Preliminary (PET): Listening

Encourage students to listen to the radio rather than the TV as the latter has pictures and helps the student understand the meaning. eBooks are an excellent way of improving both listening and reading.

Ensure that students are familiar with the different tasks and the strategies needed to tackle each type of question. This will give them reassurance and ensure that their pre-listening prediction highlighting will be helpful.

With multiple-choice and multiple-matching exam-style listening tasks, it’s not just a question of whether the students get the answer right. It is equally important that they can justify their answer and can give a reason for why they selected it. What did the speaker actually say? When a student gets an incorrect answer this will highlight what they have misunderstood.

Likewise with multiple-choice questions, it can be useful for students to explain why the incorrect options are wrong. Perhaps this will highlight negatives in the sentence or what a speaker says that contradicts the information in the option or not letting distractors be the answer.

Always return to a listening piece a few weeks or months later. Let them look at the answers in their books and their notes and the key words that gave them the answer. Then give them the listening activity again and see if they obtain full marks.

Always make sure that students understand how they should record their answers and when they should copy their answers onto the answer sheets. It should be emphasised that they should write clearly in their question booklet as it will perhaps be 20 minutes before they come back to what they have written. It would be a disaster if they cannot remember or read what they have written down.