

English
for
academic
study:

Sample unit

Listening

Course Book

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Book map

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Introduction

This book has been designed with two main aims in mind:

- to help you better understand spoken English, particularly the spoken English of academic lectures;
- to help you develop your note-taking skills while listening.

1. Video/audio recordings

Many of the lecture extracts in this book are based on transcripts of authentic lectures given at the University of Reading. These lectures were given to audiences of British and international students as part of their normal degree programmes. Although the extracts have been re-recorded to ensure clarity, the language and content of these lectures have been maintained, to ensure that you are provided with listening practice that closely simulates listening to and note-taking from real academic lectures.

The lecture extracts are taken from a range of academic fields, including investment banking, development economics, marketing, psychology and linguistics. Although the original lectures were intended for students doing degrees in these subjects, we have chosen extracts that should be accessible to a general audience of students.

Other extracts have been written specially for this book, but have also been designed to reflect features of authentic academic lectures.

The recordings are available on both audio CD and DVD.

2. Structure of the book

Apart from the first unit, all the units are divided into two sections; macro-skills and micro-skills.

Macro-skills include such things as:

- making use of lecture introductions;
- note-taking;
- recognizing the structure of lectures.

Micro-skills focus on linguistic features of spoken English such as:

- recognizing words that are spoken quickly and are not stressed;
- recognizing where one spoken word ends and the next begins;
- word stress and sentence stress.

In these units you will also find items called *Sound advice*, which either summarize key points from the unit or present advice on listening strategies.

At the end of the book you will find transcripts for all the lectures in the book. Your teacher will draw your attention to these transcripts and will, occasionally, after you have completed the main listening tasks, give you the opportunity to listen to the recording and follow the transcript at the same time. Doing this will help you learn the spoken forms of words that you may only know in their written form.

3. Vocabulary

Although the recordings in the book may not be related to your particular subject, you will find a lot of useful vocabulary in this book.

There are different types of vocabulary that you may find useful:

- academic words – these are words that occur frequently in many different academic subjects, so whatever your degree subject, it is important to learn how to use these words;

- non-technical topic words – many of the recordings use sets of topic vocabulary which will be useful to students on almost all degree courses; for example, the text on market research contains many words connected with surveys and questionnaires and statistics;
- subject-specific words – some of the recordings contain words which will be of particular interest to students of specific subjects. For example, there is an extract on social learning which will be of particular interest to students planning to study psychology.

4. Listening outside the classroom

Your listening will improve more quickly if you practise outside the classroom. You can do this in a variety of ways, for example, talking with English-speaking friends, listening to the radio or watching TV, or working with independent study materials.

You will find *Sound advice* sections in most units in this book, and these contain useful advice for improving your listening. Here are some more ideas.

- There are a number of good websites which provide practice in listening to academic lectures. If you go to the EAS website (enter through <http://www.englishforacademicstudy.com>) you will find links to these sites.
- A wide range of vocabulary is part of the key to success in listening. You should keep a record of new words or phrases that you meet, and you should make sure you note down the pronunciation, particularly if it does not fit in with pronunciation patterns you are familiar with. Ask the teacher to model the pronunciation if you are not sure of it.
- There are several dictionaries on CD-ROM on which you can hear the pronunciation (and see the meaning) of a word on screen, either by moving the mouse pointer over a word or by clicking on it. The *Macmillan English Dictionary* and *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* both have good CD-ROM versions. Think about buying one because it will be useful, not just on this course, but in your later studies.

3

Identifying key ideas in lectures

In this unit you will:

- practise identifying the key points a lecturer wants to make;
- distinguish key points from examples;
- use your understanding of examples to deduce key points;
- develop your understanding of relationships between ideas;
- learn patterns of pronunciation and word stress in word families.

Task 1: Thinking about key ideas


With a partner or in groups, discuss the following questions.

- Why is it important to recognize key ideas (or main points) in a lecture?
- Why do lecturers use examples?

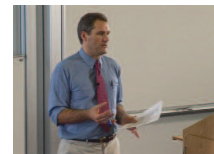
Task 2: Identifying key points in a lecture

2.1 You are going to listen to the first part of a lecture on franchising. Before you listen, discuss the following questions with a partner.

- What is franchising?
- Can you think of any businesses that are run as franchises?

2.2  **CD1 – 16** Listen to Part 1 of the lecture, which is in three sections. Identify the three sections from the following list and put them in the correct order.

- a definition of franchising
- examples of successful franchises
- one reason for setting up a franchise business
- how franchising works
- the types of business that are suitable for franchising



2.3  **CD1 – 17** Listen to Part 1 Section 1 again and answer the following questions.

- Why does the lecturer talk about hairdressing salons?
- Look at the following points the lecturer makes in Section 1. Which is the key idea in this section? What is the relationship between the key idea and the other points?
 - You may need large amounts of money or to bring in new skills to expand your business.
 - As a business expands, the owner will not have the same amount of personal control over the operation of the business as he used to.
 - As successful businesses develop, they often reach a stage when expansion brings risks.
 - You can minimize the risks of developing your business by franchising it.

