
UNIT 5 TEACHING LISTENING - I

Structure

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Objectives
- 5.3 Different Kinds of Listening Material/Passages
 - 5.3.1 Using Authentic Materials
 - 5.3.2 Using Recorded Listening Materials
 - 5.3.3 Using Live Listening Materials
- 5.4 The Listening Task/Activity
 - 5.4.1 Extensive Listening
 - 5.4.2 Intensive Listening
- 5.5 The Three Phases of a Listening Class
 - 5.5.1 The Pre-listening Phase
 - 5.5.2 The While-listening Phase
 - 5.5.3 The Post-listening Phase
- 5.6 Sample Listening Lesson
 - 5.6.1 The Pre-listening Activity
 - 5.6.2 The While-listening Activity
 - 5.6.3 The Post-listening Activity
 - 5.6.4 Comments on the Lesson
- 5.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.8 Key Words
- 5.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 5.10 Suggested Readings

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of teaching listening comprehension is to help learners of English develop skills to cope with listening to speech in real life. Listening is an important though difficult skill which is often overlooked in the formal teaching of English as a second language. It needs to be developed consciously and systematically. Learners of English at the secondary stage have to comprehend speech in a variety of situations, such as the following:

- listening to a talk or lecture
- participating in a meeting, seminar, debate or discussion
- participating in a conversation
- listening to announcements at school and at public places outside school
- taking part in a lesson
- participating in a telephone conversation
- listening to recorded/broadcast music, news, sports commentaries, weather forecasts, etc.
- watching a film, play or TV programme
- being interviewed
- being tested orally in a subject of study.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

This unit will enable you to :

- identify the various situations where the learner needs to practise and develop listening skills;

- identify and differentiate between the three kinds of listening materials for teaching listening comprehension;
- familiarise yourself with a sample listening lesson;
- understand the chief features of an effective listening lesson.

5.3 DIFFERENT KINDS OF LISTENING MATERIAL/ PASSAGES

There are three main kinds of listening materials that you can use for the listening lesson. They are:

- authentic listening materials
- recorded listening materials
- live listening materials

Each of the above has its own advantages and disadvantages. Let us examine and find out.

5.3.1 Using Authentic Materials

Authentic materials consist of speech recorded in real situations and thus provide learners with real-life listening tasks. The language they hear is real and not rehearsed or artificial.

But learners may find the language difficult to understand. It may be too fast, rambling, repetitive or unclear. It cannot be readily graded and thus may be unsuitable to the learner's level.

One of the ways to overcome this problem is to give the learners notes and undertake some pre-listening task.

Examples of authentic materials can be recordings of announcements in the examination hall, on the school sports field, e.g., a sports commentary, radio recordings, announcements made at the railway station, bus stop and at the airports.

Real life dialogues and discussion can also be used authentic materials.

5.3.2 Using Recorded Listening Materials

Recorded materials are listening inputs which have been specially scripted for teaching purposes. For example, the Class IX CBSE Course A English Textbook *Interact* has recordings of listening inputs which can be used by the teacher to help develop listening skills in the learner. In addition, many learning material developed for second language learners have accompanying audio cassettes and worksheets. Besides this, the teacher can develop her/his own listening materials in tape.

In using recorded materials there are the following advantages:

1. Learners can get exposure to a variety of voice and a range of accents making it more realistic.
2. It gives them a chance to hear several people participating in discussions or conversations.
3. The teacher or student can stop the tape, repeat and replay the cassette as often (s)he likes.
4. It also gives the learners the option to practise and develop listening skills on their own.

As visual clues are absent in recorded material, it forces the learner to concentrate on tone of voice, type of vocabulary and thus the focus becomes the actual speech/conversation. This gives intensive aural practice to the learner.

5.3.3 Using Live Listening Materials

One of the major advantages of using live listening materials is that it is much easier to control the level of difficulty and formality since here, the teacher herself may be speaking the piece. The teacher can convey the materials meant for listening practice in her own words and can simplify or slow down the listening text to suit her students' level. She can make her own speech natural by using skeletal notes and not a fully scripted listening passage. Some teachers find this difficult to do. They feel over anxious and are unsure about their language competence. But they must remember that they are not supposed to provide a perfect model of the language to their students. In a listening lesson, the principal aim is to strengthen the ability of the learner to understand the spoken message and not to model one's speech on the teacher.

Check Your Progress

- Notes :
- a) Write your answers in the space given below.
 - b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1. Why should we teach listening comprehension in the middle school?

