

UNIT 2 LEARNING AND TEACHING MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS

2.4.2 WHILE-LISTENING

While-listening activities are all the tasks that students are asked to do during the time of listening to the text.

In order to develop their listening skills students should listen to the text several times, usually three times. The listening tasks should be graded. The first listening task should be quite easy to help students to get a general understanding of the text; sometimes even a single question can be enough, not putting the students under too much pressure. The second listening task should demand a greater and more detailed understanding of the text; the task should not demand writing long responses but single words, ticking or a graphical response. The third listening task could just ask students to check their answers from the second task or lead students towards more subtle interpretations of the text.

Teachers must be sure that students understand the instructions for the task before listening begins. If teachers decide to use questions to focus students' attention on crucial elements of the text, students have to read the questions before the listening activity begins; listening for the answers will help them recognize the crucial parts of the message. During listening, writing must be kept to a minimum because the primary goal of listening is comprehension, not production. Having to write while listening may distract students from this primary goal.

Moreover as listening to a foreign language is quite difficult, it is important to give students some breathing or thinking space between listenings. For instance they can be invited to compare their answers; this gives them not only the chance to have a break from the listening activity, but also to check their understanding with a peer and reconsider before listening again.

Sample while-listening activities:

- judging whether some statements about the listening text are true or false
- answering multiple-choice questions
- putting pictures in order. Students are asked to give the right order to a series of pictures (up to five or six) according to the listening text. It is important to give a series of pictures which cannot be put in order easily without listening to the text.
- arranging events or information in the correct sequence
- filling in gaps, grids, forms, charts, lists, maps, plans ...
- ticking off items in a list
- students hear a description or a conversation and have to decide, from the selection of pictures offered, which picture is the right one.
- detecting differences or mistakes from a listening passage; students respond only when they meet something different from what they already knew about the topic or the speakers
- searching for specific information
- matching the pictures with the descriptions heard
- following a route on a map
- drawing a picture or diagram
- taking notes
- correcting something already written
- comparing the listening text with the pre-listening phase

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES:

A) For example in the CLIL lesson about the song “Zombie” history teachers could use the following activities.

Listen to the song and tick all the words you hear:

- head eyes boy child happiness violence
 silence friends family 1916 1906

Now you are going to listen to the song twice. Fill in the gaps with the words written on the blackboard and those you have just ticked:

Another hangs lowly,
 is slowly taken.
 And the caused such
 Who are we mistaken?
 But you see it's not me,
 It's not my
 In your head, in your head
 They are
 With their and their
 And their bombs and their
 In your, in your
 They are
 In your, in your
 Zombie, Zombie, Zombie
 What's in your, in your
 Zombie, Zombie, Zombie
 Another mother's breaking is taking over
 When the causes
 We must be mistaken
 It's the same old theme since
 In your, in your
 They're still fighting
 With their and their
 And their and their
 In your in your
 They are
 In your, in your
 Zombie, Zombie, Zombie
 What's in your, in your
 Zombie, Zombie, Zombie

B) In the CLIL lesson about Leonardo da Vinci art teachers could use the following activities.

You are going to listen to the text twice. While you listen decide if the following sentences are TRUE or FALSE. Then check your answers with your partner and correct the false statements together.

DECIDE IF THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES ARE TRUE OR FALSE. CORRECT THE FALSE STATEMENTS.	TRUE	FALSE	CORRECTION
The speakers are talking about an exhibition at London's Albert and Victoria Museum.			
The exhibition is entitled Leonardo da Vinci 's Design.			

Leonardo lived during the Middle Ages.			
He was born in 1452 and died in 1509.			
He is best famous for the Mona Lisa.			
Leonardo had a classical education			
He was interested only in painting and anatomy.			
There are computer-generated animations above the exhibits to help visitors understand Leonardo's drawings.			
Leonardo believed you could understand the world just reading books.			
The main core of the exhibition are 60 sheets, drawings and paintings.			
There are computer-generated animations above the exhibits to help visitors understand them.			
This is a 'mind-on' exhibition, because you can get inside Leonardo's mind.			

Listen to the interview again and answer the following sentences. Then check your answers with your partner.

Why is the exhibition called "Experience, Experiment and Design"?

What does the expression 'Hands-on' exhibition mean?

Why are visitors not allowed to touch Leonardo's documents?

What does the expression "think outside/out of the box" mean?

Why Did Leonardo think out of the box?

Is there a relationship between the way he worked and the title of the exhibition?