

Introduction

In all of our everyday listening, the key to what we understand is not what we hear; it is our **purpose for listening**. For example, in the morning, we may be vaguely aware of a TV playing in the background while we focus on getting breakfast or our “to do” list for the day. When the weather or something else we want to know comes on the TV, we shift our attention to focus on the televised information. If a child needs our immediate attention, we shift our listening focus and adopt a parental listening style (Is the child okay physically and emotionally? How could I best help in this situation?).

Young children learn to listen for different reasons with different attention levels well before they enter the classroom. Within the classroom, they are taught to “be good listeners” by looking at the speaker, keeping their bodies still, not interrupting, etc. Such training covers more social behavior than listening comprehension or choosing the purpose for listening.

Most students learn to control their listening patterns without direct instruction as they are exposed to various listening situations. They learn to anticipate the teacher’s directions for what to do and to predict what questions the teacher will ask during various kinds of academic lessons. Other students need direct instruction in how to listen effectively.

Spotlight on Listening Comprehension was developed to teach students the importance of knowing what they are listening for and matching their listening comprehension strategies to their listening purposes. The six books in *Spotlight on Listening Comprehension* focus on these essential listening purposes and the corresponding comprehension strategies:

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| Listening for details | Listening for making inferences |
| Listening for main ideas | Listening for reasoning and problem solving |
| Listening for sequencing | Listening for story comprehension |

These target areas parallel critical reading comprehension skills and will boost students’ performance in the classroom; on tests; and in everyday listening, reading, and speaking.

The content of the activities reflects a wide variety of curricular areas as well as daily life. The vocabulary and sentence structure are controlled at an elementary grade level to help your students focus on the listening comprehension element vs. novel terms or concepts.

Each book includes a Pretest/Posttest (page 6) to assess and monitor your students’ proficiency and progress. The worksheet activities require minimal writing and often feature oral answers or response formats similar to tests. Use your own judgment and teaching purposes to present the activity sheets orally or as overheads for group presentation.

Example answers are provided; use your discretion to accept other appropriate answers as correct. Wherever possible, encourage your students to explain the rationale or clues for their answers. This strategy strengthens their oral expression skills and gives other students practice in critical listening.

Retaining the sequence of auditory information is vital for school, social, and real-world success. Students must process and follow dozens of directions every day, and storing and recalling that information in the correct order can make the difference between success and failure. *Spotlight on Listening Comprehension: Sequencing* trains your students to both keep track of the information they hear and to recall the order in which they hear it.

The activities in this book begin with discrete listening tasks (e.g., numerical/alphabetical order, word sound/syllable order). Next the activities involve sequencing by time or by cause/effect. Then your students will practice following directions involving up to four steps. The activities then progress to listening to and recalling the sequence of directions, recipes, and stories with a variety of curricular and everyday contexts.

Here are some additional activities to help your students master listening with the purpose of recalling information in sequence.

- Use picture cards to tell a story to your students. Mix up the cards and have a student put the cards in order as he retells the story. Begin with two cards and progress to five or more cards as appropriate.
- Read a simple picture book to your students. Afterward, display a random page from the story. Ask, “What is happening during this part of the story?” Then ask your students to recall the event that happened immediately before and immediately after the selected page.
- Add cards that contain key transition words to your word wall or bulletin board as you encounter them in curricular reading, such as *next*, *later*, and *finally*. Prompt students to use these words as they recall information in sequence.
- Have each student prepare a “how-to” presentation on something she knows how to do well and could teach to others. Help each student create an outline that clearly presents the steps of the presentation. Keep the number of steps manageable for the first time; five or six major steps is a good place to start. Encourage scripted transition words and lots of rehearsal before your students share their presentations.

We hope you and your students enjoy *Spotlight on Listening Comprehension: Sequencing*!

Carolyn and Paul