.....
.....
.....
.....

2. List the names of three kinds of listening materials that can be used by a teacher. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of the three kinds of listening materials?

.....
.....
.....

Name	Advantages	Disadvantages
a)		
b)		
c)		

5.4 THE LISTENING TASK/ACTIVITY

The listening task can be of two kinds — extensive and intensive. Let us examine these two kinds of tasks and find out their differences.

5.4.1 Extensive Listening

During extensive listening the learner listens to an interesting story, radio programme or anecdote. The listening material may be lengthy. The learner listens for pleasure and is not expected to complete a worksheet or a task. Extensive listening may take place inside or outside the school.

5.4.2 Intensive Listening

During intensive listening, the learner listens very carefully. For example, while listening to directions the listener listens with full concentration. Such listening material is short and has a special task or worksheet designed on it. There is some amount of challenge so that the learner feels motivated to complete the task. It is through the completion of this task that the learner gets practice in specific listening skills. The intensive listening practice takes place

in class and should be so designed that it is practical, easy to administer, and can be completed within the time limit of a lesson.

The listening tasks are effective if the learners have a **well designed, interesting and carefully graded activity** to complete. Some of these tasks can be to express agreement or disagreement, take notes, make a picture or diagram according to instructions or answer questions.

The task which is set on a worksheet prepares the learner for the kind of information to expect and how to react to it. It helps in contextualising and aids comprehension. Very often the listening task is based on filling in diagrams, grids, maps and tables. It is important to bear in mind that these grids etc. are simple and do not become overelaborate.

The listening material should not be densely packed and go beyond the understanding of the learner. The learner must be able to complete it within a given time. Very lengthy intensive listening practice can de-motivate and frustrate the learner. The task that the learner is expected to do should be simple like making short, intermittent responses by marking, drawing, ticking off or writing one or more words. The task should not require the learner to write or read too much information.

Most learners enjoy working on listening tasks as they are responding actively, provided the listening task is based on interesting themes and the exercise is carefully designed and executed. By the middle school stage, the learners have a wider range of topics and interests and thus the teacher can choose from a variety of listening tasks.

5.5 THE THREE PHASES OF A LISTENING CLASS

There are three phases of a listening class. But a very important phase of the lesson is the preparation that goes before it.

The teacher has to plan a great deal on the physical aspects of the listening class. The size of the class, the arrangement of the furniture, the availability and quality of cassettes and recorder have to be taken care of in advance. The listening material may be excellent, the worksheets well-graded and contextualised but if the physical arrangements have not been planned for in advance, the listening lesson may end in failure.

Let us discuss the three stages of listening with the help of an example.

Read the listening task given below.

5.5.1 The Pre-listening Phase

Asking for directions

Introduction

Today we are going to find out how to ask for directions - and how to follow them. Later on you will have to give directions too. When you go to a new place you have to ask for directions.

Objectives

At the end of the lesson, you will be able to:

- ask for directions,
- follow directions, and
- give directions clearly

At times people are helpful. Sometimes you may ask a person who cannot guide you. Lets see what happens when Muthu reaches Mithapur Railway Station. He has come to play a cricket match and the teams are staying at the Youth Hostel B-10. on Senapati Marg.

Before listening to the tape look at the map given in the worksheet and study it carefully. See where Muthu has to go.

