

Week 2  
The Importance of Listening and  
Speaking

**24/7/2025**  
**Thursday**

**Speaking and listening are  
fundamental human  
communicative tools since  
the beginning of humankind**

**Kline (1996) states that knowing the difference between hearing and listening is  
an important feature**

**“Hearing is the reception of sound; Listening is the attachment of meaning to  
the sound. Hearing is passive, listening is active.”**

**The skill of listening is important in learning any language**

**can be observed in little babies in their development over the years  
an important pattern was discovered;**

**spent their entire first 1.5 to 2 years of their lives listening to their parents, listening to others, and trying to make sense of their surroundings.**

**can barely talk at that age but that does not mean communication is not taking place.**

**The most powerful indicator that the skill of listening influence on learning a language although children cannot necessarily speak at a young age, they understand many things asked of them**

**The HEAR strategy is important in learning any language  
(Halt-Engage –Anticipate –Replay)**

**the idea that listening actually takes active work  
and it is not just a passive skill**

**Halt**



**[to] free your mind to pay attention to the person speaking”**

**Engage**



**“Focus on the speaker” by some sort of physical movement towards his/her direction**

**Anticipate**



**Actively think about what the speaker might share next**

**Replay**



**Replay–Review what the speaker is saying and try to make sense of commonalities, either independently or with peers**

developing their ability to listen well can develop students' ability to become more independent learners,

hearing  
accurately

able to  
reproduce  
accurately

**refine their understanding of grammar  
and develop their own vocabulary.**

**Listening is an activity absorbing of the meanings of words and sentences by the brain.**

**leads to the understanding of facts and ideas, but listening takes attention, or sticking to the task at hand in spite of distractions.**

**requires concentration, which is the focusing of our thoughts upon one particular problem**

**listening with concentration is actively listening**

**Active listening is a method of responding to another that encourages communication.**

# The importance of listening

- Communication is not complete without effective listening.
- An attentive listener stimulates better speaking by the speaker.
- A good listener learns more than an indifferent listener.
- A good listener can restructure vague speaking in a way that produces clearer meaning.
- Listening is the most important communication skill.
- We probably spend more time using our Listening Skills than any other kind of skill.
- Like other skills, Listening takes practice.
- Real Listening is an active process.
- Listening requires attention.
- A good listener learns to detect prejudices, assumptions and attitudes.

**Communication plays a vital role in getting success in all fields.**

**Language is used as a tool for communication**

***Perfect communication is not possible for people without using a language.***

**Moreover, people cannot achieve their aims, objectives, and goals without using proper language to communicate.**

**Therefore, there is a need for a language to communicate with others those who live all around the globe.**

## **\* How can we define speaking?**

- **an interactive process of constructing meaning**
- **involves producing and receiving and processing information.**
- **Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking.**

# The Importance of Speaking Skill

- The way we speak differs according to the situation we are in. We do not speak to our professors the same way we speak to our friends.
- Context is important, then. It defines the way we use language to communicate certain ideas to certain people.
- The purpose of talking also plays a role in the way we speak. If we are chatting to spend time it is different than lecturing to transfer information.

**Speaking skills are useful for learners when they have to settle down well in their professions.**

**\*The professionals have to give oral presentations as they have to promote the products or their companies or give training to the other colleagues.**

**an effective speaker can inspire the audience a lot and gain the complete attention of the audience and maintain the same tempo until the end of his/her speech.**

**the audience involves completely in the speaker's speech and they sometimes forget the real world and put their complete concentration on the speech.**

# The main advantages of speaking skills are:

- To participate actively in pair or group activities in the classrooms.
- To give an impressive speech on different occasions.
- To participate actively in debates and group discussions.
- To pursue higher studies in foreign countries.
- To interact with people all around the globe.
- To promote the sale of products in the business.
- To make living abroad simpler and easier.
- To get better employment opportunities.
- To perform well in job interviews.
- To acquire more knowledge.
- To give presentations for all purposes.
- To communicate effectively with others.
- To boost up the speakers' self-confidence.
- To know the different cultures of the world.

