



Better Listening in English Webinar

by Andrew D. Miles

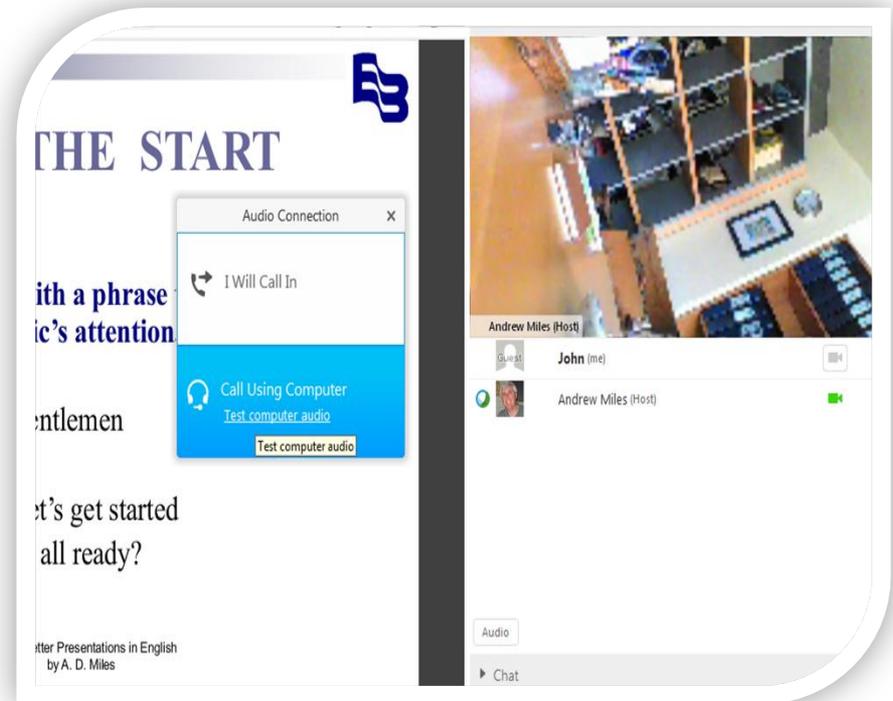


The webinar will start in a few minutes. Use this time to check whether your speakers work. If you have a microphone say hello to check I can hear you.

Better Listening Webinar
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CAN'T HEAR?

- If your speakers don't work click on the audio icon and then choose the "call using computer" option.



RECORDING



- This webinar might be recorded and it's contents made available to the public.
- If you do now wish to participate please leave this session now.

DISCONNECTED?



- If we get cut off please wait for ten minutes before you leave. If ten minutes have passed it means I wasn't able to solve the problem and we'll have to reschedule the webinar.
- We've had connection issues in the past (once I had a power cut!).
- If there's a problem I need time to log off and log on again.

LISTEN AND LISTEN!



Listening can't be taught
Listening always progresses slowly

Listen for three hours a week in short sessions. Play a CD in your car, download a podcast or watch the news.

Choose subjects you are interested in and stop when your attention drifts off.

Listen in 20-minute chunks with 10-minute breaks.



LISTEN THREE TIMES

The first time for general meaning.

The second for concrete information.

The third for what you didn't get before.

Listen several times but don't become obsessed with understanding every phrase. The aim is to improve your comprehension, not your vocabulary.

YouTube videos are ideal. Short and easy to rewind.

SET PARTIAL GOALS



Keep those Oscar-winning masterpieces in your library and don't touch them until your comprehension is excellent.

Or watch them with subtitles.

Buy audio books that suit your level.

Look for easy listening exercises in the web.

Go for Frank Sinatra first and only afterwards for Eminem.



LEARN THE SOUNDS

Stack and *stuck* are not the same, though we know it's hard to tell them apart.

Learn how to pronounce all vowel and consonant sounds properly.

You won't recognise sounds you don't know exist.

Learn some phonetics, as it's the fastest way to improve pronunciation and listening skills.

PHONEMIC CHART

iː see	ɪ his	ʊ put	uː too	ɪə ear	eɪ say	
e ten	ə ago	ɜː her	ɔː saw	ʊə pure	ɔɪ boy	əʊ so
æ hat	ʌ but	ɑː car	ɒ hot	eə air	aɪ buy	aʊ now

p pen	b book	t tea	d day	tʃ chair	dʒ jam	k key	g go
f four	v very	θ thin	ð that	s sun	z zoo	ʃ she	ʒ vision
m man	n no	ŋ sing	h hat	l look	r red	w want	j yes

VOWELS

long sounds

short sounds

DIPHTHONGS

CONSONANTS

voiced consonants

unvoiced consonants



RECORD YOURSELF

Read a paragraph and record yourself.

