

**Practical Manual**

**Comprehension & Communication  
Skills in English**

B.Sc. Agriculture, Sem. - I

AAC-147, Credit Hours: 2 (1+1)



**Dr Alka Jain**

**2020**

**College of Agriculture  
Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University  
Jhansi-284003**

**Syllabus [AAC-147, Credit Hours: 2 (1+1)]:**

Listening Comprehension: Listening to short talks lectures, speeches (scientific, commercial and general in nature). Oral Communication: Phonetics, stress and intonation, Conversation practice. Conversation: rate of speech, clarity of voice, speaking and Listening, politeness & Reading skills: reading dialogues, rapid reading, intensive reading, improving reading skills. Mock Interviews: testing initiative, team spirit, leadership, intellectual ability. Group Discussions.

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**Course Name :** .....

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## INTRODUCTION

Given the growing importance of English as a tool for global communication and the consequent emphasis on training students to acquire communicative competence, the syllabus has been designed to develop the personality and communication skills of the students. Communication breakdowns result in building barriers against one's ability to develop, both professionally and personally. Communication is an art and process of creating and sharing ideas. Effective communication, therefore, depends on the richness of those ideas, hence it requires the development of several communication skills.

prepares students for the challenges of a society that is shaped by communication. As participants in the program, students develop and integrate knowledge, creativity, ethical practice, and skills. Students also examine and produce work in oral, written, and visual communication and practice skills in group and intercultural communication.

The emphasis of this course and the corresponding exercises is to focus on the growth and enhancement of the four basic skills of communication - Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening.

### Goals and Learning Outcome

1. Understanding the different types of Communication.
2. Understanding the importance of possessing good communication skills.
3. Display competence in oral, written and non-verbal communication.
4. Exploring opportunities in the field of communication.
5. Use current technology related to the communication field.
6. Respond effectively to cultural communication differences.
7. **Value-based and holistic learning.**
8. Demonstrate positive group communication exchanges.
9. Develop sound professional and personal relationships.
10. Identify Communication barriers.
11. Develop vocabulary and grammar skills.

**Objective: To study listening skills**

**Teaching Activity 1: Fish Market**

**How to Play**

**Materials required:** List of general grocery or consumer products, paper and pen.

1. Students are divided into two groups (A – B) and made to sit facing each other. Each member in group A has a corresponding partner in group B.
2. Each member of team A is given a list of items that need to be purchased from the market. No two members will have the same items in the list or the same sequence.
3. The corresponding partners in team B are given a paper and a pen each. They are asked to write their names on the paper.
4. The teacher starts the game. The trick is that all the members in team A will start calling out the names on their list at the same time. The partner in team B has to write only those names which are called out by his/her partner in Team A.
5. What will ensue is a Fish market type scene, where all the team members are shouting out. There is a lot of noise created.
6. The list of each member of team A is matched with the items noted down by the partner in team B. The partners with the highest number of correct entries become winners.

**Objectives**

- A. To teach students, the importance of developing listening skills.
- B. To impart knowledge that NOISE is a dangerous barrier and listening cannot happen in noise.
- C. To demonstrate that listening is different from hearing.

ation is a two-way process.

or information can get distorted while passing from one



ctivity, the teacher transmitted value in addition to the subject  
be a good listener, one should remove all barriers and noise in  
; emotional chaos, jealousy, fear, anxiety etc. These barriers make  
difficult. It was also stressed that listening to others allows us to  
ments bonds. One must choose carefully what to believe in. and

**Objective: To study listening skills**

**Teaching Activity-2 Chinese Whisper**

**How to play**

**Materials:** A long tongue twister, a long funny line, any sentence of at least 10-15 words

1. This is an ancient game and very apt for this lesson. One student is asked to begin. He/ She is given a line orally whispered or written down on a paper.
2. The student reads it and whispers to the student sitting next to him/her. The student must ensure that the message is not too loud to be heard by others.
3. The second student passes on the message to the third and so on. No repetition of the message is allowed.
4. The last student calls out the message loudly. It is seen that the message has entirely changed! And the meaning too! Efforts are made to trace the source from where the message started getting distorted. The game creates a lot of laughter and fun.

**Objectives**

1. To demonstrate the difference between hearing and listening.
2. To teach listening skills by conducting an interactive and entertaining classroom session.
3. To demonstrate the importance of the channels of communication, in this case, oral communication.
4. To enable students to understand how a message can be distorted while passing through mediums.

**Value Addition:** To teach the students a value that one should never believe and react to what they hear because messages get distorted while travelling through mediums and can affect interpersonal relationships.

**Objective: To study listening skills**

**Teaching Activity 3: Listening Skills Practice with Audio 1-2**

**AUDIO-1. AIRPORT- CHECK-IN**

**Materials:** An audio recording, mobile/computer/ speaker, worksheet, pen.  
Audio reference: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/>

**AUDIO BASED EXERCISE-1**

**Q. 1.A. Theme Talk: We all love travelling and visiting places! Share your experiences and ideas on the following topics.**

a. Where did you spend your last vacation? What did you like the most about this trip?

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b. Where would you like to travel in future? Why?

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**Q.1. B. Answer the following questions:**

a. Who is the passenger?

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b. Where does the passenger request to be seated? Does she get the seat?

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c. What is the passenger's response when asked about carrying any prohibited items?

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## AUDIO-2- TRAVELLING ABROAD

### **Q. 2.A. Answer the following while listening to the recording.**

1. Speaker A: The plane is going to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Speaker B: The plane is going to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Speaker C: The plane is going to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Speaker D: The plane is going to \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Speaker E: The plane is going to \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Q.2. C. Check your understanding: Gap Fill. Do this exercise while you listen.**

1. The 9.25 flight to Rome is delayed by \_\_\_\_\_ hours.
2. Passengers going to Tokyo should go to boarding gate \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Passengers going to Athens should go to boarding gate \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The flight number of the plane going to Amsterdam is \_\_\_\_\_. It will leave from gate \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The time in \_\_\_\_\_ is 18.30.
6. The temperature in New York is \_\_\_\_\_ °F.



**Objective: To understand how to listen to scientific lectures.**

**Teaching Activity- 4 Listening to Scientific Lectures**

**Audio- How to Listen to a Scientific Lecture**

Here is an audio that provides tips on how to listen to a scientific lecture. Go to the following link and listen carefully. Then answer the given questions. . <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFFm928eiPk>

**Questions and Answers:**

1. What are the major challenges faced by a non-native speaker while listening to scientific lectures in English?

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2. What should we do before listening to a lecture?

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3. What must be your action and planning after having listened to a lecture, in order to retain it?

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## Practical No. 5

**Objective: To study Phonetics.**

**Teaching Activity -5**

**Exercise 1: State whether the 'u' and 'o' in the following words are pronounced as a short or a long vowel.**

Serial No.	Word	Vowel(u)
1	you	
2	rude	
3	Tuesday	
4	school	
5	pudding	
6	push	
7	cute	
8	cook	
9	spoon	
10	tooth	

**Exercise- 2. Maze Game! Trace the route of all the short vowel words by connecting them with a line.**

bit		sick	this	skip	keys
beat		seat	these	miss	team
Hit		sit	it	Tim	seem
eel		seam	eat	seep	sip
kid		trim	dip	scene	sin
in		dream	drip	beat	bit
lick		leak	bill	beam	kill
pit		meal	mill	peal	pill
pick		peak	sill	seal	skill
kick		heap	hip	dip	trip

## Practical No.6

### Objective: To understand stress and intonation

#### Teaching Activity- 6 - Role-Play

The students are divided into different groups. Each group selects a part to enact from the list of role-plays provided below. The students then play out the scene using appropriate words, expressions and emotions.

1. Meeting a friend for the first time in years

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2. A couple breaking up

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3. Arguing with a stranger

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4. A doctor and a very sick patient

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5. Explaining something to a baby.

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6. Greeting someone whom you are not happy to see.

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## Practical No. 7

**Objective- To study stress, intonation, and voice modulation**

**Teaching Activity 7-**

### **Let's Talk – Activity Game**

Write the following sentence on a slip of paper. Each one of you will get a slip of paper with one word from the given sentence written on it. You have to then read the sentence aloud by stressing upon the word mentioned in your slip. Do you observe how the sentence gets affected by the word in bold?

Example: "I never said she took my money."

Person 1: "I **never** said she took my money."

Person 2: I never **said** she took my money.

Person 3: I never said **she** took my money.

Person 4: I never said she **took** my money.

Person 5: I never said she took **my** money.

Person 6: I never said she took my **money**.

**Objective- to study conversation skills.**

**Conversation Skills**

**Teaching Activity 8.**

**I. Talk to Persuade.**

Decide which five sentences are asking or persuading someone to do something.

- a. I'd really appreciate your help with this. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Why don't you give it a go? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. I'm not very good at that. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. You'd really be helping me out. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. I don't usually do that kind of thing. \_\_\_\_\_
- f. You'd be brilliant at it! \_\_\_\_\_
- g. Come on! There's nothing to lose! \_\_\_\_\_
- h. OK, I'll think about it. \_\_\_\_\_

**II. Write one word to fill the gaps.**

A: Hey, Sanjay, have you got a minute? I've got a small (1)..... to ask you for.

B: OK.

A: How would you (2)..... about presenting the University awards ceremony with me?

B: Presenting? I've never done anything like that before.

A: You're a great speaker! And funny. I think you'd (3)..... brilliant (4)..... it.

B: Oh, I don't know ... A: Look, I wouldn't (5)..... ask, but you're the only person who could do it. Why don't you (6)..... it a go?

B: Urgh ... But what if I make a bad joke?

A: Come on! There's (7)..... to lose!

B: Mmm ... A: Sanjay, you'd really be helping me (8).....

**Objective: To practice conversation skills and rate of speech**

**Do You Know?**

Slow speech is usually regarded as less than 110 wpm or words per minute.

Conversational speech generally falls between 120 wpm at the slow end, to 160 - 200 wpm in the fast range.

People who read books for radio or podcasts are often asked to speak at 150-160 wpm.

Auctioneers or commentators who practice speed speech are usually in the 250 to 400 wpm range.

**Teaching Activity-9- Common Conversation Topics for Practice:**

1. Who is the most interesting person you have ever met?

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2. What qualities help you have good relationships with others?

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3. What can people learn from animals?

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**Objective: to study conversation skills- clarity in speech**

**Teaching Activity-10**

**Conversation Skills**

**Exercise 10. A. Mrs Tongue Does Her Housework: An Ice-breaker game and tongue exercise for clarity in speech.**

Given below is an activity to be conducted in the classroom. It is recommended that students practice it regularly to get better results and clarity of speech. Actions are demonstrated in the class.

Mrs Tongue lives in her house, the mouth.  
Every morning she mops it from ceiling to floor.  
First, she sweeps her mop from right to left.

Instruction

**Run your tongue in a full circle around your cheek walls and across the front of your top and bottom teeth. Repeat 3 times.**

*Next, she sweeps her mop from left to right.*

Instruction

**Reverse the direction of the circle. Repeat 3 times.**

*Now she dusts the furniture.*

Instruction

**Sweep your tongue as rapidly as you can from side to side across the upper teeth. Repeat at least 10 times.**

*Then she shakes out the rug out the window.*

Instruction

**Stick the tongue out, extended as far as you can, and move it rapidly up and down. Repeat at least 10 times.**

*Then she nails up some pictures in the back of her house.*

Instruction

**Repeat the sound k, k, k, k, k, k ...**

*Next, she nails up some pictures in the front.*

Instruction

**Repeat the sound t, t, t, t, t ...**

*Then she remembers she needs to set her clock.*

Instruction

**Repeat the sounds t, k, t, k, t, k ...**

*Mrs Tongue looks at the flowers by her front door. They need watering.*

Instruction

**Repeat the sound sh,sh,sh,sh,sh,sh ...**

*Goodness gracious! Mrs Tongue sees fallen leaves on the steps. They need sweeping up.*

Instruction

**Repeat the sound f,f,f,f,f ...**

*Lastly, she sweeps away the cobwebs from around the front door.*

Instruction

**Stick the tongue out as far as you can and sweep it from right to left around the outside of your lips. Repeat 3 times, then reverse the direction and repeat 3 times.**

*After all that work Mrs Tongue is exhausted. She comes back inside, closes the door and goes to sleep.*

Instruction

**Pull your tongue in and close your mouth.**

The activity has been taken from: <https://www.write-out-loud.com/tongue-exercises-for-articulation.html>

### **Exercise 10. B. Tongue Twisters!**



- 1. Five flippant Frenchmen fly from France for fashions**
- 2. James just jostled Jean gently**
- 3. My cutlery cuts keenly and cleanly.**
- 4. Lucy lingered, looking longingly for her lost lap-dog.**
- 5. You know New York, You need New York, You know you need unique New York.**



**Objectives:** To practice reading and comprehension skills

**War Minus Shooting- The Sporting Spirit.**

**Teaching Activity 11.**

**Q. I. Given below are some statements from the essay. If you agree, give reasons; if you don't, state the reasons.**

1. Nearly all the sports practiced nowadays are competitive.

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2. International sporting contests lead to orgies of hatred.

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3. Even a leisurely game like cricket, demanding grace rather than strength, can cause much ill-will.

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4. In countries like India and Burma, it is necessary at football matches to have strong cordons of police to keep the crowd from invading the field.

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5. Even then the spectators don't intervene physically they try to influence the game by cheering their own side and 'rattling' opposing players with boos and insults.

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6. Playing games is simply a waste of time.

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7. Games have been built up into a heavily financed activity.

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8. Big-scale sport is merely another effect of the causes that have produced nationalism.

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**Q.2 Answer the following:**

1. What is a sport? Try to define it.

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2. Who is a sportsman?

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3. What is sportsmanship? What is meant by 'the sporting spirit'?

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4. Make a list of the sports mentioned in the essay. (There are more than ten.)

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5. Do you regard the following as sports? Give reasons for your answer.

- a. Chess \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Dancing- \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Monopoly \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Knitting \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Fishing \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Cooking \_\_\_\_\_
- g. bird- watching \_\_\_\_\_
- h. motor-racing \_\_\_\_\_
- i. gardening \_\_\_\_\_
- j. shooting. \_\_\_\_\_

6. What are the differences between sports and hobbies? What is your hobby?

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7. What does the author mean by 'mimic warfare'?

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8. What example of violence in the field does Orwell use to prove his point ?

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9. How do spectators behave? Why?

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10. Make sentences with the following words:

(a) Goodwill

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(b) Prestige

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(c) Disgraced

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(d) Humiliated

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**Objective: To study Reading Skills:**

**Essay: A Dilemma- A Layman Looks at Science- Raymond B. Fosdick**

**Teaching Activity 12.**

**Exercise A. Short Questions and Answers**

1 What, according to the author, is the first reaction of a layman to the bombing of Hiroshima?

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2 What question troubles our minds when we hear about science and research?

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3. What do we mean when we say that science is a search for truth?

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4. Who is responsible for the destructive use of scientific inventions--science or people?

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**Exercise B. Give Synonyms for:**

1. Wonderful-
2. Careless-
3. Cruel-
4. Amazed-
5. Exceptional-

**Exercise 3. Fill in the blanks with the antonym of the given word:**

*i) constructive*

I worry about the \_\_\_\_\_ impact of internet on the youth today.

*ii) significance*

Everything else that happened in school seemed \_\_\_\_\_ except that one event.

*iii ) momentary*

Name any one person who made a \_\_\_\_\_ impression on you.

**Objective: To develop reading skills**

**You and Your English – Spoken English and Broken English - G. B. Shaw**

**Teaching Activity 13.**

**Exercise A.**

1. What according to Shaw are the advantages of learning to speak well?

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2. Do all British speakers speak exactly alike? What are the examples cited by Shaw to prove his statement?

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3. What are the two simplest and commonest words in English?

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4. When can we say that somebody's speech is acceptable?

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5. If Shaw were to speak to his wife at home as carefully as a public speaker speaking to a large audience, what would she think?

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6. Why are home manners different from company manners?

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7. Why does Shaw urge foreigners not to try to speak English perfectly? Do you think it is sound advice? Is he speaking with his tongue in his cheek?

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8. Can you mention a play that Shaw wrote to prove his point of view?

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9. "In London nine hundred and ninety nine out of every thousand people not only speak bad English but speak even that very badly." - Can you explain what it means?

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10. "Even among English people, to speak well is a pedantic affectation. " \_ What does it mean? Why?

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11. Guess the intended meaning Write out the sentence under each statement that correctly explains the meaning of the italicized expression or expressions.

a. "I am afraid you must put up with me." (Paragraph 1)

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b. "That is good enough of her." (Para 7)

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c. "He will suspect you of being a beggar or a confidence trickster." (para 8)

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**Objective: To study Interview Skills**

**TEACHING ACTIVITY 15. Mock -Interview 1.**

Here is a part of an interview for a Sales Officer's job. Read it carefully.

Sanjay Kumar, aged 28, enters the interview room dressed in a pleasant, light blue suit with a matching tie. His shoes are polished and his general appearance is neat and proper. He walks without affectation, addresses the Chairman and says,

Good Morning Sir!

Chairman: Good Morning. Please sit down. (Skimming through the resume in front of him)  
Mr Kumar, where are you working at the moment?

Sanjay Kumar: At Sonics Limited., Jaipur Sir.

Chairman: What is the nature of your work there?

Sanjay: I have to do everything to promote sales, from advertising through mass media to obtaining orders from retailers.

Chairman: What are the products you deal in?

Sanjay: Mainly electronic goods- tape-recorders, VCR'S, LED's.

Chairman: How long have you been working there?

Sanjay: Ever since the firm was founded. This is my third year going, sir.

Another member: why do you want to change your job?

Sanjay: Since there are better job prospects in the company. You have entered the field of computers and my first love was really computers.

Chairman: What immediate application do you foresee for computers in our country?

Sanjay: At present, the government is careful about not being over-ambitious in the use of computers. This is quite natural when we already have the problem of unemployment. But a good computer climate is being built up, specially where risky and repetitive work is involved in factories, and where retrieval work is required to maintain records in offices.

Third member: From your experience in sales, what do you think counts most in gaining success in this line?

Sanjay: First and foremost, it is good advertising. The wider the coverage, the greater the chances of getting orders. Secondly, assurance of quality. The reputation of the company is, in fact, established in its few years.

**Exercise A. Let's examine the interview**

1. His dress and appearance are neat and proper, giving the first impression of a man who is careful about his appearance and also

\_\_\_\_\_

2. He greets the Chairman and then sits only \_\_\_\_\_

3. He describes his present job \_\_\_\_\_

4. His reasons for leaving the present job is \_\_\_\_\_

**Practical No. 15**

**Mock Interview 2.**

Chairman: Mr Gopal, where are you working at present?  
Gopal: Bridgelinks India Limited. I am the Executive Engineer there. My work is to look after the making of bridges on rivers. The bridge over the Damodar at Chas was built by me.  
Chairman: Why do you wish to leave the company?  
Gopal: The present Chief-Engineer there is a stick-in-the-mud. He won't listen to all the wonderful ideas I've got.  
Chairman: Don't you think, he might have better ideas as the Chief -Engineer?  
Gopal: No. How can he? After all he is not as qualified as I am. He got to the top by getting the support of some influential people. I have a degree in Engineering from America.  
Second Member: Mr Gopal, I notice that you have some difficulty in walking. Any accident or.....?  
Gopal: That is there from birth. But why do you ask personal questions?  
Third Member: Mr Gopal, suppose you have an assignment in hand in assigning of the construction of a bridge to a contractor. It has to be built in a very short time due to a minister's possible visit that way. Only one contractor is ready to do the job that soon. You know he is unreliable. He is notorious for not using the right proportion of sand, cement and concrete. Will you give him the contract?  
Gopal: Yes. Why not? What is there in it? Afterall the work will be done. The end justifies the means.  
Chairman: That's all. You can go now.  
Gopal gets up abruptly without so much a smiling, and walks out of the room. He carries away a pencil which he had picked from the table (to fiddle with).

**Exercise 1: Describe the attitude of Gopal during the interview.**

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**Exercise 2: Interview Preparation Task:**

Here is an advertisement for the post of a scientist at an Open University.  
Write down the interview as you visualize it. What are the specific tasks of a scientist in your field?  
(200 words)

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**Objectives: To understand leadership, team spirit, intellectual ability and other soft skills.**

**Interview Preparation**

**Teaching Activity 17-**

Write down suitable answers to these interview questions.

Q.1. Tell me about yourself? (75 words)

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Q.2. Do you prefer to work independently or in a team? (75 words)

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Q.3. Can you describe a time when your work was criticized and how did you handle it? (100 words)

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Q.4. Describe a time when you had to take a quick decision?

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Q.5. Have you ever had difficulty with a supervisor or a colleague? How did you handle it?