# **Strategies for listening with purpose**

**The study of listening is a specialist field and, like all specialist fields, there is some common terminology which might be unfamiliar or confusing.**

**Learning to recognize these terms will help you to understand and develop your learners' listening skills.**

# How to teach LISTENING



**'WE HAVE TWO EARS AND ONE MOUTH SO THAT WE CAN LISTEN TWICE AS MUCH AS WE SPEAK'**  
*EPICTETUS*



# Percentage of daily communication...

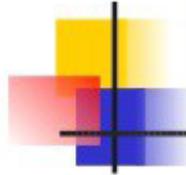
Reading 3<sup>rd</sup>  
16%

Speaking 2<sup>nd</sup>  
30%

Listening 1<sup>st</sup>  
45%

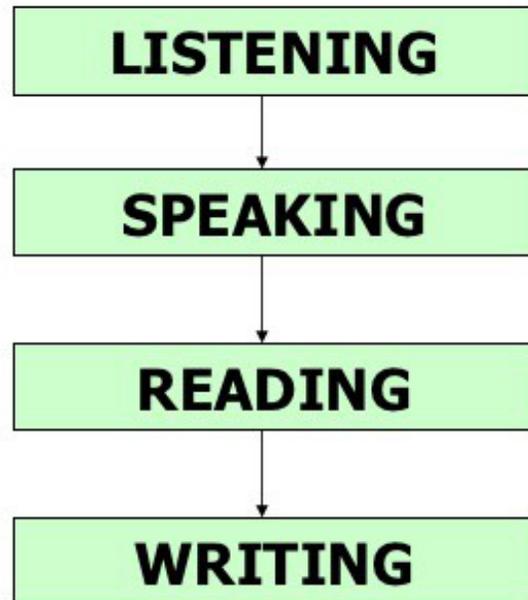
Writing 4<sup>th</sup>  
9%

*(Burely-Allen, 1995)*



# Listening Comes First

The First and the foremost communication skill that we learn in our lives is nothing but "LISTENING"



When we achieve a very good level of listening in a particular language, we often forget how sophisticated this skill really is!

The terms we use to describe the processes of listening are called **sub-skills** and they include:

Sub-skill	Definition	Example from everyday life
Predicting	Thinking about what you are going to hear, based on what you know about the speaker, the topic and the context.	You are listening to your parents planning a family trip. You think about where you have been before and what your family like to do. You begin to imagine where you think the next trip will be!
Listening for gist	Understanding just the general topic of what you hear.	You are walking in a park and you overhear friends talking. One of them is talking about a recent family event. You <b>don't notice or remember all the details or words</b> , but it sounded like it was a very happy event.
Listening for key information	Identifying specific words or phrases in what you hear.	You are waiting at the train station, listening to the announcement with information about which platform to go to. You listen carefully because you don't want to go to the wrong platform and miss your train.
Listening for detailed understanding	Understanding the content of what you hear in depth, especially the opinions and attitudes of the speaker(s).	It's your birthday soon and you want to go to the cinema with your friends. You ask your friends which films they would like to see and <b>listen carefully to what they say</b> before you decide.

# STRATEGIES OF LISTENING

What does effective listening involve?

## Bottom-up versus top-down approaches to listening



The **bottom-up** model emphasises the decoding of the smallest units- phonemes and syllables- to lead us towards meaning.



The **top-down** model emphasises the use of background knowledge to predict content.

Our ability to match the sounds to the word is called **bottom-up processing**.

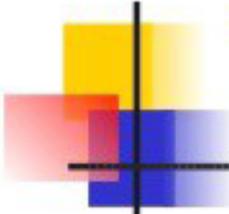
To understand what the speaker means when they use the word, we need to listen for more information, we need to know the context and co-text. This is called **top-down processing**.

