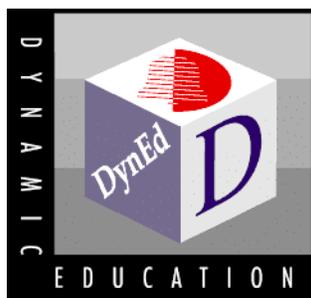


Advanced Listening

Listening Strategy Guide

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Listening Strategy Guide

This guide describes key strategies for improving your listening skills. As you complete this course, review these strategies carefully and often.

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Listening Topic 1: Pre-Listening Strategies

Predicting the themes and vocabulary of a lecture before you listen can help to improve your comprehension of difficult listening segments.

First, look at the title of the lecture and any other clues you have (photos, maps, charts, outlines, etc.) and think of specific questions you think might be answered in the lecture. Next, think about possible answers to each of your questions. Discuss the questions with a partner, if possible. Here are some sample questions for Lecture 1, *Dealing with Stress: What Baboons Can Teach Us*:

1. What kinds of things make people stressed?
2. What happens to your body when you are stressed?
3. What are some different ways people deal with stress?
4. What do you think baboons could teach us about stress?
5. How do you think people study baboons?
6. Why are baboons good animals with which to study stress?

(This strategy also works for other listening situations, such as meetings, interviews, and any other instance in which you have clues to the content.)

All lectures in this course have sample prediction questions listed in this guide. However, before looking at these notes in the future, try to create your own list of questions first. This is the best way to truly develop your prediction skills. If you are having trouble thinking of questions, consider the major question words (*who, what, when, where, why, how*) and ask yourself how they might apply to the lecture topic. Then, if you want, you can compare your questions with those provided here.

Note: You can use this prediction strategy *during the lecture* as well. That is, as often as you can, try to predict what kinds of information might come next. Even if some of your predictions are incorrect, this strategy will help you stay focused and give you a better chance of general comprehension.

Second, try to predict vocabulary you may hear in the lecture. To do this, you can analyze the main words in the title of the lecture. A dictionary and thesaurus will be very helpful.

For example:

Analysis of the word *stress*

Vocabulary

What are some synonyms of the word *stress*?

frustrate/frustration, nervousness

What are some related words or phrases?

stressful, stressor, to get stressed

What can happen to someone who is stressed?

ulcer, high blood pressure, hypertension, release stress hormones

What can people do about stress?

have an *outlet*, see a *psychologist*,
take medicine

What are some related fields/topics?

psychology, psychiatry, physiology

Analysis of the word *baboons*

What are baboons?

animals, primates, monkeys

Where do they live?

Africa, the savannah, the Serengeti

What are some important features of baboons?

They live in *troops*; within the troop, there is a *hierarchy*: some baboons are *high-ranking (dominant)* and some are low-ranking (*subordinate*). Baboons *eat, sleep, fight, mate, and groom* each other.

For the next lecture, try to think of your own list of vocabulary. Then, if you want, you can compare it with the vocabulary list provided below.

Pre-Listening Strategies: Lecture 2

Here are some sample pre-listening questions and vocabulary analyses for **Lecture 2, *Genes and Gene Therapy***:

1. What are genes?
2. What do genes do?
3. Where in the body are genes located?
4. What can go wrong with our genes?
5. How does gene therapy work?
6. Which diseases can be treated with gene therapy?
7. How long has gene therapy been in use?

Analysis of the word *gene*

What are some synonyms of the word *gene*?

Vocabulary

genetic information/map/blueprint

What are some related words or phrases?

genetics, genome, DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), double helix, cells, division, duplication, protein, mutation

Who works with genes? *doctors, scientists, geneticists, laboratory technicians*

What are some related fields/topics? *medicine, genetic engineering*

Analysis of the word *therapy*

What are some synonyms of the word *therapy*? *treatment*

Where can one get therapy? *hospitals, clinics*

Pre-Listening Strategies: Lecture 3

Here are some sample pre-listening questions and vocabulary analyses for **Lecture 3, *The Chinese Economy***:

1. What industries is the Chinese economy based on?
2. How has the Chinese economy changed in recent years?
3. How has the Chinese economy grown in recent years?
4. What are the future expectations of the Chinese economy?
5. How does the Chinese economy compare with other economies?
6. Which people or groups make important economic decisions in China?
7. Which cities are the most economically important in China?