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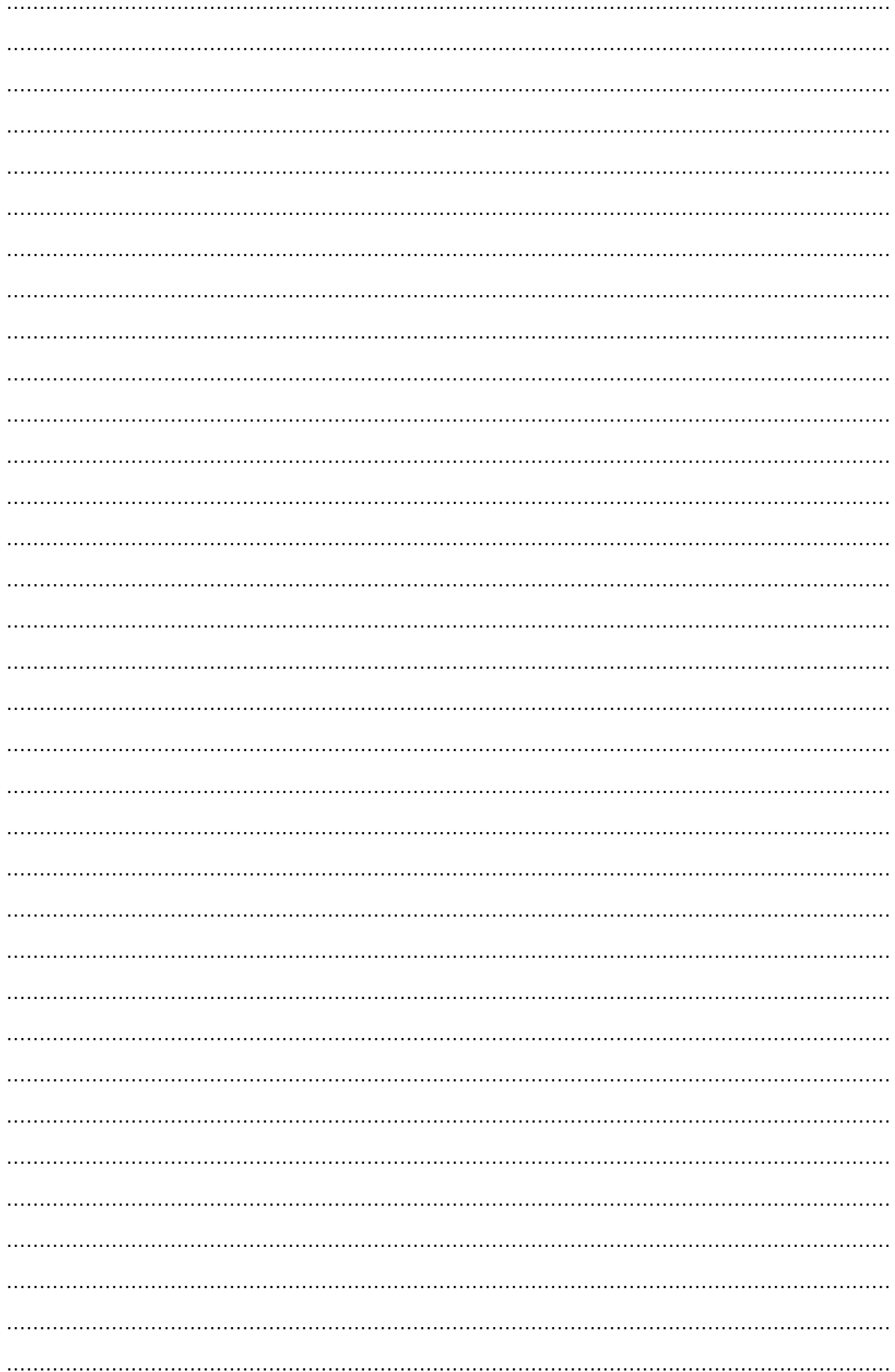
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## LISTENING SKILLS

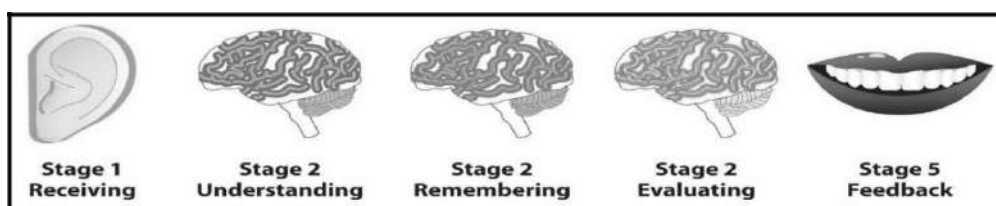
**Overview:** Listening is one of the vital skills that one needs to communicate effectively. It allows one to ‘**decode**’ the message received. Listening is the process of the “**hearing, determining meaning, critical analysis and appreciation of a spoken message.**” Gross.

**Importance:** To build relationships; To build a successful career; To avoid misunderstandings; To build trust, and Listening leads to learning.

**Characteristics of Listening**

It is a cognitive process involving the faculty of the brain and involves both attending to and assigning meaning to aural stimuli. It is different from hearing.

The Cognitive process of Listening: 1. Sensing      2. Interpreting      3. Evaluating      4. Responding

**Barriers to Listening**

1. Exposure to verbal /non-verbal stimuli.
2. Noise- Noise is an unwanted and unpleasant sound or undesirable distraction that prevents easy and effective transmission of communication.
3. Negative motivation- general aversion, past bitter experiences, tiredness, boredom, reactive mindset etc.
4. Positive motivation- Factors which increase our willingness to listen. Like Job pressure, monetary rewards etc.

## TIPS FOR ACTIVE LISTENING

Listening for the main idea - students listen to identify the main theme or idea expressed in the audio recording.

Listening for details – students listen for groups of words, phrases and important sentences.

Listening for specific information – students listen for particular information at the word level.

Predicting – students try to guess the key information contained in the recording before they listen.

Inferring meaning – students listen to identify the difference between what the speaker says and what they mean.

Identifying emotion – students listen to identify the mood of the speakers.

Listening for opinions – students listen to identify the attitude of speakers.

Inferring relationships – students listen to identify who the people are in the recording and what the relationship is between them

**PHONETICS**

**Overview:** Knowing a language includes knowing the sounds of that language. Phonetics is the study of speech sounds. The science of phonetics aims to describe all the sounds of all the world’s languages.

A vowel is a sound where the air coming from the lungs is not blocked by the mouth or throat. A consonant is a sound formed by stopping the air flowing through the mouth. All normal English words contain at least one vowel.

Long and Short Vowels: The **short vowels** can be represented by a curved symbol above the **vowel**: ä, ë, ï, ö, ü. The **long vowels** can be represented by a horizontal line above the **vowel**: ā, ē, ī, ō, ū. Here are some examples of **short vowel** words: at, egg, it, ox, up. The most common sound for each vowel is its “short” sound:

ä, pronounced /æ/ as in apple, pan, or mat,

ë, pronounced /ɛ/ as in elephant, pen, or met,

ï, pronounced /ɪ/ as in insect, pin, or mitt,



ö, pronounced /**o**/ as in octopus, ostrich, upon, or ottto,  
and ü, pronounced /**u**/ as in umbrella, un, or utt.

Long Vowels:- We call them 'long' because we hold them longer than the short sounds. However, they are completely different sounds

Long A (ā), pronounced /**eɪ**/ as in late or mate,

Long E (ē), pronounced /**i:**/ as in eat or meat (or meet or mete-- all pronounced the same),

Long I (ī), pronounced /**aɪ**/ as in mite or might,

Long O (ō), pronounced /**oʊ**/ as in oats, mote or moat, and

Long U (ū), pronounced /**ju:**/ in *mute*.

**Silent 'E' Rule:** When a vowel and consonant are followed by an 'e', the 'e' is almost always silent, but it causes the preceding vowel to be long. (Examples: ate, plane, Pete, bite, nine, rope, note, cube, flute.)