Process	Definition	Example from everyday life
Bottom-up processing = recognising what you hear	Recognising small units (sounds), building them up into bigger units (words) and then bigger ones (phrases). Sometimes called 'decoding'.	You ask someone for an address and they tell you it's number 60. <b>You accurately identify the sounds and stress of the word</b> <i>sixty</i> and don't mishear it as <i>sixteen</i> .
Top-down processing = understanding what it means	Using <b>context</b> (knowledge of the world) and <b>co-text</b> (what the speaker has said so far) to help you understand words that are not clear.	You're watching a fashion programme on TV. You think you hear someone talking about <i>string, summer, autumn</i> and <i>winter</i> . You doubt that you heard the first word correctly – you're not sure if <i>string</i> is a word in English, but you know that <i>spring</i> is a word. And you know that it makes sense when talking about other seasons. You also know that in the world of fashion, clothing is often categorised by season. <b>You use this knowledge to make an educated guess:</b> the person probably said <i>spring</i> , not <i>string</i> .

# LISTENING

- Listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary, and grasping his meaning (Howatt and Dakin). An able listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously.





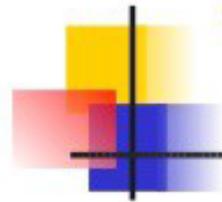
# Types of Listening

**ATTENTIVE LISTENING** – It involves paying attention to the words that are being spoken.

**PRETENCE LISTENING** – It involves more hearing than listening. It means pretending through facial expressions that one is listening when actually one is not.

**SELECTIVE LISTENING** – It involves selecting the desired part of the message and ignoring the undesired part of the message.

**INTUITIVE LISTENING** – It means listening through the intuitive mind by silencing the other forms of internal dialogues going on simultaneously.



# Types of Listening

**DISCRIMINATIVE LISTENING** – It involves identifying the difference between various sounds. It also enables one to differentiate between familiar and unfamiliar language.

**COMPREHENSION LISTENING** – It involves attaching meaning to what is being listened to. It may also include comprehending the non verbal messages being conveyed by the speaker.

**EVALUATIVE LISTENING** – It involves evaluating and analyzing the message being received. It involves judging the acceptability of what is said depending on how logical one finds it to be.

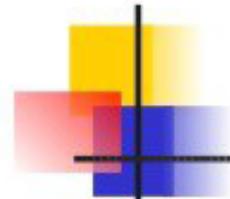
# WHY TEACH LISTENING?

- Students hear different accents and varieties.
- Listening helps students to acquire language subconsciously.
- Listening is a receptive skill.
- Education.
- Mass communication.

# Barriers to Effective Listening

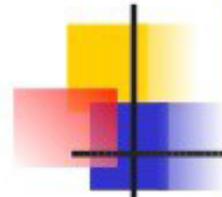
- **Physical Barriers**
- **People – Related Barriers**
  - **Physiological Barriers**
  - **Psychological Barriers**





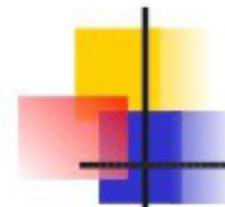
# Physical Barriers

- **Noise**
- **Poor acoustics**
- **Defective mechanical devices**
- **Frequent interruptions**
- **Uncomfortable seating arrangements**
- **Uncomfortable environment**
- **Message overload**



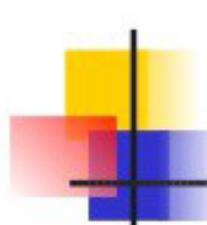
# Physiological Barriers

- **State of Health** – State of health of the listener and the speaker affects the listening ability. Fever, pain or any other form of bodily discomfort makes it difficult for a person to listen or speak comfortably.
- **Disability** – Hearing deficiencies may lead to poor listening. Similarly, speech disorders of the speaker may make a speech incoherent to the listener. Speaker's accent may also make it difficult for the listener to comprehend.
- **Wandering attention** – Human mind can process words at the rate of about 500 per minute, whereas a speaker speaks at the rate of about 150 per minute. The difference between the two leaves the listener with sufficient time to let his mind wander.



# Psychological Barriers

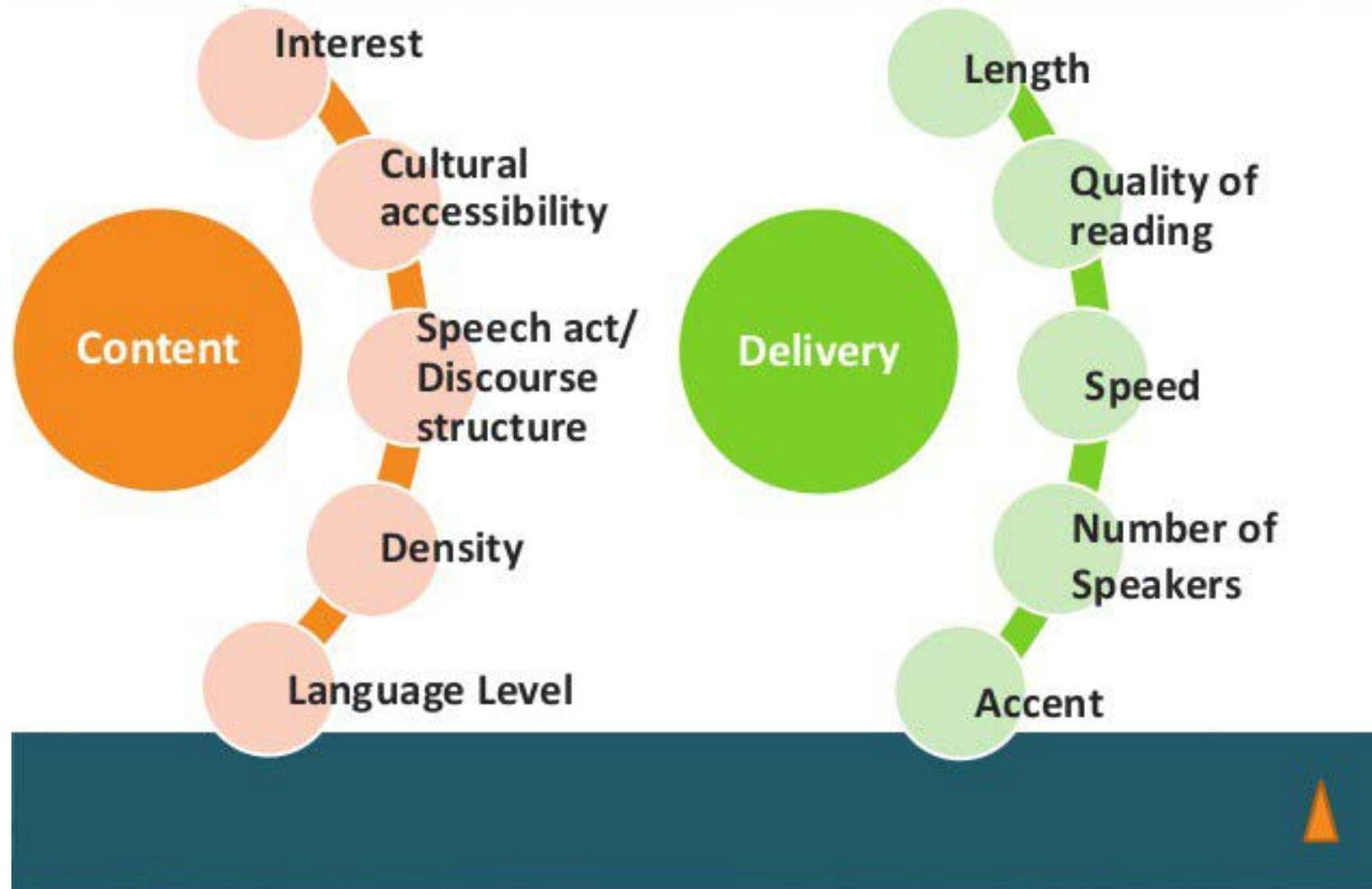
- **Being unsure of the speaker's ability** – Based on past experience or inputs from sources, the listener may have a preconceived notion of the speaker's ability. He may perceive the speaker to not be well informed, or to be lacking in depth and ability. Hence the listener will not listen to what the speaker has to say.
- **Personal anxiety** – Sometimes the listener is preoccupied with personal concerns and anxieties. This makes it difficult to perceive what is being said by the speaker.
- **Attitude** – The listener may be highly egocentric with a “know it all attitude” and may not listen as he feels that he already knows what the listener has to say.



# Psychological Barriers

- **Impatience** – The listener may not have patience to wait for the other person to finish what he has to say. He may be intolerant or may be eager to add his own points to the discussion. As a result, his desire to speak overcomes his desire to listen, thus acting as a barrier.
- **Emotional blocks** – Our deep seated beliefs in certain ideas may make it difficult for us to listen to ideas which go against our belief. We may hear such an idea wrongly or it may get distorted in our mind to match our perception or we may completely block it off by not listening to it. Many a time, we block something off completely because of painful memories associated with it.

## What makes a good Listening Text?



# Content

FEATURE	QUESTIONS TO ASK
Interest	Will this be interesting for my students?
Cultural accessibility	Will my students understand the context and ideas?
Speech act/ Discourse structure	Does it discuss abstract concepts or is it based on everyday transactions?
Density	Does the information come thick and fast or are there moments in which the listener can relax?
Language level	Is the majority of the vocabulary and grammar appropriate for my students?

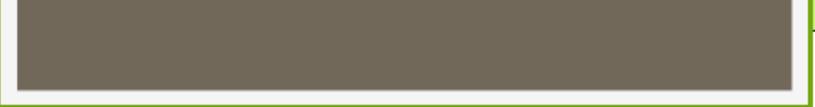


# Delivery

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FEATURE	QUESTIONS TO ASK
1. Length	Will I need to cut part of the recording because it is too long? Is it long enough?
1. Quality of recording	Is the recording clear? Will background noise affect comprehension?
1. Speed	Do the speakers talk too fast for my students?
1. Number of speakers	Are there many voices, potentially causing confusion?
1. Accent	Is the accent familiar? Is comprehensible?





# TEACHING LISTENING SKILLS

# *Main Types of Listening Activities*

- **Pre listening activities**
- **While-listening activities**
- **Post-listening activities.**

## PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITIES

Activating Schemata/Predicting

Establishing reasons for listening

Generating Questions

Pre- teaching Vocabulary

## Activating Schemata/Predicting

- ➔ Brainstorming
- ➔ Visuals
- ➔ Realia
- ➔ Texts and words
- ➔ Opinions, ideas and facts

## Establishing reasons for listening



Make the purpose realistic



Make the goal achievable



Get the students involved

**PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITIES**

**Generating Questions**



Higher-order  
Questions



Lower-order  
Questions



Display Questions

# Generating questions

**Higher-order questions:** Do you play touches on any contemporary issues?

**Lower-order questions:** Who does Macbeth kill first?

## Display questions:

*Teacher:* What time is it, Denise?

*Student:* Two- thirty

*Teacher:* Very good, Denise!



The teacher is asking for a correct form rather than for any thought.