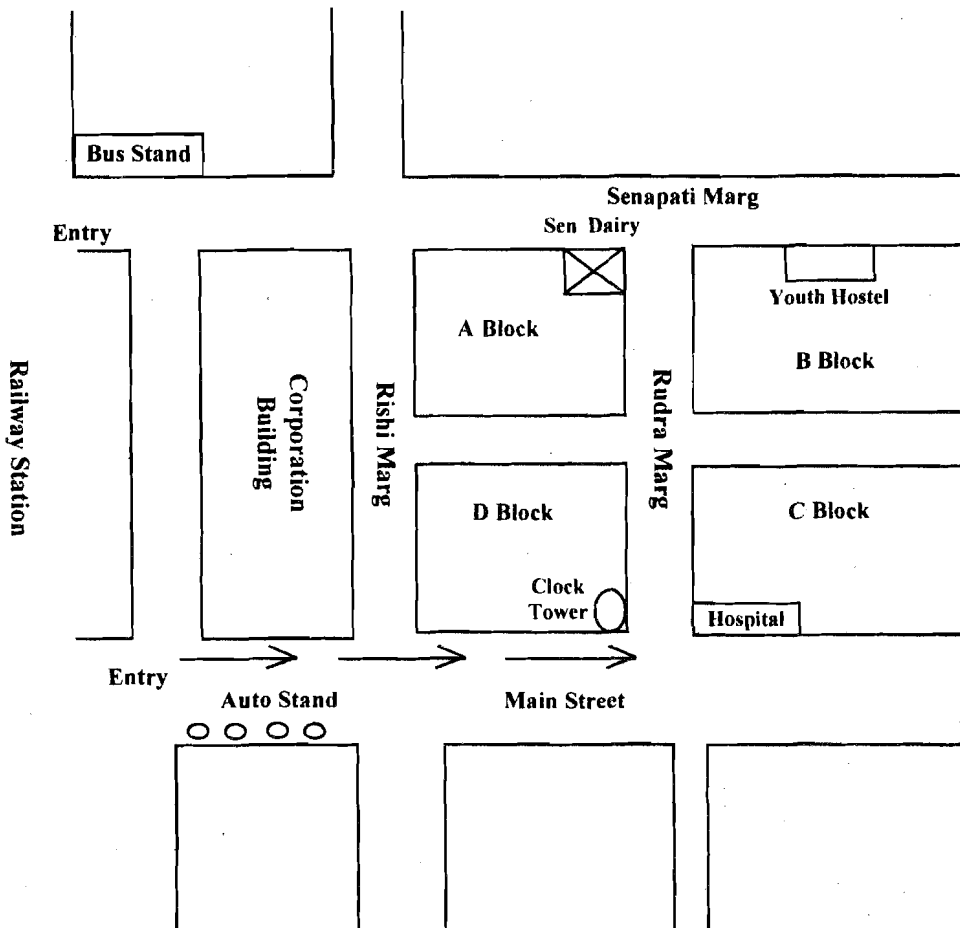
Text

Muthu : Excuse me - can you tell me where the Youth Hostel is?
 Stranger : I'm sorry I don't know - I'm also new here. Why don't you go and ask the policeman near the gate?
 Muthu : Thank you. That's a good idea. (Walks up to the policeman) Excuse me. Can you tell me where the Youth Hostel is?
 Policeman : Which Youth Hostel?
 Muthu : The one on Senapati Marg.
 Policeman : That's quite close. Are you going to walk?
 Muthu : No, I'll have to take an authorickshaw as I have a lot of luggage.
 Policeman : The autostand is just outside the gate. Take the street exactly opposite. That's Main Street. Don't take the first turning left. Go on till you reach the Clock Tower at the corner. Then turn left. After you turn left, take the second turning right. That's Senapati Marg. The Youth Hostel is the tenth house on that road. It has a large blue and white sign outside.
 Muthu: Thank you so much. You have been most helpful.
 Now answer the question of the worksheet. Switch of the tape now.

WORKSHEET

Asking for Directions

1. As you listen to the tape mark the route that Muthu took.



Put a tick (✓) against the correct answer.

2. Muthu has come to Mithapur to
- A. visit his friends.
 - B. play a cricket match.
 - C. for an interview.
3. Muthu asks the policeman for directions because
- A. he is standing near the gate.
 - B. policemen are always helpful.
 - C. he lives in Mithapur, so he should know where the youth hostel is.
4. The policeman asks Muthu "which Youth Hostel". This shows that
- A. there is more than one Youth Hostel in Mithapur.
 - B. he does not know where it is.
 - C. he does not want to help.
5. Muthu should recognise the Youth Hostel easily because
- A. it is on Senapati Marg.
 - B. he has been there before.
 - C. it has a big sign outside.
6. Muthu decides to take autorickshaw because he
- A. is tired.
 - B. does not know the way.
 - C. has a lot of luggage.
7. Muthu hurts his hand while playing cricket. He asks the manager the way to the hospital. As the manager of the Youth Hostel, give Muthu directions to go from the Hostel to the Hospital.

Start like this:

When you get out of the Hostel turn left. _____

Follow up Activity

Practice saying some of these sentences.

1. Excuse me! Can you tell me where the Youth Hostel is? (Where the library is?/Where the office is?/ Where the Accounts Department is?)
1. For the correct way to speak, listen to the tape again.
2. That's very close/near/far.
3. I am sorry I don't know.

(Source : *English Audio Lessons Work Book*, Secondary Level, National Open School, New Delhi.)

