

Unit 1 Approaches to learning

Unit overview

| Part | This part will help you to ... | By improving your ability to ... |
|------|---------------------------------------|--|
| A | Follow lectures | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understand the use of stress in sentences• develop strategies for learning vocabulary• understand modals. |
| B | Understand and compare academic texts | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• recognize different word forms• understand the language of comparison. |
| C | Research academic texts | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify and use collocations• use relative clauses to include essential information in sentences• use relative clauses to include non-essential information in sentences. |
| D | Participate in tutorials | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• recognize and use the language of academic discussions• refer to other people's ideas in discussion. |
| E | Write an essay | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understand general features of academic writing• use compound nouns• write in a formal register. |



Unit 1

Part A

Understanding
spoken
information

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

- understand the use of stress in sentences
- develop strategies for learning vocabulary
- understand modals.

Developing effective listening skills is essential for successful tertiary study. However, many students find listening difficult. You are often told to ‘practise more’ – and this will help, but only if you can understand what you are listening to! Throughout this course, you will be helped to develop a range of strategies and techniques to improve your listening.

1 Understanding the use of stress in sentences

- 1a You are going to listen to an extract from a lecture giving suggestions on how to improve your understanding of lectures in English. Work in pairs. Discuss what you think some of the suggestions might be. Write your ideas below.

Suggestions for improving listening skills in lectures



1.1

- 1b Listen to the extract and check your ideas in 1a. Add any more suggestions you hear.
- 1c Listen to the first part of the extract again. Underline any words in the sentences (1–4) which are emphasized or stressed more than others.
- 1 But why is it that people think listening to a lecture is such hard work when, for example, listening to a friend is easy and, usually, enjoyable?
- 2 Well, one thing you might think about is the difference between hearing and listening.
- 3 Simply hearing is what your ears do – your brain doesn’t have to make any conscious effort to think about what is being heard.
- 4 But listening, well that’s what you do when you’re interested, when you have a purpose or a need for the information.
- 1d Compare your answers with a partner. Discuss why some words are stressed more than others. How might listening for stressed words help you in lectures?

Content and function words

Words which provide the essential meaning of a sentence are called *content* words. In spoken English, these words are often stressed. Words which are grammatically necessary but which do not carry meaning are called *function* words. These words are not usually stressed, except for special emphasis. Examples of content and function words are given in the table below.

1e Work in pairs. Add more examples from the sentences in 1c to each category.

| Content words (usually stressed) | Function words (usually unstressed) |
|--|---|
| Nouns: <i>discussion, essay, lecture</i> | Pronouns: <i>we, they, anybody, one</i> |
| Adjectives: <i>interesting, academic, scientific</i> | Prepositions: <i>in, of, at, between</i> |
| Verbs: <i>listen, study, hear, lecture</i> | Auxiliary verbs: <i>be, have</i> |
| Adverbs: <i>really, very, also, enough</i> | Conjunctions: <i>and, or, when, while</i> |
| | Articles: <i>a, an</i> |

1f Read this extract from a different talk on listening to lectures. Do you agree with the advice?

Firstly, think about what you can do to get more from lectures yourself. Prepare your mind by reading and thinking about the topic before the lecture. Then, during the lecture, don't try to note down everything you hear like a dictation exercise, but make a note of key points and think about how they relate to the things you already know. Consider which key points you want – or need – to follow up by yourself.



1.2

- 1g Based on the table in 1e, underline the content words in the extract in 1f.
1h Listen to the extract and check whether the words you underlined are stressed.

Remember that a speaker can use additional word stress on both content or function words (and/or sometimes a pause) to reinforce a main point. For example, the speaker in the first extract you listened to stressed the words *hearing* and *listening* more than any other words in order to emphasize the difference between the two actions.

Example

*Well, one thing you might think about is the difference between **hearing** and **listening**.*

Stressing certain words more than others helps to ensure that the listener understands the most important words. This frequently happens when comparing or contrasting two words.

- 1i Read the introduction to a lecture on different approaches to learning. Underline the content words, then draw a circle around any words that might require additional stress.

Have you
ever wondered what it is that makes a
student successful? Is it the amount of work that the student
does, or the way that they do it? Does it depend on the teacher? Can a
good teacher really make students perform better, or does it all come down
to what's going on inside the student's mind during the learning process? Is it a
combination of these? Today I'm going to introduce the idea of 'approaches to
learning'; the notion that different students take different approaches
to the way they study and how this is likely to affect
their long-term success.



- 1j Listen to the extract and check your answers. Which words does the speaker give added stress to?

2 Developing strategies for learning vocabulary

Your ability to understand a lecture will increase if you are familiar with the vocabulary the lecturer uses. During this course, you will be introduced to vocabulary which is regularly used in academic contexts. You should make sure you can understand and use as much of this vocabulary as possible. Everybody has their own way of increasing their vocabulary, so you should develop your own strategies for recording, learning and revising new words.

- 2a Work in groups. Find out which strategies for developing vocabulary the other students already use and discuss how these strategies work.



- 2b Listen to the first part of a lecture on strategies for learning vocabulary. The speaker suggests there are four questions you should ask yourself when considering what strategy to use. Write them below.

| Strategies for learning vocabulary | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | |
| 2 | |

3

4



- 2c** Listen to the rest of the lecture. Under each question in 2b, make notes on the speaker’s main suggestions.
- 2d** Read the transcript of the lecture in **Appendix 1** and check your answers.
- 2e** Work in pairs. Look at the words in this box, which are from the lecture. Identify the form of each word (e.g. noun, verb, etc.), then discuss what each word means.

| | | | | | |
|-------|---------|----------|------------|------------|----------|
| focus | context | specific | discipline | categories | purposes |
|-------|---------|----------|------------|------------|----------|

- 2f** Choose three of the words from the box above. Write a sentence on ‘strategies for learning vocabulary’ for each word.

Example
*It’s a good idea to make separate lists of vocabulary for general academic vocabulary and for vocabulary which is **specific** to your subject.*

- 2g** Work in small groups. Take turns to read your sentences aloud without saying the words you chose in 2f. Your group guesses the missing words.

Example

It’s a good idea to make separate lists of vocabulary for general academic vocabulary and for vocabulary which is _____ to your subject.

Is it ‘specific’?

Yes, that’s right.

3 Understanding modals

- 3a** Read this extract from the lecture you heard in 2b. What is the purpose of the lecture: give an order, make a request, or give advice?

Perhaps you **could** make separate lists for words you feel you are likely to come across in a general academic context, and those you feel are more specific to your own discipline or are more technical in nature. You **might** also try to place the words into different categories, according to how or where they are most likely to be used. You **should** be refining these categories constantly as your records increase.

Of course, to be able to do this properly, you **must** first decide what you mean by ‘a word’. You should always consider the different forms in a word family and group these together. For example, if you come across the word *analyze*, you **need to** explore what other forms of the word might be used in different contexts – words such as *analysis*, *analytical* or *analytically* and even *analyst*. You **should** make sure you are familiar with them all and can use them all correctly.

3b Work in pairs. Discuss the differences in meaning between the words in bold in the text.

Example
***Could** is used to give suggestions, whereas **should** is used to give stronger recommendations.*

Could, might, should and must are modals.

Modals and *need to* are commonly used when making suggestions or recommendations to indicate the ‘force’ of the suggestion.

A modal is an auxiliary verb that does not change and is used with the base form of the verb.

Examples

*There are a few basic questions which you **should** consider while you design your strategy.*

*You **must** first decide what you mean by ‘a word’.*

3c One of the examples in the information box above is more ‘forceful’ than the other. Work in pairs. Look at the transcript in 3a and write each word in bold in the appropriate position on the line below (some modals may be of approximately equal ‘force’).



3d Look at the notes you made in 2c. Choose five suggestions which were made during the lecture. Write a sentence for each one, using a different modal in each sentence to reflect how strongly you feel the suggestions should be followed.

Example
*You **should** record the pronunciation of a word, as well as the meaning and spelling.*

1

2

3

4

5

3e Work in pairs. Compare your suggestions and discuss any differences in the content of the suggestion or the modal you have used. Explain your reasons for choosing the modal with a particular force.



LESSON TASK

4 Assessing strategies for improving academic vocabulary

- 4a Work in small groups. Write down the best strategies for recording, learning and revising new academic vocabulary.
- 4b Present your suggestions to the rest of the class and explain why you think they are a good way of increasing your academic vocabulary.
- 4c While you listen to other groups outlining their strategies, write down any ideas you think are useful.
- 4d Work in small groups. Decide which are the three best strategies and why.