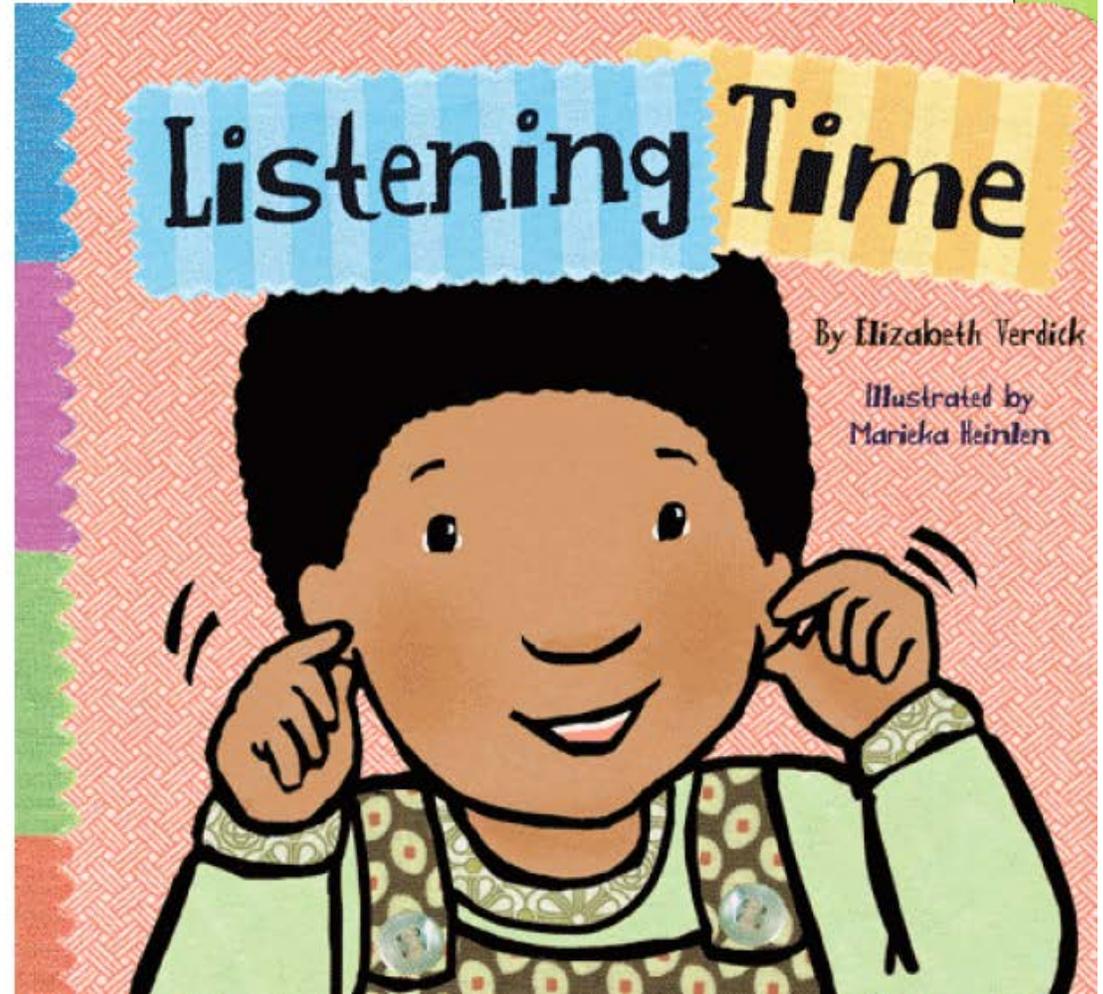
# TOP TIPS

- PRE- LISTENING:

- Tell your students “ DON’T WORRY”
- Make sure students know what they are listening for before you start listening
- Give questions to check students comprehension
- Check for any words that your students may not know



- Check for any words that your students may not know
- Short listening
- Stop the recording



**WHILE-LISTENING ACTIVITIES**

**Listening for GIST**

**Listening for DETAIL**

**Inferring**

**Participating actively**

**Note-taking**

**Dictation**

**Listen and Do**

## ○ WHILE LISTENING:

- Try to play the recording once for overall comprehension and then for specific details.
- Take notes ( dates, places, people)
- Repeat the recording especially in the difficult parts



# While - Listening

- The aim is to help learners listen for meaning
- Attention on listening itself

Show understanding by a physical response	Information transfer
Filling in gaps/blanks	Sequencing
Detecting differences or mistakes	Information search
Ticking off items (bingo)	Matching items

**Marking/checking the items in pictures**

## ○ POST-LISTENING:

- Compare their notes in small groups.
- Encourage debates and answer questions.
- Write a summary of the main points and then compare.
- Make a list of any new vocabulary.

September 12, 2001

### NEW VOCABULARY:

Ground Zero

The Pile

suicide hijackers

Missing

The Office of Homeland Security

Heightened state of alert

Security checkpoints

Anthrax

Bioterrorism

Cipro

Stockpiling supplies

Military tribunals

Sky marshals

Covert operations

Patriotic shopping

Sir Rudy Giuliani

# Post - Listening

- Allow learners to reflect on the language from the passage

Answering multiple-choice or true/false questions	Jigsaw listening
Problem solving activities	Writing letters, telegrams, postcards, messages, etc
Summarizing	Debates, interviews, discussions, role-plays, etc.

## JIGSAW

It is a teaching technique invented by social Psychologist

ELLIOT ARONSON in 1971. A cooperative learning method where students become experts on a specific part of a topic and then teach that information to their group members. It is a co-operative learning technique appropriate for students from 3rd to 12th grade. It is also used extensively in adult English second language ESL classes.