In this phase the teacher sets up the activity which gives the learner a purpose for listening. A quick look at the listening exercise helps the learner to understand the context and what (s)he has to listen for. The pre-listening activity is a very short phase. At times the learner may be asked to predict what they will hear. For example, for the worksheet given above the students may be asked a few preliminary questions, e.g., what would they do if they go to a new place and have to find out a particular place; if they know how to use a road map to

find a place, etc. The students can also be asked to familiarise themselves with the road map as given in the worksheet and to read through the questions.

5.5.2 The While-listening Phase

During this phase the learner completes the task based on the listening material. The diagram/map/table helps the student as it gives an idea about the listening passage. It also gives the learners the necessary support as it gives them clues whether the answer is to be given in one word or phrase form and not full sentences. It helps them to concentrate on the listening activity rather than worry about grammar or reading. The learners should be encouraged to gather as much information as they can from the passage while-listening. If they fill in the information later, it would turn into a memory task and not a listening one. The focus of the task is on the message of the listening text.

The while-listening tasks can be graded carefully by the teacher. Gradually, the learners can be asked to jot down more detailed information.

For example, in the worksheet given above, the learners should complete questions 1-6 while they listen to the text, you, as the teacher, must play the listening text two times to allow the students to complete the while-listening tasks.

5.5.3 The Post-listening Phase

This activity occurs after the learners have completed their listening activity. It is in this phase, that the answers to the listening tasks are discussed. If many students get an item wrong, the relevant portion on the tape can be played back once more and the cause of confusion discussed.

In addition the information or completed chart which has been filled can be used for integrating with other skills. For example the learners can be asked to use the completed map to give directions to another student for reaching a particular place (see of the worksheet given above). Thus speaking skills can be integrated with listening. Similarly writing skills may be integrated by asking learners to write an account of their trip, for the school magazine.

Check Your Progress

- Notes :
- a) Write your answers in the space given below.
 - b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

3. Why is it very important to set a task for the listening activity?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. What are some of the physical features of the listening class that a teacher must prepare for in advance?

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. What are some of the features of a good listening task?

.....

.....

.....

6. What are the three stages of the listening lesson? What learner activity takes place in each of them?

Stage in Listening

Learner Activity

a)

b)

c)

7. How can you integrate listening with other skills?

.....
.....
.....

5.6 SAMPLE LISTENING LESSON

In this section we discuss a listening lesson with the help of a tape script and worksheets designed for CBSE Course A Class IX students.

This particular lesson is about kidnapping where details about a persons looks are very crucial. As a pre-listening task, therefore, the students are taken through a task where they try to describe people by looking at some pictures given. This equips them with some necessary adjectives and helps them to discriminate the meanings of certain words.

Let us read the sample listening task very carefully.

5.6.1 The Pre-listening Activity

The Kidnapping of Preeti Duggal

1. We notice lots of details about people and their appearance. But when we need to describe them accurately and vividly (as in a kidnapping), it becomes more difficult.

Look carefully at these pictures. Draw a table like the one below, and fill in appropriate words from the box below it. Then add other words that you think describe the four people.



	A	B	C	D
Face				
Hair				
Dress				
Build				

angular	close-cropped	well-tailored	casual	stocky
elegant	unshaven	ill-fitting	formal	lanky
bearded	sloppy	medium	petite	hefty
balding	slim	plaited	thick	round
open	friendly	sharp-featured	wavy	long
receding	overweight			

2. When we meet people, we notice their face more than anything else. The box below contains words which describe the features of a face. List them under the appropriate headings, then add more words of your own.

twinkling	shifty	neat	discoloured	short
pear-shaped	large	wavy	close-cropped	Roman
protruding	gapped	upturned	thick	pointed
fair	thin	pale	swarthy	staring
long	round	untidy	tidy	close-set
broken	oval	square		

Shape of face	Complexion	Eyes	Hair	Nose	Lips	Teeth

DO THIS EXERCISE IN YOUR NOTE-BOOK

3. Pairwork, then class review, when you complete the table on the blackboard.

	A	B	C	D
face	unshaven round	angular friendly	bearded open	sharp-featured
hair	balding	thick	wavy plaited long	close-cropped receding
dress	sloppy casual	elegant	ill-fitting	formal well-tailored
build	stocky overweight hefty	slim petite	lanky	medium

Encourage students to add further words.

4. Pairwork, then class review, when you complete the table on the board.

Shape of face	Complexion	Eyes	Hair	Nose	Lips	Teeth
Peer shaped	pale	twinkling	wavy	protruding	thin	gapped
round	swarthy	shifty	untidy	upturned	thick	dis-
oval	fair	large	close	Roman		cloured
square	staring	cropped	pointed,			broken
	close-set	tidy	neat			
		short				
		long				

Encourage students to add further words.

5.6.2 The While-listening Activity

You are now going to listen to an interview between the Police Inspector-in-charge of the case, and Preeti Duggal, in which the Inspector is asking Preeti for a description of one of the kidnappers. As you listen, note down important words giving information about kidnapper in your note book under these headings:

Preeti Duggal's Kidnapper

Build -
 Height -
 Clothes -
 Shape of face -
 Complexion -
 Eyes -
 Hair -
 Nose -
 Lips -
 Teeth -
 Special features -

Tape script

Inspector : Hello Preeti, I'm Inspector Tukaram. I'm in charge of your case. The kidnapping attempt must have been a terrible experience for you.

Preeti : Oh.. yes ... a real nightmare. People like that should be put behind bars for a long, long time.

Inspector : I agree with you. And if you'll help me, we'll catch them and do just that. I believe there were two men, but you only saw one of them. Is that right?

Preeti : Yes, I only saw the one who tried to grab me. The other man was in the car.

Inspector : Now, then, if you're feeling better, perhaps you can help me build up a description of the man who tried to grab you. Let's start with his general size. How tall would you say he was?

Preeti : About as tall as you. No, shorter - about 68 cms.

Inspector : Shall we say 2.10m - 2.20m, then? And what sort of build was he? What was the general shape of his body?

Preeti : He certainly wasn't thin. I would call him stocky, yes stocky. And he had a fat stomach, too.

Inspector : Good, very good. Now Preeti, what about his clothes? What was he wearing? Can you remember?

Preeti : I think ... yes, I remember. He was wearing a striped shirt....

Inspector : A T-shirt?

Preeti : No, not a T-shirt - it had a collar. It was blue and white striped.

- Inspector : Do you remember the colour of his trousers?
- Preeti : Not really. I just know they were dark - probably black or navy blue.
- Inspector : Now, his face, Preeti. I want you to concentrate really hard. Tell me about his hair.
- Preeti : Straight, and getting thin at the sides. Above his eyes he had thick bushy eyebrows, too.
- Inspector : That's very helpful, Preeti. What about the general shape of his face?
- Preeti : Round, I would say, and he had dark, staring eyes.
- Inspector : Glasses? Did he wear spectacles?
- Preeti : Yes, with a plastic frame, Oh .. and they kept slipping down his nose - He had a sharp, pointed nose. It was bent a bit to oneside - his nose, I mean.
- Inspector : What else can you remember about him, Preeti? What about his teeth and lips, for example?
- Preeti : All I can remember about his teeth is that he had one missing, one of his upper teeth - on his right, I think .. yes, on the right. Oh yes, and he had a scar on his upper lip, where the tooth was missing. And his face was sort of bumpy, especially around his eyes.
- Inspector : Was he clean-shaven?
- Preeti : Oh, I see. He didn't have a beard, but he did have a moustache.
- Inspector : Is there anything else you can remember about him, that will help us catch him?
- Preeti : No, I don't think so.. Yes, there was one thing. He had a mark of some sort on his right arm - a tattoo, I think you call it. The tattoo was in the shape of a snake. That's all I can remember.
- Inspector : Thank you very much, Preeti. You've been very helpful. With such a good description, I'm sure we'll catch him.

In the post-listening activity discuss the answers of the while-listening activity as given below.

5.6.3 The Post-listening Activity

Answers

- Build : stocky, fat stomach
- Height : 2.10 - 2.20m
- Clothes : blue and white striped shirt, with collar, black or navy blue trousers
- Shape of face : round
- Complexion : bumpy, especially round eyes; clean-shaven
- Eyes : dark and staring; thick, bushy eyebrows; spectacles, with plastic frame
- Hair : straight, thinning at sides
- Nose : sharp and pointed; bent to one side
- Lips : scar on upper lip
- Teeth : one missing (upper right)
- Special features : tattoo on right arm, in shape of snake

After discussing these answers we can take up some other activities which requires integration of skills like the one given below.

Work in pairs. One of you (A) is Manav Sharma, a student from another school, who witnessed the attempted kidnapping of Preeti Duggal. The other (B) is Police Inspector Tukaram. Inspector Tukaram has to interview Manav Sharma to find out about the kidnapping but Manav Sharma only saw the second kidnapper — the one in the car.