### Objectives:

1. To improve pronunciation.
2. To understand the difference between vowels and consonants.
3. To avoid spelling mistakes in English.
4. To improve listening and speaking skills.

## STRESS AND INTONATION

**Overview:** Correct intonation and stress are the keys to speaking English fluently with good pronunciation. Intonation and stress refer to the music of the English language. Words that are stressed are key to understanding and using the correct intonation brings out the meaning.

Stress is about which sounds we emphasise in words and sentences. In sentences, we usually stress the most important, 'content' words. Rhythm is about how we use a combination of stressed and unstressed words in sentences. Sentences have strong beats (the stressed words) and weak beats (the unstressed words). Intonation is the way the pitch of a speaker's voice goes up or down as they speak. We use intonation to help get our message across.

Stress: stressed syllables are louder, slightly higher in pitch, and somewhat longer than unstressed syllables – The noun 'digest' has the stress on the first syllable – The verb 'digest' has the stress on the second syllable – English is a stress-timed language, meaning that at least one syllable is stressed in an English word.

Stress words are considered *content words* such as:

1. Nouns (e.g., kitchen, Peter)
2. (Most) main verbs (e.g., visit, construct)
3. Adjectives (e.g., beautiful, interesting)
4. Adverbs (e.g., often, carefully)
5. Negatives including negative helping verbs, and words with "no" such as "nothing," "nowhere," etc.
6. Words expressing quantities (e.g., a lot of, a few, many, etc.)

Non-stressed words are considered *function words* such as:

1. Determiners (e.g., the, a, some, a few)
2. Auxiliary verbs (e.g., don't, am, can, were)
3. Prepositions (e.g., before, next to, opposite)
4. Conjunctions (e.g., but, while, as)
5. Pronouns (e.g., they, she, us)
6. Verbs "have" and "be" even when used as main verbs

Intonation describes how the voice rises and falls in speech. The three main patterns of intonation in English are falling intonation, rising intonation and fall-rise intonation.

**Falling intonation:** Falling intonation describes how the voice falls on the final stressed syllable of a phrase or a group of words. Falling intonation is very common in *wh*-questions. *Wh*-questions begin with *what*, *when*, *where*, *who*, *whom*, *which*, *whose*, *why* and *how*. We use them to ask for information. The answer cannot be *yes* or *no*:

**A: *When* do you finish college?**

**B *Next year.***

**A: *Who* is your favourite actor?**

**B:** *George Clooney for sure!*

**Wh Questions:** *Where's the nearest post-office? What time does the film finish?*

We also use falling intonation when we say something definite, or when we want to be very clear about something: Ex: *I think we are completely lost. OK, here's the magazine you wanted.*

**Rising intonation:** Rising intonation describes how the voice rises at the end of a sentence. Rising intonation is common in yes-no questions:

*I hear the Health Centre is expanding. So, is that the new doctor? Are you thirsty?*

**Fall-rise intonation:** Fall-rise intonation describes how the voice falls and then rises. We use fall-rise intonation at the end of statements when we want to say that we are not sure, or when we may have more to add:

*I don't support any football team at the moment. (but I may change my mind in future).*

*It rained every day in the first week. (but things improved after that).*

We use fall-rise intonation with questions, especially when we request information or invite somebody to do or to have something. The intonation pattern makes the questions sound more polite:

*Is this your camera?*

*Would you like another coffee?*

Tags are either questions, statements or imperatives added to a clause to invite a response from the listener:

*You're a musician, aren't you? Well, yes, but I'm just an amateur.*

*She can't swim, can she? Donna plays football, doesn't she? He was your teacher, wasn't he?*

*Pass me that CD, will you?*

## CONVERSATION SKILLS- RATE OF SPEECH AND CLARITY

**Overview:** Generally, people are not conscious of their habitual speaking speed and if they are easily understood by those listening to them there is little reason to change. Their speech could be considered too slow or too fast by people outside of their normal environment but if they are not routinely communicating with them it doesn't matter. However, changes in audience and speech purpose can force a need to become more aware of speaking speed.

For example - a shift from one part of a country to another, from a slower speaking area to a faster speaking one, will, through audience response, make a habitually slower speaker aware of their speech rate. Similarly, someone with naturally fast speech who takes a job requiring presentations to colleagues or customers will find themselves having to slow down to communicate effectively. Having an accent makes a difference too. If the language you're using is not your first one there may be pronunciation issues which make it harder for your audience to understand you. Slowing down your rate of speech will help.

**Public speaking and rate of speech:** If you're giving a speech or presentation, the concept of a normal speaking speed doesn't apply. Flexibility - the ability of the speaker to mix and match pace appropriately with speech content and the audience's ability to comprehend it. Experience and audience reaction will teach you that a one-size-fits-all approach will be far less effective than careful variation in rate.

### Objectives:

1. To develop conversation skills required in formal and informal situations.
2. To understand the importance of rate of speech and clarity in conversation.
3. To carry out communication effectively.
4. To develop personality and confidence.
5. To develop fluency in English through vocabulary building.

## READING AND COMPREHENSION

**Overview:** Here is a quick overview of the four types of reading skills used in every language:

1. **Skimming** - used to understand the "gist" or main idea. **Examples:** The Newspaper (quickly to get the general news of the day). Magazines (quickly to discover which articles you would like to read in more detail). Business and Travel Brochures (quickly to get information)
2. **Scanning** - used to find a particular piece of information. Examples: a train schedule, a conference guide

3. **Extensive reading** - used for pleasure and general understanding. Examples: Novels, fiction, travelogues.
4. **Intensive reading** - accurate reading for detailed understanding. Examples: exam course, legal documents, insurance papers.

**Objectives:**

1. To develop the reading skills of the students and enable them to use the different types of reading techniques.
2. To help students understand to identify the message (theme).
3. To help students attempt abstracting and summarising.

## INTERVIEW PREPARATION

**Overview:** An **interview** is essentially a structured conversation where one participant asks questions, and the other provides answers. In common parlance, the word "**interview**" refers to a one-on-one conversation between an interviewer and an interviewee.

An Interview may be face-to-face, telephonic, individual, committee interview, behavioural, task-oriented and the like. Lack of planning and preparation before an interview is a major setback for any prospective interviewee, Adequate research about the job and the company's policies and visions is very crucial for success. Physical appearance, clarity in thoughts and explanations, ability to market one's skills, invariably add to one's success. Apart from rehearsing and writing down possible answers to common interview questions, a candidate must spend time participating in mock interviews. Resume building and development of essential job skills is a must. Apart from this, emotional intelligence is also an essential skill in the modern job scenario.

**Objectives:**

1. Improve your chances of success in getting a job or securing a place on a university course
2. Apply best practice techniques to enable you to tackle interviews for jobs, apprenticeships, placements and university courses more effectively
3. Identify what recruiters are looking for by researching an organisation or institution thoroughly, and identifying what skills and attributes recruiters might be looking for
4. Identify what questions you may be asked at interview, and how to approach answering different types of interview questions
5. Develop a better understanding of your strengths, skills and key selling points to tackle interviews with confidence
6. Develop an understanding of different types of interviews, from telephone and video interviews to non-standard interviews, and how to tackle them.

## GROUP DISCUSSION

**Overview:** a **group discussion** refers to a communicative situation that allows its participants to share their views and opinions with other participants. It is a systematic exchange of information, views and opinions about a topic, problem, issue or situation among the members of a **group** who share some common objectives.

