

# How do we work on the four skills in class?

## Panel discussion handout

### Idea 1: Use Micro-listening activities

by Sid Ali RAHBA

In this activity I will show how learners decoding skills can be developed by using the digital tool YouGlish [www.youglisch.com](http://www.youglisch.com) to do micro dictations focusing on a specific phonological feature. This activity can be done with learners at A2 and above.

#### An activity idea

1. Find/ record a short recording (about 10 seconds) that includes the phonological feature you want your students to be aware of.
2. Create a gap fill activity that focuses on the target feature.
3. Play the recording and allow students to listen as many times as they need. If your students find it very hard, you can do live listening and gradually slow down when speaking following the botanic metaphor model of *garden, greenhouse, jungle* (read more here: <https://www.speechinaction.org/greenhouse-garden-jungle/> ).
4. Show the answers and encourage your students to reflect on what was hard to listen for. Then encourage them to notice what made it hard to listen for and draw their attention to the target feature and explicitly explain what this happens.
5. Next you can either:
  - a. Prepare a set of phrases that contain the target phonological feature. Create a listening matching activity where students have all phrases in a box then listen to these phrases used in context in [www.youglisch.com](http://www.youglisch.com) and write numbers next to the phrases in the order they hear them. OR

- b. Get students to brainstorm phrases that contain the target feature, make sure they are accurate, then follow the same procedure as in a above.

My top tip is that less is more: cover one feature at the time and allow plenty of practice time to get their ears used to the way words sound.

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## Idea 2: Comics to developing listening and reading skills

by Soraya Rachel Pereira

Creating listening and reading activities from comic strips that students themselves created can help students improve their receptive skills. This handout provides suggestions for activities that can be done as before-during-and-after reading and listening activities.

### What are the benefits for teachers and students?

According to Tragant and Vallbona González (2018), reading-while-listening has proven to be a successful way to engage readers. Their experience in the Brazilian classroom with students of 11-22 year olds has shown that listening and reading skills significantly improved their learners skills in grammar. In addition, feedback through rubrics can have a positive impact not only on the teacher's teaching practice, but also on students when working alone or collectively (Bardin, 2011).

### Suggested classroom activities to focus on reading & listening skills

**Step 1:** Students create comics

**Step 2:** Record their voices reading the comics aloud

**Step 3:** Pre-reading activity: Identify the purpose/main message of the comic

**Step 4:** Pre-reading activities: Produce flashcards from the comics, ask wh-questions about content

**Step 5:** Pre-reading activity: Play whispers or broken telephone (find out more here: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teaching-resources/teaching-primary/activities/level-2/broken-telephone> )

**Step 6:** While reading: Learners read and/or listen to the recordings of their classmates' comics

**Step 7:** Post reading activities - Organize the ideas and use guessing strategies through games: **A.** Fill in the blanks; **B.** Bingo; **C.** Connect the meanings of the words; **D.** Quiz and **E.** Other ideas such as picture dictionary, slap game and chair dance.

**Step 8:** Finally, give feedback through rubrics.

### References:

[www.teachingenglish.org.uk](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk)

Bardin, L. (2011) **Análise de conteúdo**. Trad. Luís Antero Reto, Augusto Pinheiro. São Paulo: Edições 70,

Tragant, E., & Vallbona González, A. (2018) **Reading while listening to learn: Young EFL learners' perceptions**. *ELT Journal*. 72. 395-404.

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## Idea 3: Unblocking reading through AI

by Ofelie Muradyan

One of the challenges the students of different levels face when reading text in English is the vocabulary that is new to the students and blocks their understanding. One solution to this problem is including a stage in the reading between the gist and detailed reading exercise where the students will have to study and work on the blocking vocabulary.

The reading thus consists of three stages where the first and the last stage include work on the text itself while the stage between these two stages requires working specifically with some of the words taken from the text to unblock the text before the third stage. These stages of the reading exercise are similar to the hourglass structure.

See the hourglass structure below.

<b>Gist reading tasks</b>	<b>wide at the top</b>
<b>Working on the blocking vocabulary</b>	<b>narrow in the middle</b>
<b>Detailed reading tasks</b>	<b>wide at the bottom</b>

Usually the teachers consider and choose the words which would block the students' understanding to teach those in the lesson planning stage. However, teachers can use AI tools such as <https://gemini.google.com/> to save time. The AI can produce a list of blocking words from the given text. To do this, the teacher copies and pastes the text into the AI tool, and writes a prompt that includes the level of the students, the number of blocking words to be taken out the text, etc. Other than providing the teachers with the list of words that might be blocking the students' understanding of the text the AI tools can also craft activities to help the students learn, practice and use those words. Ask the AI to create definition and word matching tasks, or word scrambles. Thus, the hourglass approach and the AI tools can lead to a smoother reading experience for the students.

A recording of Sid, Soraya and Ofelie's webinar can be watched here:

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/webinars/webinars-teachers/teaching-four-skills-mini-event>

[www.teachingenglish.org.uk](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk)