

Study Skills Success syllabus

Listening

EXERCISE	OBJECTIVE
Introduction	<i>Presentation of learning objectives. This unit helps students with: understanding the importance of prediction; listening for detail; listening for the main points (eg in a lecture); inference skills.</i>
Listening skills: prediction	<i>Enabling students to understand the importance of prediction, involving linguistic and cultural awareness and knowledge of the world.</i>
Listening skills: using signposts	<i>Helping students to understand the importance of 'signpost' words (despite, so, in other words) in prediction, and the role of prediction in making listening easier.</i>
Listening: using other clues	<i>Making students aware of the importance of studying the question paper in a listening exam and how this can help prediction in listening.</i>
Listening: filling in a form	<i>Practice in listening for detail. Students hear a telephone conversation between a property agent and a student looking for a flat.</i>
Listening for detail	<i>Giving students practice in listening for detail. Students listen to statements which include numbers spoken at speed by a British woman and a New Zealand man. They write down the numbers.</i>
Listening for names	<i>As above except with names.</i>
Why is it difficult to listen?	<i>An activity to raise awareness of the elements involved in the skill of listening: knowledge of the subject matter; sound quality; language ability; motivation... How can this knowledge be used to make listening easier? Useful as a discussion activity.</i>
Listening for the main points	<i>Practice in listening to a lecture and picking out the main points.</i>
Orientating yourself to the task	<i>Helping students to identify different speakers and to think about their attitudes. In the audio, three speakers discuss the environment.</i>
Interpreting attitude	<i>Following on from the previous exercise, students listen to a conversation and interpret the speakers' attitude.</i>
Listen to a lecture	<i>Students listen to an academic lecture and make notes on paper. They then transfer their notes to the screen.</i>

Study Skills Success syllabus

Speaking

EXERCISE	OBJECTIVE
Introduction	<i>Presentation of learning objectives. This unit helps students doing speaking exams. It focuses on the IELTS speaking test as a typical speaking exam, but is equally useful for other oral tests.</i>
How important is it to speak?	<i>Helping students to understand the crucial importance of opening up and speaking. Students listen to two models and complete an exercise.</i>
But how do I know what to say?	<i>Strategies for fluency, including the concept of interviewing yourself.</i>
Accuracy in speaking	<i>Students are used to a focus on accuracy in writing; this exercise raises awareness about accuracy in speaking. Students listen to common mistakes and record themselves correcting them.</i>
Practise speaking	<i>Students record themselves answering 'social' questions (How did you get here? Tell me about your family.) They can compare their answer with a model.</i>
Giving a short talk	<i>Students listen to two speakers giving a talk on a given subject. This activity raises awareness of two issues: (1) the importance of not learning by heart; (2) the fact that perfection in language is not necessary for a candidate to do well.</i>
Avoid long words!	<i>Raising awareness of different registers, ie that we use and or also when speaking and moreover only when writing.</i>
Practise giving a talk	<i>Students practise giving two short talks, one on a recent invention and another on a friend. They can then listen to other students attempting the same tasks and can assess both their own talks and those of the other students.</i>
Giving opinions	<i>Equipping students with functional exponents for giving opinions. (It seems to me... I'd have thought that...) Students listen to these functional exponents in the context of a discussion on the role of libraries in the Information Age.</i>
Pronunciation	<i>A simple exercise on stress. This links to information on the Study Skills Success website on effective pronunciation programs.</i>
Backing up your opinions	<i>Helping students to understand the importance of backing up their opinions.</i>
Practise giving opinions	<i>Providing practice for students in answering questions on subjects of general academic interest. Students can prepare for these questions with a worksheet from the website. They practise not only giving opinions, but also backing them up.</i>

Study Skills Success syllabus

Reading

EXERCISE	OBJECTIVE
Introduction	<i>Presentation of learning objectives. This unit helps students with skimming, scanning, identifying the main arguments in a text and defining their reason for reading. There is also an exercise on summarising.</i>
Think about your reason for reading	<i>Raising awareness of the importance of defining a reason for reading. In this exercise students focus on all the different texts they read every day.</i>
Hannah's reasons for reading	<i>The concept of the purpose of reading everyday texts is transferred to academic texts as we look at the reasons for reading an assignment title, an index, a background text and examine the impact of purpose on reading strategies.</i>
Reasons for academic reading	<i>Raising student awareness of how reading purpose changes at different stages of completing an assignment. In this activity students work through these stages deciding on the purpose at each stage.</i>
What is scanning?	<i>Introduction to scanning. Students practise scanning an index.</i>
Practise scanning	<i>Giving students further practice in scanning. In this activity they are given ten questions and scan three articles to find the answers. The articles, on drought, breast feeding and acoustics, are of general scientific interest.</i>
What is a topic sentence?	<i>Helping students to understand the concept and importance of topic sentences. Students read an academic text dealing with topic sentences. They then have to identify the topic sentences within this text.</i>
Practise using topic sentences	<i>First, students are given authentic topic sentences and have to guess what will be in the paragraph. Then they have to match the topic sentences with the paragraphs they were originally attached to in a text on cloning.</i>
Topic sentences and headings	<i>Helping students understand how headings relate to the content of a paragraph. Students download an authentic article from the Study Skills Success website. The headings have been removed from the paragraphs and students have to replace them. They use the headings to locate information in a short quiz.</i>
What is skimming?	<i>An introduction to skimming with a practice exercise.</i>
Identifying the main points	<i>In this activity students read an authentic text in detail and answer questions on the main points.</i>
The main points summarised	<i>This exercise introduces students to summaries and the concept of paraphrasing. Students work on a summary of the text they read in the previous exercise. A useful introduction to the vocabulary unit.</i>

