

## Tips for Improving Your Listening Skills

Conversation is harder when you have trouble understanding the other person. Films, TV etc, all require good listening skills. And then there is IELTS, when you only get one chance.

So you should do what you can to improve.

The same as with speaking, etc, don't expect to achieve great listening skills if you don't practise.

Some of the things included in my previous posts will help you with listening too, so I won't go into detail, but you could also try:

- Language Exchange
- Role play films

### 1 - Podcasts

There are loads of English language podcasts available, too many in fact. The best resources I would say are those at the BBC, their World Service web pages, click on Learning English.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish>

Some of them are quite advanced, but the Words in the News series is excellent, and comes with a transcript and an explanation of the new words.

There is also Six Minute English.

These two options are mainly for students of Upper-Intermediate and above.

If you are lower level, google English podcasts (at your level) and see what you find.

### 2 - TV, films, radio

No explanation required. But perhaps put the English subtitles on too. This reduces the attention you pay to the audio a bit, but it still helps you understand what you are hearing.

If you don't understand everything, it's fine, you will get better each time.

And if you know the film very well, you often know what they are saying anyway.

Please remember, the subtitles are not always exactly the same as the spoken language.

### 3 - Make notes

When you listen, make some notes about what you hear.

Then listen again, and you can do one of two things:

- Check to see that your notes are correct, and change anything you got wrong
- Add more information

There is no need to study your notes afterwards, not for listening practice.

### 4 - Watch sports

OK, if you don't like sports then don't do this, it will bore and frustrate you. But if you are a big football fan, watch matches with the commentary in English. Yes, it's hard... they speak very quickly and use a lot of terms you may not know, but a lot of the language is quite simple, you know, "ooh, that was a great goal from Diego Costa", etc Смайлик «smile»

I give this tip because I watched a lot of football on TV in Italy and I believe it improved my listening skills more than anything else.

But I repeat, you should be interested in what you are listening to.

#### 5 - Listen with a friend

Listen to English with a friend and then afterwards, talk about what you heard. Maybe you can turn it into a mini-competition, see which one of you remembers most about it. Correct each other if there are mistakes.

Another way you can do this is to ask each other questions about it afterwards, like a quiz.

Making it competitive can motivate you to listen more closely.

#### 6 - Pause the recording

Listen to something and pause it. Then try to guess what they are going to say next. It doesn't matter if you are wrong, but if you set yourself challenges, you will listen better.

Of course, if you are VERY wrong, for example they are talking about cats and you predict they are going to say something about holidays next, maybe the recording is too difficult Смайлик «smile»

#### 7 - Listen and read at the same time

This is possible with many podcasts, especially those on BBC Learning English.

It helps you focus, but I would advise listening without the script afterwards too.

#### 8 - Listen and note new words

This is a good way to improve your vocabulary too. Listen to something and write every word that you hear, that you don't understand. Even if you get them wrong, or spell them incorrectly, if you listen with a reason, it does increase the attention you give it.

#### 9 - Don't listen to things that are much too difficult

Yes, challenge yourself. But if you are Elementary level, don't waste time with Advanced podcasts. But if you are a good Intermediate student or above, listening to native speakers can be beneficial, yes.

#### 10 - Music

Although a lot of music is not a model of perfect English, listening to it can sharpen your skills. It's OK to misunderstand, even native speakers do this.

For many years, I thought that Louis Armstrong, in his song Wonderful World, was singing DOGS SAY GOODNIGHT Смайлик «grin»

I was very disappointed to learn it was in fact, DARK SACRED NIGHTS Смайлик «frown»

#### 11 - REALLY listen

Don't just hear English, really listen and think about what you are hearing. It is tiring, but very effective.

#### 12 - Put the radio on

If you can, put English radio on in your house. Even just in the background. Even if you don't listen actively. Just surround yourself with the sound of English.

BBC Radio Five Live is good, available online. The benefit of Five Live is that it is not a music channel, so you will hear a lot more English spoken.

#### 13 - Podcasts again

For higher level students, this podcast could be good. Maybe just because I like it, but the presenter, a famous English TV personality, speaks very clearly and not too fast. The series is also very interesting.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/search...>

That's it, some of the tips above are almost identical, which proves one thing, the only way to improve your listening is to do it as often as you can.