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# *Listen First*

**FOCUSED LISTENING TASKS  
FOR BEGINNERS**



Oxford American Skills

# Introduction

*Listen First* provides beginning-level, adult and young adult ESL students with communicative listening skills through focused listening tasks. These tasks teach students how to listen, clarify, and respond in typical interactive listening situations. They focus on content areas that reinforce zero-level ESL classroom instruction. Material is recycled from unit to unit, ensuring student comprehension and progress.

Beginning-level students are often overwhelmed when they try to understand every word they hear. The exercises in *Listen First* get students to focus on specific information and screen out irrelevant material. Passages are short so that students will focus on comprehension rather than memorization. Nonverbal responses, such as circling, checking, and underlining, enable students to demonstrate their listening skills, even at the earliest stage of language learning. Oral production is preceded by numerous passive and active listening exercises and is carefully scaled to the beginner's level.

Each of the ten units of *Listen First* is divided into seven sections:

See It	an overview of content and vocabulary
Choose It	discrimination activities
Write It	spelling and/or word dictations
Expand It	listening tasks featuring new situations in the content area
Apply It	listening tasks with an emphasis on life skills
Get It Across	dialogue, intonation, and interactive activities
Check It	evaluation activities

*Listen First Teacher's Book* contains prelistening activities that set up lessons, suggested procedures, and follow-up activities. Consult *Listen First Teacher's Book* for a thorough, section by section treatment of each unit, answer keys, and a complete tapescript.

## PRELISTENING

Before students begin working on a unit, they will need some exposure to its context and vocabulary. By starting with prelistening activities, students are able to focus later on specific listening tasks without the additional distraction of processing new vocabulary. Recommended prelistening activities include Total Physical Response (TPR) commands that use realia or visuals, *yes/no* questions with visuals, a preview of the unit dialogue, or

a review of related materials students have already learned. Encourage students to listen beyond the interference of words they don't know or have forgotten. This is one of the most valuable lessons a second language listener can learn.

Students acquire the skills needed for communicative listening much more quickly if they feel successful and see progress from one activity to the next. Before listening to the cassette, assist students in making predictions about the material as a preview activity.

## UNIT PAGES

### See It

The first page of each unit introduces students to the content and context of the unit. Vocabulary is presented in a listening passage, and clarification strategies are previewed. In section A, students look and listen only. This may need to be played more than once if students are unfamiliar with the material. In sections B and C, students listen and follow directions—pointing to words, pictures, or numbers structured within a context, such as a classroom or a department store. In addition, students circle, underline, mark with an x, and check words, pictures, or numbers in a related context.

These TPR activities are a non-threatening way for students to demonstrate their comprehension. During these activities, assess how much of the content or vocabulary is familiar to students and which items need further review.

### Choose It

The second page contains a series of discrimination activities using illustrations or short phrases. Students listen to very short passages and circle, mark with an x, match, check, or number the appropriate illustrations based on the information in the listening passage. In doing so, students must focus on a particular aspect of the passage, for example, the part of the body that hurts, and identify the corresponding word or illustration.

### Write It

These exercises give students practice in listening for spelling in the first six units, and for focus words in the last four units. The emphasis is always on comprehension, and word boxes are provided when necessary.

The exercises bear a resemblance to more traditional listening exercises, but instead of listening, writing, and then checking, students should be encouraged to write as they listen, with the assurance that they may hear the tape as often as necessary to complete the exercise.

### Expand It

New situations and vocabulary are introduced on the **Expand It** page. Just as in **See It**, previewing new vocabulary will facilitate the listening process. You may choose to work from the text illustrations or with realia to familiarize students with the new ideas. It is not necessary for students to produce the new vocabulary, however, they will need to recognize the new items within the context of the unit.

The tasks are supported by illustrations that set the scene and provide valuable clues to understanding the listening passages. Awareness of visual clues is an essential part of first language listening, and language learners need to remember how to use these cues in second language listening situations. For this reason, picture sequencing and matching activities are often found on the **Expand It** page.

### Apply It

The tasks on this page use vocabulary, clarification strategies, and situations from the previous four pages in a life-skill area, such as taking a phone message, making an appointment, or asking for directions. Students use the familiar techniques of checking, circling, and making an x in tasks that mimic real-life exchanges. The material in **Apply It** sets up the dialogue for the interaction activity in **Get It Across** and provides examples of clarification strategies.

The teacher can expand on this section by providing students with listening experiences outside the classroom. For example, a scavenger hunt involving school personnel, a call to Directory Assistance for a phone number, or a message left on an answering machine will assist students in applying the listening skills learned in class to the real world.

### Get It Across

Active, successful listening is the goal of *Listen First*. **Get It Across** provides students with valuable practice in interactive listening. The initial exercise is always a listening passage, emphasizing a particular clarification strategy. The second exercise is the model dialogue, allowing students to see the clarification structure in print.