- 2.4** 🎧 **CD1 – 18** Listen to Part 1 Section 2 again. In pairs, discuss what the following terms mean in the context of the lecture.

franchisor	franchisee	trademark	trade name
package	untrained person	continual assistance	

- 2.5** 🎧 **CD1 – 19** Listen to Part 1 Section 3 again.

- What does the franchisor provide to the franchisee?
- What does the franchisee give in return?

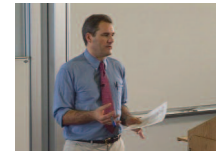
Task 3: Distinguishing key points from examples

The lecturer begins Part 2 of the lecture by saying: 'There are a number of issues that you need to consider when deciding whether or not to franchise your business.'

- 3.1** **With a partner, discuss what you think the lecturer will talk about in Part 2 of the lecture.**

- 3.2** 🎧 **CD1 – 20** Listen to Part 2 of the lecture.

- Make brief notes in your notebook on the three or four points made by the lecturer, maximum 15 words for each point.
- Compare your notes with a partner and see whether you have identified the same points.



- 3.3** **Look at the transcript for Track 20 on page 68 and find examples of language used by the lecturer to signpost key points.**

For example, the lecturer signposts the first point by saying: 'Firstly, there needs to be ...'

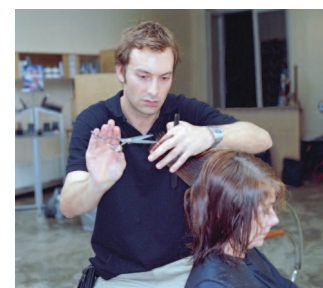
- 3.4** 🎧 **CD1 – 21/22** Listen to Part 2 Sections 1 and 2 again and answer the following questions.

Section 1

- To support his key point, the lecturer gives two reasons and two examples. What are they?
- Do they help make his point clearer? If so, how?

Section 2

- What point does the lecturer make about buying supplies in bulk?
- How is this point related to the key point in this section?
- Now look at the text on the next page. Having made the key point, the speaker repeats the idea twice. Underline the words where he repeats the idea.



In addition – and this is fairly obvious – you will need a fairly wide margin between cost and income. Remember that the gross margin needs to provide a return on the investment to both the franchisor and the franchisee. So you will need to keep costs low and prices as high as the market will bear. One advantage of a franchise operation is that supplies can be bought in bulk across the whole franchise, which will help to keep costs down. But you can see that franchising would be unsuitable in a market where the margin between cost and income is very narrow.

3.5 🎧 **CD1 – 23** Listen to Part 2 Section 3 again, where the lecturer talks about training and support; the operating manual; and developing skills quickly.

- How are the above three ideas related to one another?
- What point does the lecturer make about previous experience?

Task 4: Signposting key points

In Part 3, the lecturer continues to discuss some of the issues that need to be considered when trying to decide whether or not to franchise your business.

4.1 🎧 **CD1 – 24** Listen to Part 3 of the lecture. Make notes on the key points in your notebook. Then compare your notes with a partner. Have you identified the same key points?



4.2 🎧 **CD1 – 25** Listen to Part 3 Section 1 again and complete the excerpt with one to three words in each space.

Note: Notice that again the lecturer uses signposting language to indicate he is beginning a new point.


One further issue you may need to consider is whether the business is _____ to another geographical area. If you have developed your business serving one particular part of the country and you want to set up a franchise network covering a _____, the whole country for example, another thing you will have to consider is whether there is a _____ for your product or service in different regions. It may be, for example, that competition in other parts of the country may be so _____ that it is difficult for franchisees to _____, or that for localized _____ or _____ reasons the business may not be as profitable.

Study tip

A technique often used by lecturers to highlight ideas is to stress key words or phrases. Trying to identify where the speaker does this can help you recognize key points in a lecture.

4.3 🎧 **CD1 – 26/27** Listen to Part 3 Sections 2 and 3 again. Make notes on the different ways in which brands can be protected.

4.4 Look at the following excerpt.

- a) Underline the signposting language used to highlight key points.
- b)  CD1 – 26/27 Now listen again and circle any key words or phrases the lecturer stresses.

Note: You may also notice that the speaker sometimes pauses after key points.

Finally, when you are setting up a franchise network, you will need to bear in mind that you will be losing direct control of the way your brand is perceived by the customer, so this brings me to my last point, which is to emphasise the importance of protecting your brand. I am sure you are all aware that it often takes a long time to establish a distinctive brand with a valuable reputation, but that this reputation can be damaged comparatively quickly if, for example, quality standards are not consistently applied. The detailed operating manual that I referred to earlier will play a role in maintaining the brand but, just as important, you need to take care selecting franchisees and monitoring their operations. In addition to checking that franchisees have the relevant skills and experience to run a successful business, you also need to ensure that they share the same business values as you, that they accept the importance of maintaining the brand and that they are clear about what they can or can't change about the way the business is run – so people who are very individualistic will probably not make good franchisees.

