

To be able to listen well gives you confidence in communication. You can only talk sensibly when you can understand what is said to you. Failing that, you may miss important information presented to you, or respond in a funny way. Listening in everyday life is a real-time skill. Unlike reading, you often don't have the chance to adjust the pace of speech, listen again or check an unknown word. The need to understand what you hear on the spot makes it even more crucial that you develop the ability to listen well.

The aim of this leaflet

This introductory leaflet is a guide to our advice sheets for improving listening. It provides a brief description of all the advice sheets that have been prepared on specific kinds of listening. Also included below is a section on general listening skills where we refer you to textbooks rather than an advice sheet.

Basic advice about improving listening

Do you think that listening is about getting every word that is spoken? If so, think again. Even though good listeners may be able to get every word that they hear, this is not their

concern most of the time, as our experience with our first language tells us. So do specify your listening objectives when you carry out a listening activity. As long as you achieve your objectives, you are a good listener — whether you catch every word or not.

All listening textbooks in the Language Commons explain general listening skills and provide practice opportunities. Therefore, we have not prepared a separate advice sheet for these skills. Locate the *Listening* shelf in the *Multimedia Area* of the Language Commons and find a book that meets your level of English proficiency to gain some practice.

For some general advice on listening, you may also visit the websites:
<https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/listening/> &
<https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/resources-listening/>
The title of the document is “Learning Strategies, Suggestions & Tools to Improve Listening Skills”.

Listening to specific materials

Below are advice sheets that have been prepared to help you tackle listening to specific authentic materials. As the materials

differ, the targets of listening and the possible problems also vary. Is there one which is relevant to your needs?

- **Listening to the News (L2)**

An indispensable source of information in their own right, news reports are ideal practice materials because they are easily accessible and there is a real reason to listen. This advice sheet gives you suggestions about how you can prepare yourself for better news listening and what activities you can do during and after listening.

- **Listening to Lectures (L3)**

Lectures are the main way of communicating knowledge at university but sometimes they are not easy to follow. This advice sheet introduces you to the skills required to get the most from listening to academic lectures, and provides sources for practice and tips to help you improve your listening technique.

- **Improving your listening with Movies (L4)**

Most people will find watching movies an enjoyable activity. Without ruining your fun, this advice sheet suggests ways

to make viewing a learning activity as well.

- **Listening to British and American English (L5)**

As the world gets more international, it becomes more important to be able to cope with both families of English — British and American. This advice sheet introduces you to the major areas in which the two differ, and suggests ways to build up your ability to understand them.

- **Listening to Conversation (L6)**

Conversation has many features that may cause listening difficulties. This advice sheet suggests ways to tackle these problems. To learn about participating in conversation, refer to the advice sheet **Improving your Conversational English (S3)**.

- **Listening to Songs (L7)**

If you think songs are just for fun, and can't help you improve your English, think again! This advice sheet introduces you to songs in the Language Commons and on the web, and suggests ways that you can learn and enjoy songs at the same time.

And now...

If you would like any help or advice, or just a chat about your progress, please get in touch

- we are here to support your independent learning! To contact us:

- Make an appointment to see an **adviser**. For details of advisers and their availability, please go to <https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/language-adviser-timetable/>.
- E-mail your questions to **iLANG** (lcilang@ust.hk).
- Ask at the reception counter of the Language Commons — if the receptionist cannot help you directly, s/he will pass your query on to one of the advisers.

What else can you do?

- Browse the many physical (<https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/language-commons/#resources>) and online materials (<https://ilang.cle.ust.hk/resources-listening/>) for Listening.
- Join a Listening activity or short course (<http://ilang.cle.ust.hk/listening/>).

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