To help students practice clarification, interference is built into these first two exercises. The first time a question is answered in the dialogue, some information is blacked out with the interference symbol ~. Various noises are used on the cassette to suggest interference. In the classroom, students can have fun using their own techniques, such as coughing, mumbling, rubbing their mouths, or anything that prevents the listener from being sure about the answer to the question.

For the third exercise, pages A and B contain complementary information. This is an information gap in which students must obtain information from their partner in order to complete a grid or chart, draw missing objects in a picture, or put locations on a map.

We recommend you have half the class look at page A, and the other half look at page B. Have students listen to the cassette for the intonation, clarification, and vocabulary used in the interactive activity. Practice the model dialogue with them, later encouraging them to work on it without you. Pair students, As with Bs, reminding them to look only at their own page when working to complete the information gap. This activity may be done twice, with students pairing up again, taking opposite roles.

### Check It

The **Check It** page helps students evaluate their progress in each unit of *Listen First*. The first exercise is similar to those on the **Choose It** page, and the second to exercises in **Apply It**. The last exercise is a TPR activity.

The TPR activity requires students to listen for and demonstrate comprehension in a slightly different way, such as moving, drawing, or filling in a chart. On this last activity, the teacher should encourage students to ask for clarification and may pause and replay the tape as often as necessary. The goal of this activity is for every student to succeed in following directions. This success may come from a variety of sources: students requesting clarification, replaying the cassette, students asking other students for clarification, and teacher or student demonstrations.

The evaluation section is not meant to threaten or discourage the student. Encourage students to have fun with the activity.

### FOLLOW-UP

The tasks in *Listen First* lend themselves to numerous follow-up activities. *Listen First* Teacher's Book offers a variety of follow-up activities, as well as hints on pairing students, correcting errors, and evaluating performance.

## How To Use Listen First

1. Preview each page's vocabulary and context with students before playing the tape.
2. Present one task at a time.
3. Review the task type (circling, checking, matching, etc.) with the class on the board or overhead projector (OHP).
4. Read or have a student read the directions for the task.
5. Check students' comprehension of the directions.

Ask *yes / no* questions: *Are you listening for a number?*

Ask *or* questions: *Are you listening for a letter or a number?*

Have students restate the focus of the task: *We're listening for the number.*

Have students predict the kinds of information they're going to hear: *phone numbers.*

6. Play the example.
7. Stop the tape and go over the example on the board or OHP to check students' accuracy.
  - Have a student do the example and have the class correct it.
  - Have individual students call out their answers and let the class come to a consensus.
  - Circulate around the room and check individual student's work.
8. Play the rest of the exercise, pausing as often as necessary, especially between the first and second items. Repeat Step 7 each time the tape is interrupted.
9. Rewind and play the tape again two to four times for students to review and catch missed items. Point out clues in the exercise and write students' suggestions answers on the board for discussion.
10. Help students evaluate their accuracy by having the class come to a consensus on the answers. In cases where there is no consensus after four or five listenings, supply the correct answers on the board or OHP.
11. Play the tape a final time, enabling students to review the correct answers.

استفاده از این کتاب برای تقویت مهارتهای شنیداری و به عنوان یک کتاب جالبی در کنار سیستم های آموزشی نظیر «Let's go, Parade, Bravo» و امثالهم برای رده سنی کودکان و نوجوانان و در مورد بزرگسالان در ترم های ابتدایی در کنار سیستم های آموزشی چون Headway Beginner و Intro Interchange و امثالهم بسیار اثر بخش میباشد. مطالعه این کتاب به همه زبان آموزان در هر سن که از سطح مبتدی شروع به زبان آموزی می کنند توصیه می گردد (دکتر میراغا استاد دانشگاه)

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Unit	Listening Focus	Clarification Strategy
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3 <i>page 17</i> A Classroom	locations of objects instructions	<i>Where?</i>
4 <i>page 25</i> Time/A House	time rooms in a house phone messages	rephrasing
5 <i>page 33</i> A Department Store	descriptions of clothing prices	<i>How much?</i>
6 <i>page 41</i> A Neighborhood	locations of buildings directions	<i>Which?</i>
7 <i>page 49</i> Health	parts of the body symptoms doctor's appointments	<i>What?</i>
8 <i>page 57</i> The Calendar	dates birthdays	<i>Wh- questions</i>
9 <i>page 65</i> Employment	occupations work schedules skills	<i>Wh- questions</i>
10 <i>page 73</i> The Weather	weather the temperature likes and dislikes	<i>Wh- questions</i> rephrasing
<i>page 82</i>	Alphabet Cards	<i>page 86</i>
		Number Cards

# Unit 1

## See It



look



listen

### A

Look and listen.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

alphabet



point



circle



underline



letters



capital letter



small letter

### B

Point to the letters.

