

# Introduction

## Good study practice

Before you start to use this book, complete the questionnaire. Decide whether each statement is true (T) or false (F) for you. Then work in pairs and compare your approaches to learning. Come back to the fourth column when you have finished studying the entire book, and consider if any of your opinions have changed.

	You	Your partner	After you complete this book
1 I like to participate actively in class discussions.			
2 I like to review what I've learned in class and think about how it's connected to other things I know.			
3 I think it's important to listen carefully to the tutor and remember everything in lectures.			
4 I like to develop my understanding of a subject by doing extra research by myself.			
5 I think studying is enjoyable because it's interesting.			
6 The main purpose of studying is because it's useful for a future career.			
7 If I have a question about my courses, I like to get the answer from my tutor first.			
8 If I have a question about my courses, I try to search for the answer in my coursebooks.			
9 I think it's important to memorize the information that my tutor gives me.			
10 I think it's important to give original opinions in class and in my writing.			
11 I focus on preparing well to pass my exams.			
12 I want to study to broaden my understanding of a subject because it will help me in real life.			
13 I think it's important to consider new ideas critically to decide whether I agree with them or not.			
14 I think it is important to accept the ideas that the tutor tells me.			

# Unit 1      Approaches to learning

## Unit overview

Part      This part will help you to ...      By improving your ability to ...

<b>A</b>	<b>Be an effective listener</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• understand types of listening</li><li>• use note-taking techniques</li><li>• understand strategies for effective listening</li><li>• understand the purpose of lectures</li><li>• follow lectures effectively.</li></ul>
<b>B</b>	<b>Understand and compare academic texts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• recognize types of academic text</li><li>• choose appropriate reading strategies</li><li>• use skimming, scanning and intensive reading</li><li>• take notes while reading.</li></ul>
<b>C</b>	<b>Research and describe academic texts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• understand more about learning methods in higher education</li><li>• find source materials</li><li>• understand source references</li><li>• use library catalogues.</li></ul>
<b>D</b>	<b>Participate in academic discussions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• participate in tutorials</li><li>• generate and organize ideas</li><li>• reflect on your discussion skills.</li></ul>
<b>E</b>	<b>Write an academic essay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• understand different types of academic writing</li><li>• use a process approach to academic writing</li><li>• understand essay questions</li><li>• develop a thesis statement</li><li>• use sources in your writing.</li></ul>



Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-63544-9 – Skills for Study Level 1  
Craig Fletcher and Blair Matthews Ian Smallwood  
Excerpt  
[More information](#)

Unit 1

Part A

Understanding spoken information

By the end of Part A you will be able to:

- understand types of listening
- use note-taking techniques
- understand strategies for effective listening
- understand the purpose of lectures
- follow lectures effectively.

1 Types of listening

1a Work in pairs. Look at the situations below where students need to listen to English at college or university. Match the situations (1–5) with their possible purposes (a–e).

Situation	Purpose
1 Lecture	a To give students an opportunity to speak at length on a topic they have researched
2 Class or tutorial/seminar	b To discuss projects and study arrangements
3 Presentation	c To provide students with information or ideas relating to a course of study
4 Discussion with classmates	d To socialize
5 Talking with friends	e To allow detailed discussion of ideas presented in a lecture

1b Think of at least three other situations at college or university where you may need to listen to English. Write them below.

Other situations
1
2
3

1c Listening to lectures can sometimes be difficult. Work in pairs. Write down three things you might do to make the situation less difficult.

Making listening to lectures less difficult
1
2
3

1d Work in groups and compare your suggestions.

2 Using note-taking techniques

Taking notes is an important part of listening to lectures. Good note-taking requires practice. Throughout this course, you will be given lots of opportunities to develop your note-taking skills.

2a Match the sentence beginnings (1–7) with the sentence endings (a–g) to reveal some advice on effective note-taking.

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1 Don't write down everything ...   | a short.   |
| 2 Keep your notes ...               | b your notes and add any extra points.                           |
| 3 Don't write full ...              | c and well organized.  |
| 4 Make sure your notes are tidy ... | d for long words and drawing simple diagrams to represent ideas. |
| 5 After the lecture, review ...     | e explanations and detailed descriptions.                        |
| 6 Review your notes ...             | f regularly.   |
| 7 Try using abbreviations ...       | g that you hear.   |

2b Check your answers with a partner and add some more suggestions of your own for effective note-taking.

Suggestions for effective note-taking

3 Effective listening

To be an effective listener, you need to engage with what the speaker is saying and make sure that you hear and understand as much as possible.