Study Skills Success syllabus

Writing

EXERCISE	OBJECTIVE
Introduction	<i>Presentation of learning objectives. This unit helps students with analysing the title, deciding on a structure, planning, separating main and supporting points and linking ideas.</i>
Title analysis 1	<i>Helping students to understand the importance of analysing the title. This activity introduces the PQRS title analysis technique.</i>
Title analysis 2	<i>Students practise using the PQRS analysis technique with assignment titles.</i>
Research	<i>Students practise gathering data for an essay. This unit focuses on an essay on vivisection and in this activity students go to the Study Skills Success website to source information.</i>
Essay structure 1	<i>Enabling students to understand the structure of a discussion essay. They have to match the parts of the essay with their function.</i>
Essay structure 2	<i>Practice in understanding essay structure. Students have to match extracts from a discussion essay with the section of the essay they belong to (ie introduction, body, conclusion).</i>
Essay structure 3	<i>Helping students understand the logic of essay structure in general by looking at two other essay structure types, ie time and logic.</i>
Essay structure 4	<i>The concept of structure is extended to other types of text. Chronological, narrative, parallel and deductive texts are considered.</i>
Linking ideas 1	<i>Introduction to linking at the sentence level. This exercise looks at how we link by time (first, next), logic (therefore, so), addition (in addition, moreover) and contrast (however, although).</i>
Linking ideas 2	<i>Practice in using linking words within a paragraph. Students have to drag the linking words to the correct place within a paragraph about water conservation.</i>
Writing an essay 1	<i>Throughout this unit students have been preparing an essay on vivisection. In this exercise they write the essay in exam conditions, and can then look at sample essays (for, against and undecided).</i>
Writing an essay 2	<i>More practice in essay writing. Students have four essay titles. They can visit the Study Skills Success website for authentic background information on all four essays.</i>

Study Skills Success syllabus

Grammar

EXERCISE	OBJECTIVE
Introduction	<i>Presentation of learning objectives. This unit helps students with grammatical terminology and with three areas of grammar central to academic reading and writing: the passive, modals and the language of cause and effect.</i>
Diagnosing your grammar mistakes	<i>Helping students to understand grammatical terminology. Students are shown eight sentences each with a grammar mistake and have to match the mistake with the index word in a grammar book.</i>
Test your grammar	<i>Students answer ten questions as a grammar diagnosis exercise.</i>
The passive	<i>Students answer questions to raise awareness of the concepts of the passive, form and function.</i>
The passive in reports	<i>Practice in forming the passive. Students are given sentences from academic reports that are written in the active. They have to rewrite them in the passive.</i>
Avoid these passive mistakes	<i>Helping students to pinpoint key grammar errors. Students have to spot the errors in sentences from a law assignment and correct them.</i>
Modals	<i>Introduction to why and where we use modals in the context of a text on counselling.</i>
Practise using modals	<i>Students practise choosing the correct modal in a follow-on exercise from the text on counselling in the previous exercise.</i>
Modals of mitigation	<i>Introduction to key phrases of mitigation, eg It could be argued that..., This may suggest that...</i>
The language of cause and effect	<i>Introduction to the language of cause and effect. Students see eight sentences from a report on mortality from smoking. In each sentence they click on the cause and receive feedback on the language used.</i>
Cause or effect?	<i>Practice in using the language introduced in the previous exercise. Students drag words into the correct order to form sentences that express the concept of cause and effect. This is done in the context of sentences about exam preparation.</i>
Six tips for grammar	<i>Learner training. This exercise gives students ideas on how they can improve their grammar away from the computer.</i>