Circle or underline the letters.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

a b c d e f g h i j k l m

N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

n o p q r s t u v w x y z

**Unit 1**  
**Choose It**

**1**

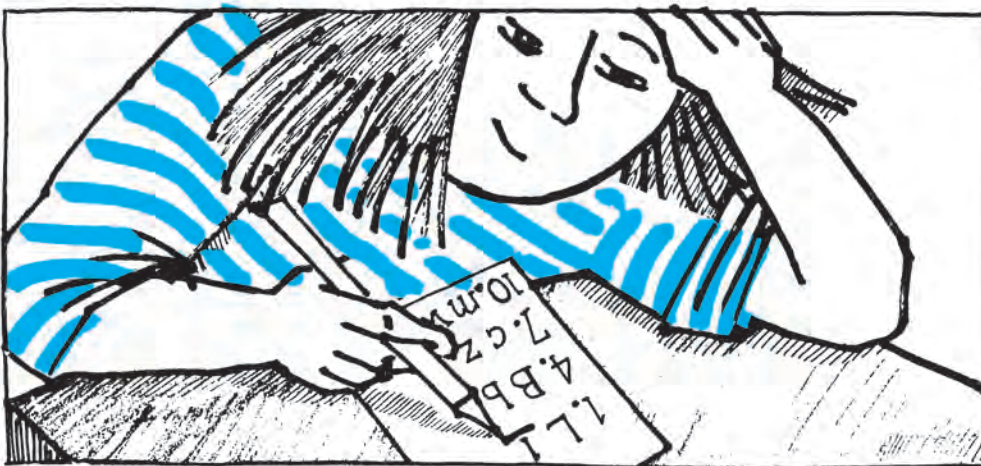
Circle the letter.



- |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. © O  | 2. V W  | 3. U V  |
| 4. L R  | 5. F S  | 6. K Q  |
| 7. A H  | 8. I Y  | 9. B V  |
| 10. G J | 11. S X | 12. N M |

**2**

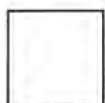
Underline the letter.



- |               |         |         |
|---------------|---------|---------|
| 1. L <u>l</u> | 2. z Z  | 3. C c  |
| 4. B b        | 5. E e  | 6. G j  |
| 7. c z        | 8. k Q  | 9. C S  |
| 10. m w       | 11. S Z | 12. n m |

# Unit 1

## Write It



box



write a letter in the box



write the missing letter

3

Write the missing letter in the box.

A	B	C	D	E		G		I	J		L	
N		P		R		T	U	V		X	Y	

4

Write the missing letters in the boxes.



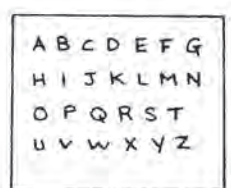
1.

b o x



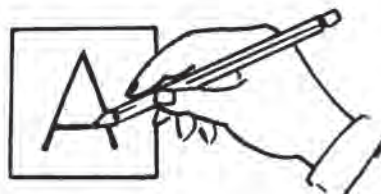
2.

p o i



3.

o o



4.

r i t



5.

l i t e



6.

i r c l



**Unit 1**  
**Expand It**



vowels

**5**

Circle or underline the vowel you hear.

1. A E

2. I E

3. U I

4. I E


5. O E

6. I A

7. U O

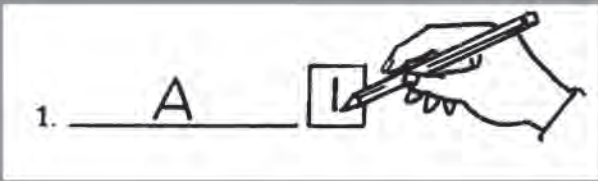
8. E A

9. A E



1. A

on the line



1. A I

in the box

**6**

Write the vowel on the line or in the box.

1. A  2. \_\_\_\_\_  3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_  5. \_\_\_\_\_  6. \_\_\_\_\_

**7**

Write the letters on the line and in the box.

1. B V 2. \_\_\_\_\_  3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_  5. \_\_\_\_\_  6. \_\_\_\_\_



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## **Listen First**

### **Focused Listening Tasks for Beginners**

*Listen First* is designed for the beginning-level, young adult and adult ESL student, with little or no previous instruction. *Listen First* exposes students to simple, everyday language that has immediate, practical value outside of the classroom. Task-based exercises and illustrations help students build essential vocabulary and demonstrate comprehension. Short, conversational exchanges use natural speech patterns, requiring students to focus and engage in selective listening and common clarification strategies.

*Listen First* comes with Cassettes and a Teacher's Guide.

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