A discussion is understood as an activity of sitting and talking about a specific subject. The word 'discuss' has been derived from the Latin root 'discutere', which means to shake or strike. Thus 'discussion' refers to thoroughly shaking up the subject, that is, examining it thoroughly to reach a conclusion.

Group discussions are an important aspect of communication. They stimulate creative, reflective, and analytical thinking. They are less formal than meetings and conferences. A successful discussion involves both listening and speaking.

**Objectives:**

1. To generate new ideas.
2. To solve an issue of concern.
3. To develop the ability to participate in group discussions in the course of job interviews.
4. To train in interpersonal skills.

## ADDITIONAL LEARNING RESOURCES

**A Compilation of Commonly Confused Words:**

**Appose vs. Oppose:** *Appose* is a verb that refers to placing objects close to or on top of each other: "The clock and the painting were apposed on the wall." *Oppose* is a verb that means you are against something or do not agree with it: "I am opposed to your suggestion that cricket is better than hockey."

**Appraise vs. Apprise:** *Appraise* is a verb that means to estimate or give value to something: "The real estate agent appraised the house at \$1.2 million." *Apprise* is a verb meaning to inform or give notice to someone: "I will apprise you of my status as soon as you return."

**Arrant vs. Errant:** *Arrant* is an adjective meaning complete, utter, or thorough: "The arrant thief was not to be trusted." *Errant* is an adjective that is similar to *wandering*: "The errant entertainer never stayed more than two nights in a given town."

**Ascent vs. Assent:** *Ascent* is a noun that refers to going up or advancing from an original position: "I watched the balloon's ascent into the sky." *Assent* is a noun that means agreement: "We need to reach assent on how to do this project."

**Assemble vs. Ensemble:** *Assemble* is a verb that means to put or gather pieces together to make a whole: "We need to assemble this toy train." *Ensemble* is a noun that means a collaboration of complementary units that together create a particular look: "I love your outfit. What a beautiful ensemble!"

**Aural vs. Oral:** *Aural* is an adjective that means heard by the ear: "The dentist flinched at the aural assault from the screaming patient." *Oral* is an adjective that means communicated by voice: "We have an oral exam tomorrow in which we answer questions from the professor."

**Awaken vs. Awoken:** *Awaken* is a present-tense verb meaning to rouse from sleep: "We must awaken the dragon." *Awoken* is the past-tense form of the same verb: "The dragon has awoken."

**Ball vs. Bawl:** *Ball* is a noun that refers to a spherical object often used in sports and games: "For bowling, you need a heavy ball with three finger holes." *Bawl* is a verb that refers to crying heavily: "When she left for the army, her husband fell to his knees and started to bawl."

**Balmy vs. Barmy:** *Balmy* is an adjective that means warm but still pleasant: "It's balmy outside today." *Barmy* is an adjective that refers to something unwise, irrational, or foolish: "Your resolution to eat an entire pizza by yourself is absolutely barmy!"

**Bare vs. Bear:** *Bare* is an adjective that means without cover or clothing: "He wore bright green swimming trunks, and his chest was bare." *Bear* is a verb that means to hold up, support, or tolerate, and it is also a noun that refers to an animal: "The grizzly bear cannot bear to be without her cubs."

**Bail vs. Bale:** *Bail* is a noun that refers to money given by someone in order to release another person from incarceration: "If you pay my bail, I'll be able to get out of here." *Bale* is a noun that means a tightly wrapped package of a finished product: "Go put the hay into bales so we can stack them in the truck."

**Bait vs. Bate:** *Bait* is a verb meaning to entice something toward something else: "We baited the fish by putting a worm on the hook." It can also be used as a noun to refer to the item used to entice or lure something: "We used a worm as bait." *Bate* is an adjective meaning held in suspense or anticipation: "I waited patiently with bated breath."

**Belief vs. Believe:** *Belief* is a noun that means to have trust or faith in the properties of something: "He held a firm belief that he was right and she was wrong." *Believe* is a verb that means to hold faith or trust in something, such as a religion or a theory: "Do you believe in Santa Claus?"

**Berth vs. Birth:** *Berth* is a noun that means a space adequate for a ship to move, dock, or anchor: "Move toward the berth so we can dock and get the passengers off the ship." *Birth* is a noun that means the process by which mammals enter the world: "The horse gave birth to a small bay filly."

**Bloc vs. Block:** *Bloc* is a noun that refers to a group of people who are united by a commonality: "America and Canada form a bloc that is connected by capitalist ideology." *Block* is a noun that refers to a cube of a solid substance, such as wood: "Use that block of wood to hold up the doorframe." It can also refer to the area surround by four streets in a city or town: "I'm so glad to live only two blocks from the grocery store."

**Capital vs. Capitol:** *Capital* is a noun and is a seat of government, generally a city: "Ottawa is the capital of Canada." *Capitol* is a noun and is the building in which a legislature meets: "The capitol building is really quite beautiful."

**Carat vs. Caret vs. Carrot vs. Karat:** *Carat* is the unit of measurement for gemstones: "My fiancé bought me a two-carat diamond ring." A *caret* is a mark on printed matter indicating where something is to be inserted: "The proofreader used a caret mark to indicate a missing word." A *carrot* is a vegetable: "Would you like me to add some carrots to the soup?" *Karat* is the unit used to measure the purity of gold: "My fiancé bought me a 24-karat gold ring."

**Censor vs. Censure vs. Sensor:** *Censor* is a verb that means to examine in order to suppress or delete objectionable material: "Please don't censor my emails." *Censor* can also be a noun meaning a person who censors: "The censor examined the questionable material." *Censure* is a verb that means to criticize or strongly disapprove: "Please don't censure me for caring too much." *Sensor* is a noun and is a mechanical device that monitors light, sound, or movement: "We set up sensors to alert us to intruders."

**Chord vs. Cord:** *Chord* is a noun that means a sound made by an instrument when multiple pitches are played together: "I need to strum an *E* chord on my guitar." *Cord* is a noun that means multiple threads of thin material woven together: "The cord connecting the phone to the wall is covered in a protective plastic layer."

**Coarse vs. Course:** *Coarse* is an adjective that means having a rough texture: "This sandpaper is very coarse." *Course* is a noun that refers to a set pathway: "You set a positive course for your future by staying in school."

**Complement vs. Compliment:** *Complement* can function as a noun or verb, referring to something that matches or enhances: "The pillow he bought was a complement to the couch." *Compliment* can also act as a noun or verb and refers to an expression of praise: "She complimented her friend on her excellent taste."

**Disinterested vs. Uninterested:** *Disinterested* is an adjective that means impartial and unbiased, having no stake in the outcome: "We need advice from a neutral, disinterested party." *Uninterested* is an adjective that means not interested at all: "My girlfriend is uninterested in the chick flicks I try to make her watch."

**Dose vs. Doze:** *Dose* is a verb that means to be given an amount of a substance, such as medicine: "After his surgery, he was dosed with morphine to help with the pain." It can also be used as a noun to refer to the amount of the medicine: "Please may I have a dose of cough medicine?" *Doze* is a verb that means to sleep lightly: "I'm going to doze in this deck chair all afternoon."

**Elicit vs. Illicit:** *Elicit* is a verb meaning to draw out: "The officer tried to elicit the truth from the suspect." *Illicit* is an adjective meaning illegal: "He seemed to have no information about the illicit drug ring."

