

LISTENING FOR GIST

The big picture can be just as important as the specifics. When students listen for just the gist, they come to realize that a general understanding is often enough.

Listening for Gist enables students to gather broad information, and then use it to discuss, debate, and support opinions.

Step One: The teacher explains the purpose of the activity: to listen for general comprehension. There are no comprehension questions, and students shouldn't take notes.

Step Two: Students listen to the teacher read the article, monologue, or dialogue (or listen to a recording). The reading speed should be just slightly above the ability of the class. If the teacher reads a passage once and most everyone understands most everything, then the activity was far too easy. In short, the time is wasted and no improvement in listening ability is conferred on the students.

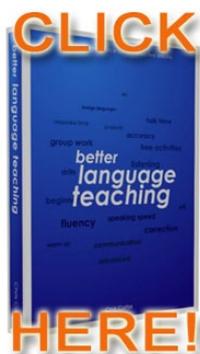
Step Three: Students get into pairs. Both students provide a one or two sentence summary of what they heard in the previous step. In smaller classes, this may be said aloud or shared with another pair of students. In large classes, students may share their summary with another pair, or this may be skipped. The summary ensures that everyone more or less has the broadest comprehension.

Step Four: Students continue in the same pairs. They now provide a recap of the information from Step Two. Students should focus on the big picture, although some details may be added.

Step Five: The teacher reads the piece aloud once more. Students listen without taking notes.

Step Six: Students get into pairs again and confirm, correct and add to the information provided in Step Four.

Step Seven: The teacher distributes the article, etc. to the students. They receive a few minutes to go over the piece silently, after which they once more confirm, correct, and add to the information previously discussed.



If you liked this idea and want others, then take a look at my ebook, [Better Language Teaching](#). There are **100 activities** with more than **75 variations** for flexible, fun learning.

Have great classes!

Chris Cotter