Study Skills Success syllabus

Vocabulary

EXERCISE	OBJECTIVE
Introduction	<i>Presentation of learning objectives. This unit helps students with using context to guess the meanings of words, ignoring unknown words, dictionary work, use of synonyms and near synonyms and learning words in 'families'.</i>
Guessing unknown words	<i>An awareness activity. In this activity students see authentic academic sentences with 'difficult' words. They use the context to guess the meanings.</i>
Practise guessing words	<i>Practice in matching unknown words with known words in the context of a teacher training text.</i>
More guessing practice	<i>Students practise guessing the meanings of words in the context of an authentic article from New Scientist magazine.</i>
Ignoring unknown words	<i>An awareness building activity in which students are shown that they should consider their purpose for reading when deciding whether they can safely ignore unfamiliar words.</i>
Practise ignoring unknown words	<i>Practice in reading a sociology text in which 'difficult' words have been blanked out. Students decide whether they can still understand the text as a whole.</i>
How can a dictionary help you?	<i>Dictionary skills. In this activity students explore the different ways in which dictionaries can help them.</i>
Which dictionary?	<i>A diagnostic and awareness building exercise in which students work through a series of statements made by other students from around the world and decide which dictionary is best for them.</i>
How can I widen my vocabulary?	<i>Students look at texts from history, English, IT and economics and find synonyms and near synonyms.</i>
How can I use my wider vocabulary?	<i>Practice in using synonyms and near synonyms in inauthentic and then authentic texts.</i>
Learning words in families.	<i>Students practise building up words from affixes and word roots.</i>
Six tips for vocab!	<i>Learner training. This exercise gives students ideas on how they can build their vocabulary away from the computer.</i>

Study Skills Success syllabus

Research

EXERCISE	OBJECTIVE
Introduction	<i>Presentation of learning objectives. This unit helps students with deciding where and how to find information on the Web; developing criteria for evaluating websites; finding their way around a source book; developing strategies for note-taking; and understanding the Cornell system for note-taking.</i>
The Web: sources of information	<i>Practice in listening to a lecture. The lecture is about sources of information on the Web. Students take notes and fill in the gaps in the notes on the screen.</i>
The Web: effective searching	<i>Practice in using search engines. Students print out a question sheet and find the answers by searching on the Web.</i>
The Web: evaluating information	<i>An activity in which students develop an evaluation checklist by reading four extracts from websites and developing prompts. They check their answers by comparing them with a sample checklist on the Study Skills Success website.</i>
The Library: the right book	<i>Helping students to understand the function of different parts of a book; front cover, publishing notes, index...</i>
The Library: the right book (2)	<i>Students practise using the information from the previous exercise by working through the process of finding the right book for an assignment.</i>
The Library: the key word	<i>Helping students to understand how to find the key word for an index or search engine.</i>
Notes: abbreviations	<i>An exercise in which students match abbreviations with words they might hear in a lecture or read in a book.</i>
Notes: ideas for layout	<i>Students explore ideas for laying out notes by writing notes on three texts from a business studies course.</i>
Notes: the Cornell System	<i>Students listen to a lecture on the Cornell system, a complete system for note-taking. As they listen they practise taking notes.</i>
Notes: the Cornell System 2	<i>Students compare their notes with the Cornell layout, and for the remainder of the lecture practise applying the Cornell System.</i>
Notes: understanding Cornell	<i>A comprehension exercise in which students can listen to the lecture again, and test their understanding of the system and how it can be useful to them.</i>

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Visuals

EXERCISE	OBJECTIVE
Introduction	<i>Presentation of learning objectives. This unit helps students why we use visuals, and which visuals are suitable for different types of data. They will also learn how to talk about visuals using appropriate tenses. They will practise interpreting charts and tables, and explaining their interpretation.</i>
What is the purpose of visuals?	<i>Helping students to understand why data can be more accessible in visual format than in continuous text. Students listen to a mini-lecture.</i>
Which visual?	<i>Understanding the strengths of different types of visual in presenting different types of data. Students match the data-type with the chart or table.</i>
Describing a line graph	<i>An activity in which students listen to a lecture and learn vocabulary associated with different points on a line graph. The focus is on nouns (the peak, a sharp fall...)</i>
Practise describing a line graph	<i>Students practise interpreting and describing a line graph. The focus this time is on verb forms. Students read a presentation text on the use of tense in describing visuals.</i>
The language of approximation	<i>Enabling students to use expressions of approximation, such as the bulk of..., roughly, a small fraction...</i>
Summarising	<i>Helping students to interpret a bar graph and summarise the main conclusions.</i>
Practise summarising the main points	<i>An exercise in which students interpret data presented in a graph and a table and write a short report. They can compare their report with a model.</i>
Describing a flow chart	<i>Students look at how a flow chart describes a process rather than a static situation, and how the language used to describe a flow chart is therefore different. They listen to a trainer describing a process.</i>
Listen and draw a flow chart	<i>Students listen to a company trainer describing a process and draw a flow chart. They then practise choosing the correct tenses to describe a process.</i>
Seminar work: explaining graphs	<i>Students practise describing two graphs as if they were in a seminar. They can record themselves and compare their description with a native speaker.</i>
Write a report	<i>Practice in viewing related data in three different formats. Students interpret the data and write a short report.</i>