**Emigrate vs. Immigrate:** *Emigrate* is a verb that means to leave one country to live in another: "The family emigrated from the UK." *Immigrate* is a verb that means to move to another country: "The family immigrated to Canada 20 years ago."

**Eminent vs. Imminent:** *Eminent* is an adjective that refers to something or someone worthy of recognition due to a noteworthy quality or influence: "Eminent members of the government include the Prime Minister, Cabinet members, and MPs." *Imminent* is an adjective that refers to something that hasn't happened yet but is about to take place: "In November, the arrival of winter is imminent."

**Empathize vs. Emphasize:** *Empathize* is a verb that means to have sympathy: "She could really empathize with how he was feeling." *Emphasize* is a verb that means to give emphasis, or stress, to something: "He emphasized how upset he was by bursting into tears."

**Exalted vs. Exulted:** *Exalted* is an adjective that means held in high regard: "The Prime Minister holds an exalted office in Canadian society." *Exulted* is the past tense of a verb that means to celebrate and show enjoyment: "He exulted after hearing about his raise."

**Exercise vs. Exorcise:** *Exercise* is a verb that refers to activities performed to get or stay in shape: "I am going to exercise as soon as my yoga class starts." It can also be used as a noun referring to the activities themselves: "Exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle." *Exorcise* is a verb that means to exile a demon through religious ritual: "The man decided to exorcise the spirits from his house."

**Explicit vs. Implicit:** *Explicit* is an adjective meaning fully or clearly expressed: "She was explicit about the rules, stating in no uncertain terms that the children must not leave the house." *Implicit* means implied or not expressly stated: "Their trust in her was implicit."

**Faint vs. Feint:** *Faint* is an adjective that means barely perceptible or very weak: "The sound was so faint, I could barely hear it." It can also be a verb that refers to a sudden loss of consciousness: "The noise was so loud, I thought I might faint." *Feint* is a noun that means a diversion—something that takes attention away from another event: "During the fight, he feinted left before bombing an overhand to his opponent's jaw."

**Fair vs. Fare:** *Fair* is an adjective that refers to making an unbiased decision: "To be fair, you should split the pizza down the middle so we get the same amount." *Fare* is a noun that means the cost required for transportation: "The boat has a cheaper fare than the plane, but it will take much longer."

**Farther vs. Further:** *Farther* and *further* are both adjectives and adverbs meaning at a distance. *Farther* should be used when referring to physical distances: "The house is just a little farther down the road." *Further* should be used for figurative distances: "I can't wait to discuss this further."

**Flair vs. Flare:** *Flair* is a noun that means a particular talent for something: "Ted has a flair for playing the tuba." It can also refer to an attention-grabbing quality: "Those red shoes add flair to that plain black dress." *Flare* is a verb referring to when a fire grows in strength: "The fire will flare when you add that cardboard." It can also indicate the sudden eruption of a potentially violent situation: "The argument is likely to flare up if you don't apologize quickly."

**Flaunt vs. Flout:** *Flaunt* is a verb that means to show off: "You shouldn't flaunt your wealth." *Flout* is a verb that means to show disdain for something: "By wearing a red pantsuit to the funeral, he was flouting the rules of decorum."

**Flounder vs. Founder:** *Flounder* is a verb that means to move awkwardly while trying to accomplish something: "He floundered with the apology, unsure of what he ought to say." *Founder* is a verb that means to fail, collapse, or cave in: "That relationship is sure to founder." It can also be used as a noun to refer to someone who establishes a company, settlement, or institution: "Larry Page and Sergey Brin are the founders of Google."

**Foreword vs. Forward:** *Foreword* is a noun that means the section at the beginning of a book that introduces the content: "I want to write a foreword to my memoir, but it can't be too revealing." *Forward* is a directional adverb that means coming up or up ahead (as opposed to backward): "Move your chair forward so you're closer to the stage."

**Formally vs. Formerly:** *Formally* is an adverb that means officially or properly: "All the wedding guests were formally dressed." *Formerly* is an adverb that refers to something that was different in the past: "My math teacher was formerly a professional belly dancer."

**Garner vs. Garnish:** *Garner* is a verb that means to collect or gather: "The treasure hunt required us to garner a number of unusual objects." *Garnish* is a verb that means to embellish by adding decoration: "You can garnish your salmon with some dill spice."

**Gauge vs. Gouge:** *Gauge* is a noun that refers to something that is used to measure: "An air pressure gauge will tell you if you should fill your tires." It can also be a verb meaning to estimate a measurement: "I can't gauge distance without my glasses on." *Gouge* is a noun that means a tool with a rounded blade used to scoop or dig: "Use the gouge to clean out the pumpkin." *Gouge* is also a verb meaning to scoop, dig, or make a groove: "The river had gouged a winding channel through the rock."

**Good vs. Well:** *Good* is an adjective meaning excellent or satisfactory: "You are very good at playing the trumpet!" *Well* is an adverb meaning thorough or satisfactory, and it can also be an adjective that means healthy: "She decided to stay home from work because she didn't feel well."

**Grisly vs. Grizzly:** *Grisly* is an adjective that means horrible or disgusting: "This was certainly the scene of a grisly murder." *Grizzly* is a noun that refers to a bear: "The California grizzly is a majestic bear." *Grizzly* can also be an adjective that means streaked with gray: "The lumberjack wore a flannel shirt and had a long, grizzly beard."

**Heal vs. Heel:** *Heal* is a verb that refers to a process in which an injury gets better: "Let the scab heal, and it will just be a small scar." *Heel* is a noun that refers to the back part of a foot: "A shoehorn helps you slide your heel into a shoe."

**Hear vs. Here:** *Hear* is a verb that refers to the sense that allows us to listen to our surroundings: "I know you're yelling, but I still can't hear you." *Here* is an adverb that implies that you have arrived at a destination: "It may have taken five hours, but we're finally here."

**Hoard vs. Horde:** *Hoard* is a noun that means a supply or a verb that means to accumulate: "After collecting acorns all summer, the squirrel had gathered quite a hoard." *Horde* is a noun that means a large group: "A horde of people gathered around the celebrity, asking for photos and autographs."

**Idle vs. Idol:** *Idle* is an adjective that means inactive or not moving: "We made idle conversation about the weather before going our separate ways." *Idol* is a noun that means an image of a god used as an object of worship or someone who is looked up to by another: "The people bowed before the idol."

**Imply vs. Infer:** *Imply* is a verb that means to indicate or suggest without being specific: "I didn't mean to imply that I don't care about you." *Infer* is a verb that means to guess or speculate: "From his hunched posture and pronounced frown, she inferred that he was feeling very disappointed."

**Install vs. Instill:** *Install* is a verb that means to establish, mount, or make ready for use: "You have to install the video game on the computer before you can play it." *Instill* is a verb that means to cultivate something within someone: "You can instill good manners in any child if you lead by example."

**It's vs. Its:** *It's* is a contraction of *it is*: "I love this show. It's so funny to watch!" *Its* is a pronoun and is the possessive form of *it*: "Come quickly! The kitten is chasing its own tail."