5 Review and extension

Vocabulary consolidation

- 5a Complete this table with the missing word forms. Use a dictionary to help you if necessary.

| Noun | Verb | Adjective |
|---------------|-------------|-----------|
| category | participate | specific |
| | emphasize | |
| | identify | |
| strategy | formulate | |
| | require | |
| concentration | | |
| | substitute | — |

- 5b Choose five words from the table and use them in sentences of your own which make recommendations about approaches to study. Use a different modal in each sentence to reflect how strongly you feel about your recommendation. Write your sentences in the box on p.13.

Example

You must **participate** in discussions in class.

1

2

3

4

5



Syllable stress

5c In English, the main stress is placed on one syllable in each word. Most two-syllable nouns and adjectives place stress on the first syllable. Most two-syllable verbs place stress on the second syllable. Listen to these words and mark the stressed syllables.

| | | |
|-----------|----------|------------|
| 1 lecture | 2 easy | 3 instruct |
| 4 reflect | 5 import | 6 clever |
| 7 decide | 8 import | |

- 5d Look again at the two forms of *import*. Which is a noun and which is a verb?
- 5e Look at the sentences you wrote in 5b. Practise reading each sentence aloud, making sure you use syllable and word stress accurately.

Developing a personal vocabulary logbook

5f It is important to design and use a personal vocabulary logbook to enable you to record and learn new vocabulary. Start by deciding how you are going to organize your logbook and then consider which vocabulary items in this unit you should include in it. Think about how you are going to use your logbook: how are you going to remember and practise the items in it?

Unit 1
Part B

Understanding
written
information

- By the end of Part B you will be able to:
- recognize different word forms
 - understand the language of comparison.

1 Recognizing different word forms

- 1a You are going to read a short text comparing two approaches to learning – *deep learning* and *surface learning*. Work in groups. Discuss what you think the two terms mean and how they are different.
- 1b Compare your answers with other groups.
- 1c Read the text below. Write notes on features of the different types of learning.

| Deep learning | Surface learning |
|---------------|------------------|
| | |

Simply stated, *deep learning* involves the critical analysis of new ideas, linking them to already-known concepts and principles, and leads to understanding and long-term retention of ideas so that they can be used for problem solving in unfamiliar contexts. Deep learning promotes understanding and application for life. In contrast, *surface learning* is a more superficial acceptance of information and memorization as isolated and unlinked facts. It leads to short-term retention of material for examinations and does not promote understanding or long-term retention of knowledge and information.

Critical to our understanding of this principle is that we should not identify the student with a fixed approach to learning, but it is the design of the learning opportunity that encourages students to adopt a particular approach. We need to analyze the way we are teaching and identify the most likely methodology to encourage deep learning.

- 1d Work in groups. Discuss these questions.
- 1 Who is the text written for?
 - 2 Do you agree with the advice in the second paragraph? Explain your reasons.

- 1e** Work in pairs. Decide whether the words in bold in these extracts from academic sources are verbs, nouns or adjectives. Write them in the correct column in the table below. Then complete the other columns.
- 1 These students were **identified** with adopting a deep approach to learning.
 - 2 The main **identifying** characteristic of this type of learner is the ability to apply what they have learned to different contexts.
 - 3 The second group tried to remember facts contained within the text, **identifying** and focusing on what they thought they would be asked later.
 - 4 The main aim of the article is to **identify** the two approaches to learning and to suggest ways in which educators might encourage the more effective approach.
 - 5 Barnett, for instance, **defines** a student as ‘someone who ... throws herself into her studies’ (Barnett, 2007, p.18).
 - 6 This has led to the **definition** of teaching as enabling student learning.

| Verb | Noun | Adjective |
|------|-----------------|-----------|
| | <i>analysis</i> | |

- 1f** Check your answers with a partner.
- 1g** Read the paragraph below and write the words in bold in the correct column of the table in 1e. Then complete the other columns.

Research shows clear differences in the defining **characteristics** of student approaches to learning. However, it would be a mistake to characterize any student as taking a deep or surface approach all the time. Instead, it is more likely that students tend to adopt **different** approaches in different contexts. A simple **distinction**, therefore, between deep and surface learners is not necessarily an accurate picture of student learning styles. The most **successful** students are likely to be those who take a blended approach, and combine the positive aspects of surface approaches (memorization when necessary, and goal focus) with the interest and **engagement** in a subject that is **typical** of the deep approach.