Analysis of the word *Chinese*

Vocabulary

What are some related words or phrases? *China, Asia(n), East Asia(n), socialist*

Which are the most important cities in China? *Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Peking*

Analysis of the word *economy*

What are some related words? *economic, growth, growth rate, GDP (gross domestic product), GNP (gross national product), debt, taxes, investment, trade, income, per capita income, production, enterprise, factory, agriculture, market, market economy, socialist economy*

Where do economies exist? *regions, countries, provinces, states, cities, localities, households*

Listening Topic 2: Identifying Main Ideas

There are four keys to identifying main ideas in lectures and presentations. First, a speaker may signal a main idea through discourse markers; that is, there are certain phrases that tell you a main idea is coming. Here are some examples:

The point I want to make/cover here is...

The main point is...

The important thing here is...

What I'm trying to show is...

What I'm going to talk about today is...

The purpose of my remarks is ...

This afternoon I'd like to explain/focus on...



See [Listening Topic 5](#) for more information on discourse markers.

Similarly, speakers often use *rhetorical questions* to signal main ideas, topics, and themes. These are questions that the speaker asks out loud, and that the speaker plans to answer in his/her presentation. In general, rhetorical questions *will always be answered in the lecture or presentation*. Therefore, rhetorical questions are important discourse markers to pay attention to. For example, in Part 3 of Lecture 1, Professor Sapolsky asks, “Why do only some of us get sick in the face of stress? Why do some bodies and some psyches deal with stress better than others?” Here, the professor is using rhetorical questions to introduce the main ideas of his talk.

Another key to identifying main ideas is *repetition*, or how many times a word or phrase is repeated. If something is repeated several times, it suggests importance. For example, in Part 1 of Lecture 1, the word “different” is repeated six times, the word “disease” is repeated twelve times, and the phrase “slowly accumulate damage over time” is repeated twice. These repetitions accurately reflect the two main ideas of this segment:

- Diseases are different today than they were long ago.
- Today, we get diseases where we slowly accumulate damage over time.

The third key to identifying main or important ideas is *pace*. Pace is the speed of speech. Unimportant points or small details are usually spoken more quickly. Important points, such as main ideas, are usually spoken more slowly and clearly. For example, Part 1 of Lecture 1 ends with the following lines:

Instead, we have these completely strange diseases that have never existed before on this planet in any sort of common number. We have cancer, we have heart disease, we have Alzheimer's disease, we have adult-onset diabetes, we have diseases that are unheard of by hunter-gatherers in the middle of the Kalahari Desert, diseases that were unheard of by our great-great-great grandparents. We have diseases where we slowly accumulate damage over time.

When you listen to this section of the lecture, you will notice that Professor Sapolsky speaks very quickly until he reaches the last line: *We have diseases where we slowly accumulate damage over time*. This line is spoken far more slowly and clearly than the others because it is the main idea that he is trying to express.

Finally, a lecturer's visual aids, such as outlines, lists or drawings, often provide obvious clues to a speaker's main points. For example, in Lecture 1, Professor Sapolsky lists the main variables of stress physiology on an overhead projector transparency. In Lecture 2, Professor Shapiro shows a picture of DNA to illustrate its function. In Lecture 3, Professor Lau uses an overhead transparency to clarify the components of the Chinese economic reform. These types of visual aids should be taken advantage of. In fact, there is an old piece of academic advice which states that when a speaker has made the effort to write something on the board, you should make the effort to write it in your notes!

Listening Topic 3: Note Taking

Taking notes effectively is crucial to success in academic and professional environments. There are **four** important components to successful note taking.

