LISTENING IN ENGLISH

What are they saying?

If English is your second language (or even your third), you may sometimes wonder what Aussies (Australians) are saying. Good news! Your ears will soon adapt if you:

1. Listen often
2. Listen actively
3. Use other senses to help

1 Listen often

Listen to English in everyday situations:

At uni—Go to lectures, tutes, seminars, public talks and STUDY Smarter workshops.

At home—Watch TV, podcasts and videos. Listen to the news, to music and songs, and to STUDY Smarter on YouTube.

Out and about—Get out as much as you can. Listen to people all around you in the bus, in the shops and at work.

In social settings—Join social groups and clubs, and take part in activities at uni and in the community.

The more you listen, the more you’ll learn—as long as you listen well!

2 Listen actively

Part of listening well is listening actively. To listen actively, try to predict what people might say, to guess what they mean and to ask questions about what doesn’t make sense.

Predicting is important, because even if you are wrong, it helps prepare you for listening.

And guessing at overall meaning helps, because meaning is not just in words; it’s also in body language and intonation.

Use these vital clues to help you guess what people mean.

Finally, when in doubt, speak up and ask questions! Most speakers are happy to clarify what they mean.

Remember, if don’t get what someone says, it may not just be you. Others might feel this way too.

You might not understand because the speaker hasn’t explained things well or spoken clearly.

Or it could be that they’ve used cultural references you don’t know, or humour and irony, saying the exact opposite of what they actually mean!

3 Use other senses to help

When you listen, you don’t just listen with your ears. You also listen with your eyes, with your mind, and with your body as well!

So help yourself to listen well at university by sitting near the front so you can see facial expressions, gestures, slides and videos.

Make notes of key ideas as you listen. This will help you focus on what’s being said. Add colour to your notes to show different themes.

Write down questions as they occur and make sure to ask these when there’s a chance.
Try these on your own

**Predicting**
1. Select videos, podcasts or YouTube screencasts that you can replay.
2. Play a short segment, stopping after a few minutes to predict what’s coming next.
3. Continue listening. How well did your prediction match what you heard?
4. Repeat several times: starting, stopping, predicting and checking.

**Taking notes**
1. Select videos, podcasts or YouTube screencasts that have subtitles or scripts.
2. Play a short segment with subtitles off; taking notes while you listen.
3. Listen again with subtitles on. How well do your notes match what was said?
4. Repeat several times: starting, taking notes, stopping and checking.

**Guessing**
1. Select videos, podcasts or YouTube screencasts that you can replay.
2. Play a short segment without any sound, guessing what people are saying.
3. Listen again with sound on. How well did your guesses match what was said?
4. Repeat several times: starting, guessing, stopping and checking.

**Asking questions**
1. Read several reviews of a film you’d like to watch.
2. Write a series of questions about what might happen during the film.
3. Watch the film, listening for the answers to your questions.
4. If some questions are unanswered, turn on subtitles and watch it again.

Try this with a friend
Download a podcast transcript, take one half each and blank out every 7th word. Then swap halves and listen to the podcast, filling in the blanks.

**English Language Corner**
Check out the *English Language Corner* on the STUDY Smarter website for information about events, programs and resources to improve your English fast!

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**Any suggestions?**
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