

MY BEST 10 IDEAS FOR WAYS TO ...

ENHANCE LISTENING SKILLS

Laura Simons and Lisa Stevens share tips for teaching listening exercises in primary and secondary classrooms



PROFILE

Lisa Stevens

Lisa Stevens is a primary languages educator and consultant who teaches at two Birmingham primary schools. She is a member of ALL Council and has consulted on various projects including the BBC Schools Radio series *¡Mi Madrid!* for KS2 Spanish learners.

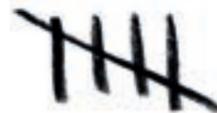


Laura Simons

Laura Simons is Second in Languages Faculty at Dylan Thomas Community School in Swansea where she teaches French, Spanish and Welsh. She is a member of ALL Council and South Wales Network Lead. She runs the Secondary MFL Facebook group in Wales.

1 Tally charts

How do we teach learners to be able to pick out certain words from a listening extract? Ask your pupils to keep a tally of the number of times they hear a particular word / conjugation of verb. This also practises numeracy and can be a good revision of numbers too as the pupils have to write the frequency in the target language.



2 Bingo

Pupils have a bingo card with key words from the extract written on it, which they cross out as they hear them. This can be differentiated in many ways: word matching; listening out for different forms of the verb on the card; or crossing out the word you hear the synonym / antonym for.

las ciencias	el francés
el dibujo	el teatro
la tecnología	las matemáticas

3 Songs

It goes without saying that songs are a great way to practise listening skills. Gap fills work extremely well – and can be differentiated by providing the words to fill the gaps, offering multiple choice answers or getting the pupils to write what they hear – www.lyricstraining.com works well for this.



4 Tweeting

A novel way of checking understanding is to get the pupils to summarise what they have just heard in the form of a tweet, which limits what they can say and ensures they are concise in their summary.



5 Guess the next word

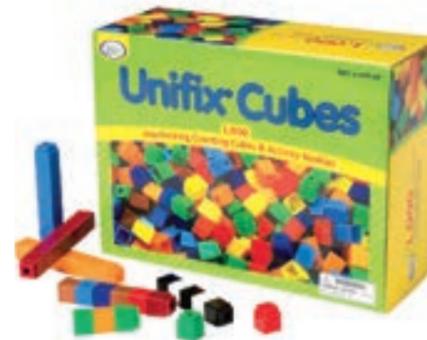
Pupils have to guess what word comes next from a list of choices. This can be differentiated by using just one answer that could be correct, or a choice of answers, each of which would make sense, but would need a wider contextual understanding.



Encourage your students to guess which word comes next

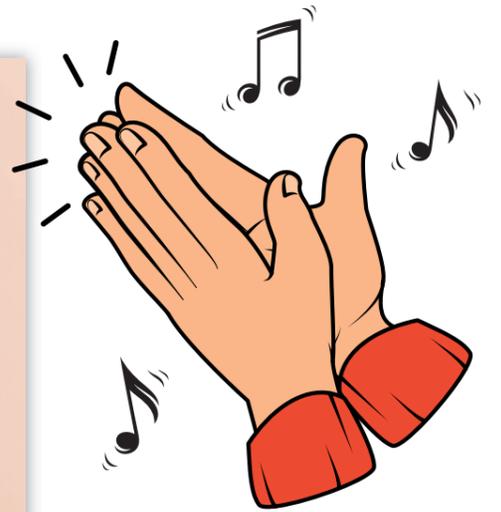
6 Use unifix

As learners listen to a colour poem in Spanish, they must put multicoloured unifix cubes into the order in which they hear the colours. The same activity can be done with any text if you create a colour-coded list of words – or images. You can add 'red herrings' if you want to make it more challenging.



7 Actions for sounds or words

Use songs to practise listening skills. An activity that always goes down well is listening out for a sound or phoneme and performing an action every time it appears. For example, in *Debajo de un botón*, learners clap for 'on' and stamp for 'in'. In *Dans le forêt lointaine* they might pass a cuddly toy each time they hear the 'ou' sound, or you could split the class into 'hibou' and 'coucou' and ask them to stand when they hear their word.



8 Reconstruct a text

After reading the chapter in *La Maravillosa Medicina de Jorge* in which George makes his marvellous medicine, ask your learners to



listen to the recipe. Cut up the text into strips and get them to work in pairs during the second reading to reconstruct the previously unseen text.

9 Sing a song and construct a picture

In a unit focusing on clothes, KS1 learners enjoy singing the songs *Juguemos en el bosque* and *¿Qué hay en la lavadora?* As well as singing along, they must complete team challenges to dress Señor Lobo for the former and grab clothes from / put clothes into the washing machine for the latter. The students love a bit of friendly competition and the task focuses the mind on the meaning of the lyrics.

10 Spot the difference

Learners listen to a sentence twice and the second time a detail is changed; it could be a noun, an adjective, a verb, an adverb – in fact, just about any word. Can the students spot the difference? For a tougher challenge, use a short paragraph with multiple differences and ask learners to note as many as they can.



Challenge learners to spot the difference between two sentences