1. **Language.** Take notes in the language in which you will need to use the notes. That is, if you are in a business meeting in New York with U.S. companies and you will need to use your notes to write memos, letters, or contracts in English, then take notes in English, not your in native language. Similarly, if you are in a class where you will be tested in English or you will need to discuss the information in English, take notes in English. This will help you remember precise language and context in note-taking situations. In addition, it will help develop your English skills. Finally, and most important, after you become an efficient note taker in English, you will be able to take notes more quickly and accurately than if you constantly translated everything.
2. **Speed.** Effective note taking requires you to quickly record information. To do this, good note takers DO NOT WRITE DOWN EVERY WORD or try to take notes in neat sentences; instead, they write only *key words* and phrases. In addition, good note takers use *shorthand* when they take notes. In other words, they use symbols to represent words or ideas. Here are some common examples:

>	is more than	w/	with
<	is less than	w/o	without
=	is equal to	b/c	because
≠	isn't equal to	K	thousand (40K = 40,000)
Δ	to change to, a change	/	per, out of (1/25 = 1 per 25)
→	leading to, causing	+, &	and
←	to be caused by, as a result of	∴	therefore, consequently
↑	to go up, increases	♂	man, men
↓	to go down	♀	woman, women
		i.e.	for example
		@	each, at

When you take notes, try using some of these symbols as well as any others you can think of. Everyone has a different system of note-taking shorthand, so feel free to be creative!

Here is an example of efficient note taking which reflects a few lines from Lectures 3. Notice that ideas have been reduced to key words and that shorthand symbols are used extensively

You hear:

If you think about Japan in its two fastest growing decades, you know – basically from 1955 to 1975 – Japan grew at approximately between 9 and 10% per year. Now, if you look at our own history, the fastest growing period for the United States is actually from 1875 to 1895. And during that period, the U.S. actually grew at something like 6% per annum.

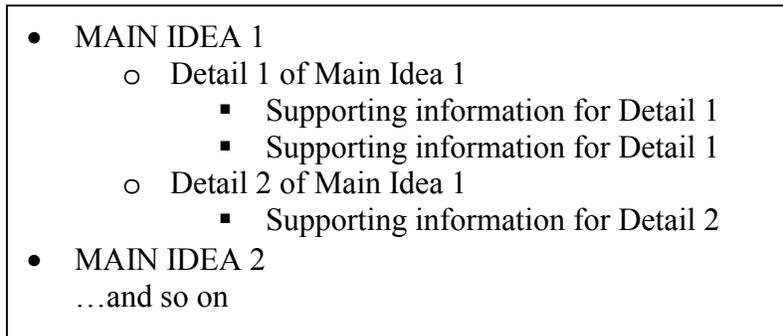
You write:

Japan: fastest growing decades = 1955-75 = \uparrow 9-10%/yr

U.S.: 1875-95 = \uparrow 6%/yr

3. **Organization.** Your notes should reflect which of the lecturer's points are main points and which are details. Sometimes the details are also broken down into smaller categories or sub-details, and your notes must show this as well.

There are many effective ways to represent lecture organization in your notes. One common technique is to write the main ideas close to the left margin of the page, the details below the main ideas and a little bit to the right, smaller details below and to the right of the larger ones, and so on.



If this system of note taking doesn't suit you, ask your teacher for other suggestions.

A final note: Clear, organized note taking requires practice. Furthermore, your opportunities for practice don't have to end when the lecture ends: the best note takers often *rewrite* their notes to show the ideas and organization more clearly.

4. **Accuracy.** Are your facts correct? Did you write down all the main points and a sufficient number of details? Can you read your notes and understand what you wrote? These skills take time and practice, but you can achieve a lot of success through good pre-listening preparation (see [Listening Topic 1](#)), efficient note taking using shorthand, and a clear pattern of organization.

In addition, accurate note taking requires *stamina*. That is, you must be able to concentrate for long periods of time. The more you practice, the more your note-taking stamina will develop.

Finally, there will be times when you miss information. Don't worry – this happens to all of us! If you do miss information, make a guess about what you missed and try to maintain your focus. Fortunately, lecturers often repeat important information, so if you miss something, there's a good chance you will hear it again.

Listening Topic 4: Processing Details

Advanced Listening requires you to comprehend many different types of details in several different contexts. Consequently, this listening strategy topic is presented in three parts, each discussing a different aspect of understanding details.