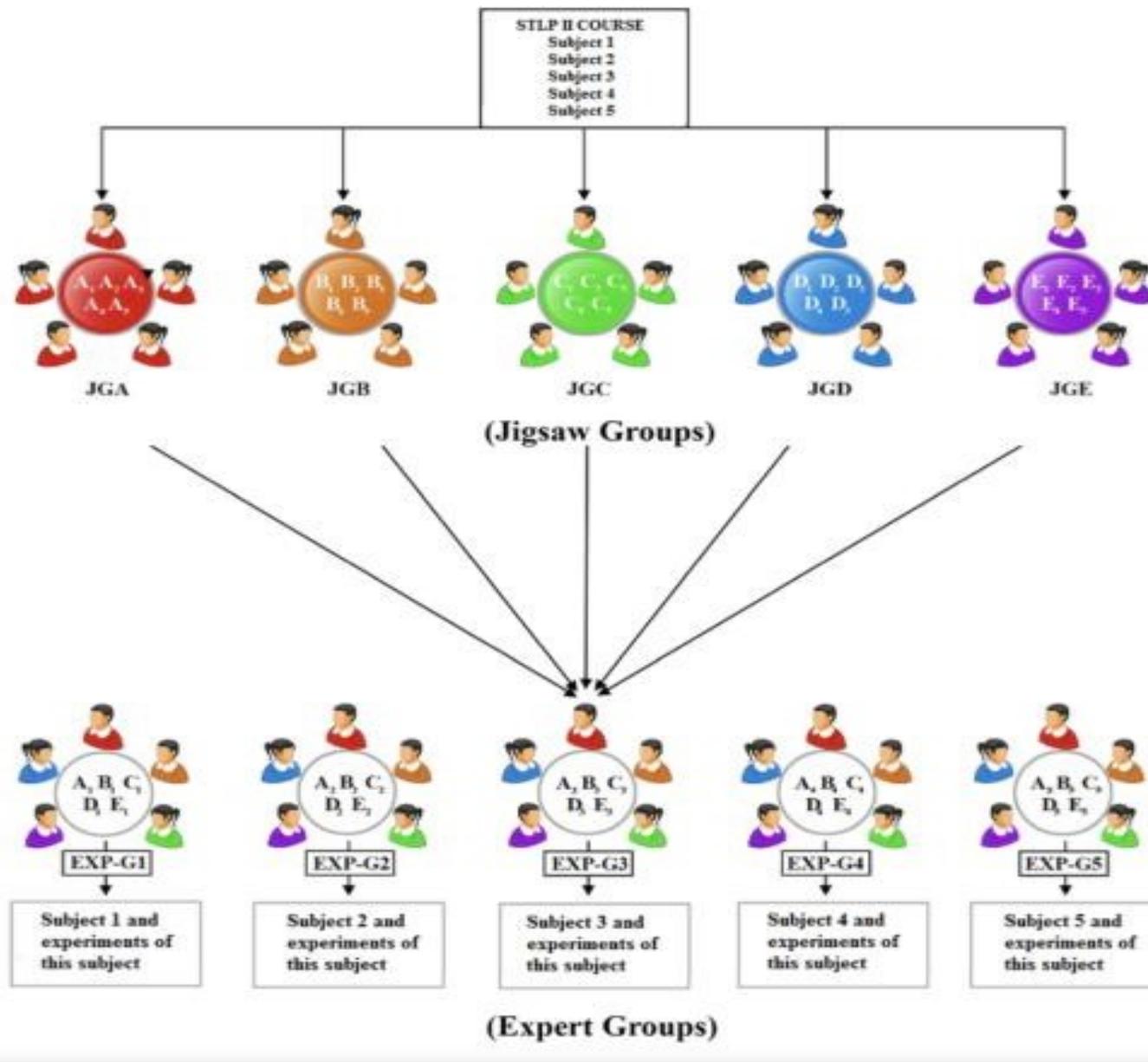
Listening

Engagement

Interaction

Peer teaching

Co-operation by giving each member of the group as essential part to play in the academic activity.



## **REMEMBER!!!**

Try to use as many different sources of listening material as you can:

Advertisements, news programs, poetry, songs, extracts from plays, speeches, lectures, telephone conversations, informal dialogues.