The written agreement between the franchisor and the franchisee should specify very clearly what performance and quality standards are expected, and much of the initial training will be ensuring that staff have the skills to achieve these standards. However, regular visits to franchise units are essential in ensuring that the standards are being applied consistently and uniformly, and ongoing training may be necessary to deal with issues that are uncovered in these visits. Protecting the brand is ultimately in the interests of both the franchisor and the franchisee, because for the franchisee one of the main advantages of running a franchise is that they are buying into and helping to consolidate an established brand.

Sound advice:

- As you listen, try to keep in mind the key ideas and relate any new information you hear to those ideas.
- Listen for signposting language, stressed words or phrases and pauses, as indicators of key points.
- If you do not understand a key point, listen for any examples which may help you to recover the meaning.

Task 5: Micro-skills: Word families (1)

You can extend your vocabulary by learning groups of words which have the same basic form and which are often related in meaning.

Examples:

Noun	Verb	Adjective
product, production, productivity	produce	productive
definition	define	definite, definitive
economy, economics, economist	economize	economic, economical

5.1 Practise the pronunciation of the words in the table and underline the stressed syllable in each word.


5.2 Use the words in the table to study how changes in syllable stress within word families affects pronunciation.

In many cases a different syllable stress has an effect on the pronunciation of the sounds.

Example:


product /'prɒdʌkt/

produce /prə'dju:s/

5.3  **CD1 - 28** You can also modify the meaning of a word by adding a prefix, e.g., *interpret/misinterpret*, *assess/reassess*, *appear/disappear*. Listen to the following sentences and write in the missing prefix to each word.

How do the prefixes change the meaning of the original words?

- All trade unions were declared ____ legal by the government.
- This is one example of a ____ match between the individual's goals and those of the organization.
- They found no significant ____ relation between class size and levels of achievement.
- Real estate ____ actions rose by 30 per cent last month.
- Prices are determined through the ____ action of supply and demand.
- These animals exhibited ____ normal behaviour compared to the control group.


5.4  **CD1 - 29** Listen to the following sentences and complete them with two to four words in each space. Some of the words include prefixes.

- We had to get _____, because the detail was not very clear on the original ones.
- Many doctors work _____, which puts them under a lot of stress.
- Crime prevention is _____ of the police's work, but it is often difficult to assess its effectiveness.
- Doctors have noticed _____, such as bulimia and anorexia, not just among young women but, surprisingly, among young men.

Study tip

If you think about the grammar *and* meaning of each sentence as you do the exercise, you are more likely to get the correct answers.

- e) These plants should be grown in partial shade, rather than _____.
- f) Researchers have found that _____ much more likely to be involved in traffic accidents.

5.5  **CD1 - 30 Listen to the following groups of sentences. Complete the sentences with two to four words in each space. One of the words in each space is a form of the word in bold.**

- a) Children need a **secure** environment in which to grow up.
Many immigrants are only able to find _____.
The money was invested in _____ and property.
- b) Achievement levels **vary** considerably from school to school in the city.
Some economists believe that interest rates can be predicted by examining _____.
In the Eden Project they have managed to create _____ of habitats.
There is _____ to healthcare in different parts of the country.
- c) How are we going to **solve** this problem?
You need to _____ in water before applying it to the crop.
There appears to be _____ between the two countries, despite years of peace negotiations.
- d) A mass spectrometer was used to **analyze** the gases.
_____ of the data is needed to confirm these initial findings.
The course is designed to help students to develop _____.
- e) The results **indicate** that the virus mutates more rapidly than was first believed.
All the _____ suggest that the economy is recovering.
The strike was _____ the level of the workers' frustration.
- f) Chomsky was a fierce **critic** of Bush Senior's foreign policy.
There was _____ the way the election had been administered.
The negotiations _____ establishment of peace in the area.

Sound advice: Your listening skills will improve if you work to enlarge your vocabulary. Learning *word families* is an effective way of doing this, but you also need to develop your awareness of differences in pronunciation between words in each family. You can learn the most useful word families by referring to the Academic Word List and by doing the exercises in *EAS: Vocabulary*.

Unit summary

In this unit you have practised identifying key points in a lecture and seen how examples can help you understand a key point. You have also developed your understanding of relationships between ideas and learnt patterns of pronunciation and word stress in word families.

1 Which two statements about how a lecturer identifies key points in a lecture are not true? Mark each statement T (true) or F (false).

- a) The lecturer may use signposting words and phrases to indicate a key point.
- b) The lecturer may use words and phrases that are specific to the topic of the lecture.
- c) The lecturer may stress important words and phrases.
- d) The lecturer may pause for a moment before introducing a key point.
- e) The lecturer may repeat some key points.
- f) The lecturer may speak very quickly at times to emphasise that a point is key.
- g) The lecturer may give examples to support a key point.
- h) The lecturer may give reasons why a point is important.

2 Tick the statement below that is true for you.

- a) I can now distinguish between key points and examples.
- b) I still get confused about what is the key point and what is an example.

3 When a lecturer uses typical words and phrases to indicate a key point, it is called 'signposting'. Write eight typical signposting words and phrases from the unit here.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

For web resources relevant to this unit, see:

www.englishforacademicstudy.com/student/listening/links

These weblinks will help you identify and practise key vocabulary and provide you with further listening practice related to business matters such as franchising.