everything', just the key words. Auxiliary verbs, conjunctions, pronouns and propositions are all spoken quickly and sometimes are shortened so that you hardly hear them at all. They are non-stressed words (function words). The **content words** of the sentence, the important words which are the key to understanding meaning,

Activity Ten - **I went to market** - Test your listening skills with this game.