1. Aural Skimming: Listening for a Particular Detail

Our goals in listening often involve understanding or “catching” one crucial detail; this typically requires pulling one particular detail out of a larger set of details. For instance, while listening to someone talk at a business meeting, you might have a special interest in a particular budget figure or a date for a certain event, but have little interest in other details. Other common examples include listening for particular facts in weather reports or in airport announcements about flight information. Similarly, in *Advanced Listening* you are often asked to listen for a particular detail within a lecture segment.

The most important strategy for this type of listening is *prediction*. That is, before listening, try to predict what may signal or mark the information you are listening for. For example, what words might the speaker use when giving this detail? If you are listening for a particular number, think about what type of number you expect: Will it be in the hundreds or the millions? Will it be a fraction? A decimal? A percentage? The more you focus yourself before you listen, the better chance you have to succeed in the listening task. (See [Listening Topic 1](#) for more discussion about prediction.)

2. Understanding and Recalling Details

Just as we enter some listening situations with the goal of comprehending one crucial detail, we also come out of listening situations with the need to remember or process pieces of information we have heard. Here are two strategies to help you understand more details while you listen as well as remember more details after you have listened.

- **Maintain your focus.** It is easy to become distracted while listening, especially when the language is not one you natively speak. One way to maintain your focus is to continue to actively predict what may come next in the lecture.
- **Take detailed notes.** Not only does note taking help you stay focused, but it also will provide your best reference to what has been said. In academic and other listening situations which require the understanding and recall of large numbers of details, it is absolutely necessary to take the best notes you can. Studies have found that efficient, detailed note taking is a key predictor of academic success. (See *Listening Topic 3* for a more comprehensive discussion of note taking.)

3. Strategies for Making Inferences

Some questions you hear in the Interactive Listening section are *inference* questions. An inference is an assumption made from information that we have. That is, in the case of listening comprehension, an inference is an interpretation or a conclusion based on the information that we hear. Making inferences is a critical skill because not all important information is clearly or

explicitly stated; therefore, even if we understand all the words in a listening segment, we still may not have complete comprehension.

For example, in Part 3 of Lecture 1, Professor Sapolsky says this about a disease called *alopecia areata*: “This happens once in a lifetime of a dermatologist. You talk to dermatologists, and they’ve read about it in the textbooks.”

From this passage, we can infer two things which were not directly stated. First, we can deduce that alopecia areata is an uncommon disease; if it only happens once in doctor’s career, then we know it must be fairly rare. Second, we can infer that a dermatologist is the appropriate doctor to treat this disease, and, thus, the disease must affect the skin in some way.

How can we make inferences successfully? Here are two ways improve your inferencing skills.

- **Review your pre-listening strategies carefully and apply them ([Listening Topic 1](#)).** Inferences are largely based on background knowledge. The more you know about the subject and the more you have predicted about the listening passage, the better able you will be to make inferences.
- **Trust your instincts and don’t be afraid to guess!** If you guess wrong, try to determine why you were wrong and move on. That’s what learning is all about.

Listening Topic 5: Determining the Relationships of Ideas

A lecture is a series of smaller ideas which are put together in a particular way to form larger ideas. In other words, lectures and other styles of communication are built upon the relationships of ideas. *Discourse markers*, also called *organizational cues* or *signposts*, can help you determine these relationships. In fact, these markers can help you figure out the meaning of many words or ideas which you would not have understood otherwise.

For example, in Part 2 of Lecture 1 you hear: *You ate some reedbuck that was riddled with anthrax. The medical outcome of that would be absolutely clear: you've got a 48-hour life expectancy. It kills you 100% of the time.*

The phrase “reedbuck that was riddled with anthrax” is certainly a difficult group of words to understand. However, because of the discourse marker the professor uses in the next sentence, you should be able to determine the general meaning of this difficult phrase. That is, the professor says that the **outcome of** eating “reedbuck riddled with anthrax” **was** death. This phrase, *the outcome of _____ is...*, is a discourse marker which signals a **cause-and-effect relationship**: the **result** or **effect** of eating the reedbuck was death. Because we know the relationship of ideas here, we can easily infer that “reedbuck that was riddled with anthrax” was a bad, poisonous, deadly thing to eat. In most cases, that level of understanding is all we need to follow the speaker and comprehend his/her main ideas.