3a Listen to a short talk given by a tutor to a group of students during their induction week on the topic of 'listening for study'. Write notes about any suggestions the tutor makes.

Before listening	While listening

- 3b** Compare your notes with a partner. What might you have done before or during *this* listening task to make your listening more effective?
- 3c** Look at the table below and tick (✓) which three strategies would be most helpful to you. Add any other strategies you can think of.

	You	Your partner
1 Be clear what the topic of the class or lecture is before it begins.		
2 Prepare carefully before the class or lecture by reading what is required.		
3 When you pre-read, make notes or leave space to add any interesting points that you hear in the class or lecture.		
4 Try to predict some of the topics and key topic vocabulary you are likely to hear during the lecture or discussion.		
5 Ask questions about ideas that are not clear – either during the lecture or at the end.		
6 Any other suggested strategies (give details)		

- 3d** Work in pairs. Ask your partner which three strategies they think are most useful.
- 3e** Tell the class which three strategies your partner prefers and why.

**4 Understanding the purpose of lectures**

- 4a** Work in pairs. Discuss these questions and make brief notes of your ideas. Leave additional space – you will be adding to them later.
- 1 Are lectures an effective way of teaching? Why / why not?
  - 2 Why are lectures so commonly used in higher education teaching?
  - 3 Why should you attend lectures?

- 4b Read this extract from an article on lectures and make any necessary additions or changes to your notes from 4a.

## Lectures

**Whatever subject you choose to study, lectures are almost certain to be an important part of your student life.**

We take it for granted that lecturing is a natural feature of higher education, even though we have probably all experienced difficulty in understanding lectures, or even staying awake through some of them! In fact, we have known for over forty years now that lectures are not the most effective way of teaching or learning. In 1968, the educational sociologist Lancelot MacManaway studied two groups of students. One group was asked to listen to his lectures and take notes, and the other group were not made to listen to the lectures themselves, but simply given a paper script of everything he would have said in the lecture and asked to read it. He found that the students who read the script actually got more benefit from it, and showed a greater level of understanding, than those who had listened to his lectures. But if lectures are not an ideal teaching method, why do we still use them? What is the real purpose of lectures, and how can we make sure that we get the most out of them?

The word *lecture* itself comes from the Latin word meaning ‘to read’. The term has been around since the fourteenth century, and tells us a lot about how we think about education. Lectures in their earliest form developed as a way of spreading information at a time when books themselves were relatively rare and precious items, and access to libraries and the information they contained was severely restricted. So lectures, literally readings from key books to an interested audience, became a way of transmitting knowledge. The lecturer or tutor possessing knowledge which they pass to their students (who presumably

are believed to have none) remains to this day a common understanding of the process of education, and perhaps explains why lectures are still so widely used. A 1994 study by Geoff Isaacs found that most academic staff share common ideas about the purpose of lectures. Out of 100 academics interviewed by Isaacs, around three quarters said that the purpose of lectures was to transmit important information from tutor to student, to provide a framework for the important ideas on a subject, to help students identify key points on a topic. This is interesting, because it suggests that lecturers are not speaking in the hope that you will understand everything. In fact, it seems that they are expecting just the opposite – that you will not understand everything. Therefore, the lecture is not intended as a complete guide to the topic, but an overview – a framework of key points, that the student can then go away and use to guide them in their own study later.

### References

Isaacs, G. (1994). Lecturing practices and note-taking purposes. *Studies in Higher Education*, 19(2), pp.203–216.

MacManaway, L. (1968). Using lecture scripts. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 22(3), pp.327–336.

MacManaway, L. (1970). Teaching methods in HE – innovation and research. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 24(3), pp.321–329.



1.2

- 4c Listen to a tutor giving a talk to students after they had read this article. Add to or change the notes you made on lectures in 4a.

5 Following lectures effectively

The development of ‘effective listening’ is a key focus of this course and important to your achievements as a student.

- 5a Work in pairs. Decide whether each statement about effective listening is true (T) or false (F).
- 1 Effective listening includes understanding 100% of what the lecturer says.
  - 2 Effective listening includes understanding the gist of what the lecturer says.
  - 3 Effective listening includes the ability to predict what you will hear.
  - 4 Effective listening includes writing useful notes quickly.
  - 5 Effective listening includes thinking about how ideas are connected together as you listen.
  - 6 Effective listening means you can remember what the lecturer said.
  - 7 Effective listening includes asking the lecturer to be allowed to record their talk.
  - 8 Effective listening means being able to understand different accents.



- 5b Listen to three people talking about what they think ‘effective listening’ is. Complete these notes about their main ideas.

Speaker 1: Student from non-English-speaking country
Take a note of ...
Ask questions about ...
Don't be ...

Speaker 2: University lecturer
Don't try to understand ...
Taking notes is important because ...
Don't just try to ...
Ask if it's OK to ...
Think about ...

Speaker 3: University lecturer
Take steps to make sure ...
Read ...
Try to predict ...
Don't write everything ...
After the lecture, ...



▶ **UNIT TASK**    **Approaches to learning**

As you study each unit of this book, you will be asked to work on different stages of a task related to the theme or topic of the unit.

The Unit 1 task is about approaches to learning. At the end of each part, you will be asked to complete a stage of the task as follows:

Part A: Listen to an introduction on the topic.

Part B: Read two texts about it.

Part C: Do some further research for relevant material.

Part D: Have a group discussion on the topic.

Part E: Write an essay with this title:

*Discuss how different approaches to learning can affect student success in higher education.*

You are going to listen to a talk on deep and surface approaches to learning.



- a Work in pairs. Discuss what you think the terms *deep* and *surface* approaches to learning may mean. Make notes on your ideas.
- b Listen to a student advisor explaining what is meant by deep and surface approaches to learning. Check your answers to a.
- c Work in pairs. Look back at the questionnaire you did on p.6. Some of the sentences describe a surface approach and others a deep approach to learning. Discuss which ones might be called deep and which ones surface. Give reasons for your ideas.

Surface approach to learning	Deep approach to learning

- d Listen again. Add to or change your notes on deep and surface approaches to learning.
- e Work in pairs. Use your notes to discuss the differences between deep and surface approaches to learning and how you might adapt your own approach to be more successful.



Go to the checklist on p.175 and read the tips relating to Unit 1 Part A.



Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-63544-9 – Skills for Study Level 1  
Craig Fletcher and Blair Matthews Ian Smallwood  
Excerpt  
[More information](#)

Unit 1

Part B

Understanding written information

By the end of Part B you will be able to:

- recognize types of academic text
- choose appropriate reading strategies
- use skimming, scanning and intensive reading
- take notes while reading.

1 Types of academic text

1a Work in pairs. Discuss these questions.

- 1 Do you read in your spare time? What kind of things do you enjoy reading?
- 2 Which of these texts do you expect to read most frequently during your studies? Can you think of any more examples?

magazine articles	newspaper articles	academic journals
emails	websites	textbooks
essays	lab reports	reports

1b Look at **Appendices 1, 2 and 3** at the back of the book. Which of the above are they examples of? How do you know?

1c Read the texts in the Appendices quickly and complete the table.

	Text 1	Text 2	Text 3
a What type of text is it?			
b Who is the intended reader?			
c What is the purpose of the text?			
d What register is used (e.g. formal, informal, scientific, business, academic, etc.) (more than one register may be possible)?			
e What different features does the text have (e.g. subheadings, diagrams, citations, etc.)?			

1d Check your answers in groups.

2 Choosing appropriate reading strategies

2a Work in pairs. Look at the different text types shown below and answer these questions. Give reasons for your answers.

- 1 Which texts would you read more/less carefully?
- 2 Which texts are likely to be more/less difficult to read?
- 3 Which texts might you make notes on? Why?

an email from your  
college/university  
  
a magazine article

an email from your  
tutor giving feedback  
on your work

a chapter in  
a textbook  
  
an email from  
a friend

2b Read the two texts from magazine articles and answer the questions below.

- 1 What is the best title for this article?
  - a Learning Cantonese
  - b Learning English
  - c Learning a new language

At any moment of any day, a huge number of people from almost every country in the world will be studying a new language. The reasons for studying may vary. Sometimes the reason is simply one of interest, sometimes it is because the student intends to visit a country that uses that language, and sometimes it is to help with a future career. Sometimes it is simply because the language is a compulsory subject at school or college. Whatever the reason, one thing that all language learners are certain to discover is that mastering a new language can be an extremely

frustrating experience – and one which almost always leads the learner into embarrassing situations at some time or another. Just last week I took a taxi to visit my friend and decided to try out a few words I had recently learned in Cantonese. I leaned forward, tapped the taxi driver on his shoulder and said what I thought were the words for ‘Block 4’, the address of my colleague. The taxi driver looked very confused, and then started laughing. I later discovered I had confused the tones of the words for *Block 4* and had told him that he was dead!