Manav Sharma (student A) — You think you can describe the second kidnapper. Choose one of the faces below. Do not tell student B (Inspector Tukaram) which one you have chosen. Then answer Inspector Tukaram's questions.

Inspector Tukaram (student B) — Some useful expressions for you:

- Can you describe his ...?
- How old was he?
- What kind of a did he have?
- What about his?
- Did he have a?
- What kind of a?
- What other special struck you?

When you have both finished the interview, Inspector Tukaram should look at the pictures and try to work out which is the second kidnapper. When both of you agree, decide which features were most important in identifying the man.



Source : *Interact*, English Course A, Class IX, Features Book, CBSE.

5.6.4 Comments on the Lesson

The listening material is recorded. It provides a suitable and realistic range of voices and accents. It is not a reading text spoken aloud but a sample of heard speech. The information is not densely structured. There are deliberate insertions of redundancies, repetitions, clarifications and pauses woven into the speech so that learners get adequate time to do the listening task. The listening passage is motivating, relevant and interesting to the learner's situation and needs.

The task that the learner is required to do simple enough to be grasped at a glance. Writing is kept to a minimum but at the same time the task becomes challenging as the learner has to keep track of names, directions and places.

5.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have looked at the different aspects of listening comprehension. This will help us, as teachers, to impart the necessary listening skills to our learners. We can use recorded listening materials or live listening materials in our teaching practice. We can then decide whether the listening task we set up for our learners is intensive or extensive. Whatever our decision, we need to guide our students through the listening activity in a phased manner. First the student has to be prepared for the exercise — this is termed the pre-listening phase, the second step is the while-listening phase in which the learner completes the task set up as part of the listening activity. The final post-listening phase helps consolidate the learner's comprehension.

5.8 KEY WORDS

extensive listening	:	listening for pleasure, no set task.
intensive listening	:	listening with concentration for specific information needed for a task.
authentic listening	:	listening recordings of natural conversations.
recorded listening	:	listening recording of rehearsed, semi-scripted or scripted speech.
live listening	:	listening speech which is spontaneous/semi-scripted and often read out by the teacher herself.
pre-listening	:	the stage in a listening session when the listening task is introduced.
while-listening	:	the stage in a listening session when the learner attempts the listening task.
post-listening	:	the stage in a listening session when the learner completes the task; clarifies and revises the listening task or does other activities which emerge from the listening task.

5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. We need to teach listening comprehension in the middle school because our learners need to develop their listening skills to become competent users of the language.

2.	Advantages	Disadvantages
a) Authentic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● real life listening. ● challenging for advanced learners. ● it is not artificial English. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● cannot be graded. ● too difficult for certain level - perhaps middle school. ● speech can be too rambling.
b) Recorded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● learner can stop, replay it many times. ● learner can use it independently. ● more than one voice, accent. ● learner's concentration on listening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● technical problems. ● quality of cassette recorder. ● physical problem of setting up.

c) **Live**

- teacher can grade according to learner's level.
- teacher can slow down or accelerate pace.
- the heard speech is spontaneous and natural.
- it is closer to real life.
- learners can see the person they are listening to (visual clues are helpful).
- cannot be repeated.
- some teachers may be unduly concerned about the quality of their speech.

3. The task prepares the learner for the listening material. It aids comprehension and gives the learner useful clues and support in completing the task. It helps in contextualising the material and facilitates comprehension.
4. The teacher must prepare in advance for the physical aspects of the lesson. Check the quality of audio cassette, recorder, size of room. Pre-set the audio cassette and arrange the students in such a way the audio cassette is audible to all.
5. The listening material should be interesting, graded, contextualised and not densely structured.

The listening activity should be well-planned and carefully staged.

6. **Stages of Listening**

Learner Activity

Pre-listening
the listening task.

Prepares the learner to achieve the most from

While-listening
information and message.

Challenges and guides learners to handle the

Post-listening
on language of passage.

Feedback given by peer/teacher. Follow-up work

7. Study the activity closely and relate it to an activity which focusses on speaking, reading or writing. The activity should stem from the listening activity and seem a natural corollary to it.

5.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

Anderson, A. and Lynch, T. (1988) : *Listening*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Rixon, S. (1986) : *Developing Listening Skills*, Essential Language Teaching Series, Macmillan.

Ur, P. (1984) : *Teaching Listening Comprehension*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.