Here are some common discourse markers and the relationships of ideas they indicate:

Markers of Addition

Also, ...
Another point (reason, factor, explanation, etc.) is ...
Furthermore, ...
In addition, ...
Moreover, ...

Markers of Cause and Effect

...because...
...because of...
...(be) caused/affected by...
...(be) due to...
...(be) due to the fact that...
The reason for this is...

} Indicate a cause of the previous action/idea.

As a result...
Because of this,...
Consequently,...
For this reason,...
So,...
Therefore,...
The result/outcome of this is...
Thus,...



*Indicate an effect or consequence
of the previous action/idea.*

Markers of Clarification/Explanation

In fact,...
In other words,...
That is,...
What do I mean by _____?
Which is to say,...

Markers of Classification/Categorization

There are 2 (3, 4, several, many, etc.) types/kinds/forms/categories/classifications/groups
of _____.
This comes in/takes 2 (3, 4, etc.) forms.
_____ can be divided/subdivided/broken down/classifieds into 2 (3, 4, etc.) types.

Markers of Comparison and Contrast

Along the same lines,...
In the same way,...
Like _____, ...
Likewise, ...
Similarly, ...
To put this in perspective/context, ...



Indicate similarity.

Although/though _____, ...
However, ...
In contrast, ...
Instead, ...
Nevertheless, ...
On the other hand, ...
To put this in perspective/context, ...
Unlike _____, ...



Indicate contrast.

Markers of Definition

_____ means...
We can define _____ as...
What do I mean by _____?
What is _____?

Markers of Exemplification

An example of _____ is....
For example,...
For instance,...
In fact,...
...such as...

Markers of Sequence of Events

How did this develop/occur/happen/come about?
Next/Then/Later/After that,...
There are _____ steps to _____...
We can trace this process/development...

Of course, speakers don't always use discourse markers to link their ideas. In the cases where there are no sign posts or organizational cues, listeners must rely on common sense and on their skills to predict information ([Listening Topic 1](#)), make inferences ([Listening Topic 4](#)), and determine meaning from context ([Listening Topic 6](#)).

Listening Topic 6: Guessing Vocabulary from Context

Guessing meaning from context is an important skill. Even native speakers often hear unknown words in speech and must try to guess the meaning through context. Those who are successful at this skill usually use many of the other strategies discussed in *Advanced Listening* to help them in guessing vocabulary:

- they make predictions and prepare themselves before they listen ([Listening Topic 1](#));
- they pay attention to the repetition of key words ([Listening Topic 2](#));
- they use their intuition to make inferences ([Listening Topic 4](#));
- they pay attention to discourse markers ([Listening Topic 5](#)).

In addition to the above, here are **3** strategies that will help you make better guesses about the meanings of words you don't know.

1. Use the words and phrases surrounding the unknown word to make quick guesses about its general meaning. For example, in Part 1 of Lecture 1, you hear:

What did we get sick with? What did we die from? The flu, pneumonia, tuberculosis.

You might not be familiar with the words *flu*, *pneumonia*, or *tuberculosis*, but because you know that these are things that people get sick or die from, you can infer that they must be types of illnesses. You mustn't worry if you don't know exactly what these illnesses are or what their symptoms are, for example. When you are listening, you need to make very fast guesses regarding the general meanings of words. If you stop to think about a word for too long, you will probably sacrifice your understanding of the speaker's next point. In sum, make your guesses quickly and learn to be comfortable with less than 100% certainty. Also, be confident! You will see from the exercises in *Advanced Listening* that, with practice, your guesses will usually be right!

2. Recognize when the speaker offers a definition or an explanation of an unknown word. For example, Professor Shapiro (Lecture 2) begins Part 4 by saying:

As you all know, cystic fibrosis is a very debilitating disease.