How do English sounds differ from yours?

Read it again and compare your second recording to your first.



MEMORISE SONGS

By repeating phonemes and internalising words that seem stuck together we train our brain to recognise words when we hear them.

Songs and poems will work well.

The secret? Download one song every week and sing along in your car.



ACCENT MATTERS

If you have an Irish teacher
it will be harder to understand Americans.

Listen to recordings that have a similar accent
to your target speakers.



ASK FOR REPETITION

Your brain works more slowly in English than in your mother tongue so ask for repetition when you need time to think.

English people are used to repeating so don't worry if you need to ask.



SORRY?

- I don't understand.
- What do you mean?
- I can't follow you.
- Let's check if I heard correctly.
- Would you mind repeating?
- Could you say that again?
- What was that?
- Sorry?



NO PHONETIC SPELLING

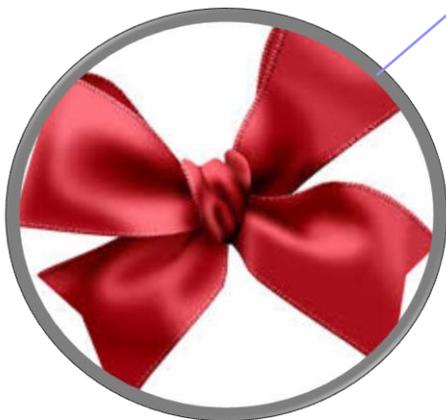


→ **Sew** is just the same as **so**,

Tie a ribbon in a **bow**,

When you meet the Queen you **bow**,

Which again must rhyme with **how**.



NO PHONETIC SPELLING



English spelling does not always agree with pronunciation so it's difficult to connect written words and sounds.

Imagine English as a language where you need to learn everything twice. Memorise both the spelling and the pronunciation of every new word.

Ask your teacher to pronounce new words and say them aloud so she checks whether your pronunciation is right.



GO FOR THE ESSENCE!

Many expressions carry no meaning.

Pay attention to words speakers say louder, words they say slowly, words they repeat, words where their pitch rises or words they pause before.



GO FOR THE ESSENCE!

Don't concentrate on complicated sentences at the expense of simpler ones. If you do, you'll miss what you *can* follow because you're thinking about what you can't.

Focus on what you understand and forget the rest. It's easy to miss what's easy because you are thinking about what's difficult!



ANTICIPATE

Memorise vocabulary related to the subject to be discussed.

Role play similar situations with your teacher so you know what type of language to expect in real-life interchanges.

Read or listen to speeches the person might have delivered; look for articles she might have written.

People tend to use cyclical language so if you've heard or read it the person will almost likely repeat it.



OPEN YOUR EYES

Trust your eyes over your ears.

We are so obsessed with verbal output
that we forget gestures.

Trust your instinct and mirror the speaker. If he cries,
do likewise. If she smiles, smile.



FIND A QUIET PLACE

If you can choose the venue, meet speakers at quiet places where outside sounds won't hinder your understanding.

Most tapas bar are picturesque and foreigners love them but understanding is a nightmare. Avoid street-level terrazas, crowded restaurants, noisy pubs and music bars.

The secret? Try hotel top-floor bars where drinks might be expensive but sound is generally good.



HELP OTHERS

- ❖ Catch the person's attention before you say your first words.
 - ❖ Pronounce introductory phrases before the core of your message.
 - ❖ Resort to facial expressions, gestures and visual aids.
 - ❖ Give examples when misunderstood.
 - ❖ Try to avoid noisy backgrounds. If necessary go somewhere else.
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- ❖ Don't use slang, acronyms, ironical phrases or complicated language.
 - ❖ Don't forget to give verbal clues when you change subject.
 - ❖ Don't speak too fast or drop your pitch at the end of words.
 - ❖ Don't shout, as yelling won't make your accent clearer.
 - ❖ Don't chew, eat or smoke while you speak.



BITS & PIECES

- ❖ Watch series in their original version—with or without subtitles.
- ❖ Play online games with foreigners.
- ❖ Check the pronunciation of new words with online glossaries.
- ❖ Attend webinars on favourite subjects.
- ❖ Download audio books and listen to them as you jog.
- ❖ Watch presentations related to your job.
- ❖ Listen to the BBC.
- ❖ When you play computer games change the language to English.
- ❖ Watch tutorials in English when you need to learn something.
- ❖ Watch Ted Talks videos as you have a lunchtime sandwich.
- ❖ Join a friend at an English pub.
- ❖ Follow Premier League or NBA matches.
- ❖ Join a gospel choir!



CONTACT DETAILS

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