

FIRST (FCE): LISTENING

All current research shows that students whose teachers speak only English in the classroom develop listening comprehension skills much faster. One of the ideas that went out of fashion but has now returned to the classroom is dictation.

Task: You could choose a standard dictation exercise based around a grammar item or a topic. The students write down everything they hear. After completing the dictation, give the students a few minutes to work together, exchanging ideas and making changes to their scripts.

Task: A running dictation is always a light way to finish a lesson but still has good benefits. Make a number of copies of the passage and place them in different places in the room. Divide the students up into pairs or groups depending on the size of the class. One person runs to the copy page, memorizes the first sentence then runs back to the group where s/he dictates the sentence to the partner or group who listens and writes. This is repeated until the whole passage has been dictated. It is then corrected.

Task: Students are given the text of a dictation which contains specific mistakes. They must listen and identify and correct those mistakes. This activity is particularly good for very careful, precise listening.

Task: Listening to check your answers: After completing a written exercise or perhaps even a quiz, listen to a recording to check their answers. This is a useful listening exercise because the students are motivated to listen carefully. Once again this is a good end-of-lesson activity or to finish up the week.