In this way, she is telling us directly that *cystic fibrosis* is a disease. Similarly, in Part 2 of Lecture 3, Professor Lau says:

Chinese GDP is about 150 billion dollars. This is gross domestic product.

He explicitly defines the acronym GDP as gross domestic product. (See [Listening Topic 5](#) for a list of discourse markers that signal a definition or explanation.)

In addition, speakers sometimes define words or phrases using *appositives*. Here, an "appositive" is any word or phrase – a noun, pronoun, noun clause, infinitive phrase, prepositional phrase, etc. – which stands after another word or phrase without a grammatical link. For instance, in Part 6 of Lecture 1 we hear:

And it turns out, that's exactly the pattern you see in a dominant baboon, in a high-ranking baboon.

Here, Professor Sapolsky clarifies the phrase “in a dominant baboon” using the appositive prepositional phrase “in a high-ranking baboon.” Here is another example from Lecture 1, Part 6:

And the order of these bases – the letters – the order of these is what we read out.

In this example, Professor Shapiro is uses the appositive “letters” to help explain “bases.”

3. Finally, try to build your vocabulary as quickly and broadly as possible, since the more words you already know, the easier it is to guess unknown words from context. As you complete this course, keep a vocabulary log of the new words and idioms you learn, and review this log frequently.

Listening Topic 7: Recognizing and Using Word Stress

What is word stress?

Word stress, also called *primary sentence stress*, refers to the word or words of a spoken sentence that are louder, longer, and of a more prominent pitch than the other words in the sentence.

Why is word stress so important?

Spoken English is a stress-based language. That is, the stressed words, or *content words*, in a sentence carry the essential meaning of that sentence, and represent the important content or new information the speaker wishes to express. On the other hand, *unstressed* words, or *function words*, simply provide a grammatical context for the stressed words. Therefore, if you are able to identify the stressed words in a message, you will usually be able to identify the essential meaning of that message. Here is an example from Lecture 1, with the stressed words in capital letters:

You hear: *If you were FEMALE and you wanted to do something very RISKY, you got PREGNANT in 1900.*

If we take out all the unstressed words and put the stressed words together, we get the central meaning of the message: FEMALE RISKY PREGNANT 1900

Here is another example:

What are the MECHANISMS that explain why SOME BODIES are so VULNERABLE to STRESS-RELATED DISEASE?

MECHANISMS SOME BODIES VULNERABLE STRESS-RELATED DISEASE ?

In this last example, it may seem strange to you that “some” is stressed. After all, stressed words are usually nouns, main verbs, descriptive adjectives and adverbs (words that carry the central meaning); they are usually not conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, and adjective determiners, such as “some.” Therefore, the fact that “some” *is* stressed tells us something very important about the speaker’s message. It tells us that he is asking why only *particular* bodies – *some, not all* bodies – are vulnerable to stress related disease. In sum, a speaker’s meaning is coded in the words he or she stresses.

How can I use word stress?

Nobody understands every word they hear, especially if the speech is rapid and complex. However, being able to identify stressed words can be a shortcut to better listening comprehension. **Try to listen more carefully to the stressed words, and don’t worry as much about the unstressed words.** *Advanced Listening* will help you become aware of this pattern of spoken English and give you practice in identifying the stresses. After a while, if you work at it, listening for the stressed words will become a natural part of your approach to listening.

Here are some tips for recognizing stressed words:

1. Remember: stressed words are usually longer, louder, and have a more prominent pitch than other words in a message.
2. Stressed words are usually articulated more carefully than unstressed words; that is, they are pronounced more carefully and are rarely reduced.
3. Speakers often have physical movements which correspond to their stressed words. That is, body language and word stress are connected. To see this, look at the lecturers on this CD with the sound turned off. Look at the movements they make with their arms, hands, and face while they talk. These movements are usually connected to the stressed words in their speech. Once you have identified the individual body language patterns of a speaker, identifying the stressed words will be easier.

Finally, you can also use these exercises on word stress to help improve your spoken English. For example, after you have identified the correct stressed words of a sentence, *repeat it out loud* and try to copy the exact stress and intonation of the sentence. This will help you to develop correct stress and fluency.