

## → Listening

## → Comprehension techniques

Unlike text comprehension, which allows you to read as slowly as you want or even stop to check unknown words, you cannot control the speed at which you hear a spoken text or interrupt its presentation. Thus it is important to be well prepared and clear about what points you are listening for.

- Before you listen find out the topic of the text. Then try to anticipate what will be said.
- Read the task(s) carefully and decide whether you have to listen for:
  - the gist (=the main idea)
  - all of the main points;
  - specific information only.
- The first time you listen concentrate on the gist of the text. Do not take any notes yet.
- Listen again with the task in mind. Note down the relevant information.
- Do not try to take down everything that the speaker says.
- Arrange your notes logically so that you can do the task. Use flow charts, mind maps and clusters to help you order key words (cf. page 141).

## → Reading

## → Skimming and scanning

Reading techniques are particularly useful when you work with large amounts of text, as when you prepare reports or presentations. The reading technique you choose depends on the type of information you are looking for.

**Skimming** involves finding the main ideas in a text to get an impression of its content.

- Read the title, the introduction or first paragraph, the first sentence of every paragraph and any headings and sub-headings.
- Note any pictures, charts or graphs.
- Pay attention to any words or phrases in italics or bold print.
- Read the summary or last paragraph.

**Scanning** is useful when you want to find specific information quickly. Have a question in mind and read a passage to find the answer. Ignore unrelated information.

- Decide what specific information you are looking for.
- How might the information be given in the text? For example, if you need a date, only look at the numbers in the text.
- Headings can help you to identify sections which might contain the information.
- The first sentence in a paragraph should indicate whether the information you need could be there, or not. Do not read the text in detail.

## → Reading log / diary

A reading log or diary is a good way of recording ideas that come to mind when you read a longer piece of fiction such as a *play* or *novel*. Although it is a personal record of your ideas and feelings, you can also use it to make note of details about the *plot* and *characters*. You could collect your ideas as shown on the right. You could also add pictures or drawings to illustrate your ideas. Remember to check whether your predictions about events were correct.

**Ch. 1****Plot**

- what happens,
- how suspense is built up,
- hints about future events ...

**Characters**

- personal reaction,
- descriptions,
- relationships,
- comparisons with real / fictional people ...

**Ideas / feelings / questions**

- comments on the language,
- imagery,
- characterization,
- how the story might continue;
- the meaning of events;
- whether you (dis)like the plot / characters ...

“This is not a novel to be tossed aside lightly. It should be thrown with great force.”

Dorothy Parker