**Lead vs. Led:** *Lead* (rhyming with *reed*) is the present tense of the verb *to lead*, meaning to guide a person or group: "I will lead you to the fountain of youth." *Led* is the past tense of the verb *to lead*: "I led them to the park, but I didn't stay." *Lead* (rhyming with *red*) is a type of metal often used in roofing and plumbing: "When lead was found to be dangerous, the use of lead paint was largely discontinued."

**Leak vs. Leek:** *Leak* is a noun that refers to a small hole where liquid, powder, or gas can escape: "There is a leak in the bottom of the bucket." A *leek* is a vegetable with a stalk and leaves, similar to an onion: "This recipe calls for two leeks."

**Lessen vs. Lesson:** *Lessen* is a verb that means to reduce the amount or size of something: "You need to lessen the amount of water in that cup, or you'll spill it." *Lesson* is a noun that means something that is taught to you: "You need a lesson in manners."

**Likeliness vs. Likeness:** *Likelihood* is a noun that refers to the probability of something happening: "The likelihood that you will actually win is slim." *Likeness* is a noun that refers to a similarity or resemblance: "The painting of the man was a good likeness."

**Loath vs. Loathe:** *Loath* is an adjective that means reluctant or unwilling: "She was loath to try the sandwich." *Loathe* is a verb that means to feel disgust: "She didn't want the sandwich because she loathed salami."

**Mantel vs. Mantle:** *Mantel* is a noun that means a ledge found above a fireplace: "I hung the family portrait above the mantel in the living room." *Mantle* is a noun meaning cloak or shawl: "I pulled my mantle over my face when the sandstorm started."

**Marital vs. Martial:** *Marital* is an adjective that means pertaining to marriage: "The newlyweds were looking forward to years of marital bliss." *Martial* is an adjective that means warlike: "Karate, Taekwondo, and Kung Fu are martial arts that originated in Japan, Korea, and China, respectively."

**May vs. Might:** *May* is a verb used to express possibility, permission, or hope: "You may miss class today because you are sick." *Might* is the past tense of *may*: "When you were sick, you might skip class, but now that you are well, you must come." *Might* is also used in questions and requests: "Might I ask you a question?"

**Medal vs. Metal vs. Mettle:** *Medal* is a noun that refers to an award typically given to worthy candidates for an impressive accomplishment: "If you win the race, you get a gold medal." *Metal* is a noun that refers to a typically hard, opaque material that has good electrical and thermal conductivity: "Take off your metal watch before you walk through the detector." *Mettle* is a noun referring to someone's fortitude or ability to deal with a high-pressure situation: "The final obstacle course will be a test of the contestants' mettle."

**Meter vs. Metre:** *Meter* is a noun that refers to something that measures something else: "The parking meter records the amount of time you have been parked in a particular spot." *Meter* is also a unit measuring length or distance; 100 centimeters = 1 meter. *Metre* is the preferred spelling in UK English when referring to the unit of measure: "There is a pub located just a few metres from our hotel."

**Militate vs. Mitigate:** *Militate* is a verb that means to oppose something with force or influence: "You should militate against animal cruelty." *Mitigate* is a verb that means to make something less serious or harsh: "I like to mitigate tense situations by making jokes."

**Moral vs. Morale:** *Moral* is a noun that refers to a standard of behavior in terms of right and wrong: "The lying, conniving embezzler had no morals at all." It can also be used as an adjective to describe someone whose values and behaviors are upstanding: "Our mayor is a moral leader who would never allow corruption in her government." *Morale* is a noun that refers to the excitement and spirit of a group: "The cheer squad really knows how to raise the morale of the audience."

**Naval vs. Navel:** *Naval* is an adjective that refers to ships and the navy: "The naval officer climbed aboard the ship and commanded that the anchor be raised." *Navel* is a noun meaning the location where the umbilical cord is located on newborns, also known as the belly button: "He noticed he had lint in his navel."

**Official vs. Officious:** *Official* is a noun meaning a person elected or appointed to office: "The official instructed us to get out of the car." It is also an adjective meaning authorized or authoritative: "They received an official warning." *Officious* is an adjective meaning unnecessarily aggressive in the unwanted offering of one's services: "The officious bureaucrat spent all morning telling them what to do."

**Oppress vs. Repress:** *Oppress* is a verb that means to dominate something or someone: "The invaders wanted to oppress the people native to the land." *Repress* is a verb that means to contain or hold in: "Don't repress the bad memory; you need to talk about it."

**Pair vs. Pear:** *Pair* is a noun that means two pieces that belong together: "A single shoe is useless; you need a pair." *Pear* is a noun that refers to a type of fruit: "For lunch, I'm eating a pear-and-cranberry salad."

**Palate vs. Palette:** *Palate* is a noun referring to one's sense of taste: "He had a very sophisticated palate—he especially loved fine wine." *Palette* is a noun meaning a set of colors on a board used by an artist: "The artist picked up her palette, dipped her brush in the blue paint, and began to work."

**Peak vs. Peek:** *Peak* is a noun that refers to the top or highest point of something: "The mountain peak is 1500 feet from the ground." *Peek* is a verb that means to look quickly in order to catch a glimpse of something you are likely not supposed to see: "I peeked in the office to see my work schedule a day early."

**Pedal vs. Peddle:** *Pedal* is a noun meaning a lever that is worked by the foot. It is also a verb meaning to use pedals: "She pedaled her bike faster to get away from him, but her foot slipped off the pedal." *Peddle* is a verb meaning to sell something door to door: "To earn money, the man decided to peddle his wares on the street."

**Petty vs. Pretty:** *Petty* is an adjective that means trivial or stooping to low standards: "Spreading that rumor was very petty of you." *Pretty* is an adjective used to describe something that is attractive to you: "That ring is very pretty."

**Practice vs. Practise:** *Practice* is a noun that refers to the use of something, such as an idea, theory, or process: "Brushing twice a day is a healthy practice." It can also be used as a verb meaning to repeat in the hopes of improvement over time; "I practice the piano every day." *Practise* is the UK spelling of the same verb: "In Britain, practise makes perfect."

**Pray vs. Prey:** *Pray* is a verb meaning to petition, thank, or converse with a deity: "The little girl knelt by her bed to pray." *Prey* is a noun meaning a person or animal that is hunted. "Mice are a common prey of owls." *Prey* is also a verb meaning to seize or devour or to exert a harmful influence: "Owls sometimes prey upon squirrels and rabbits."

**Prescribe vs. Proscribe:** *Prescribe* is a verb meaning to advise the use of a certain medicine: "The doctor prescribed antibiotics to clear up the infection." *Proscribe* is a verb that means to denounce, forbid, or condemn: "The new law was going to proscribe public gatherings."

**Principal vs. Principle:** *Principal* is a noun meaning chief or head. It can also be an adjective meaning highest in rank: "The principal of the middle school was strict but kind." It can also be an adjective meaning highest in rank: "The president plays the principal role in governing the country." *Principle* is a noun meaning a rule, law, or characteristic: "Students must follow the basic principles of good behavior."

**Raise vs. Raze vs. Rise:** *Raise* is a noun that means a promotion to a higher level, typically in a work environment: "John

decided he was going to ask for a raise." It is also a verb meaning to lift up: "The sunshine helped to raise my spirits." *Raze* is a verb meaning to completely destroy: "The Vikings razed the village." *Rise* is a verb that means to move up from a lower position: "The sun will rise from the lowest to the highest point in the sky by noon."

**Regretful vs. Regrettable:** *Regretful* is an adjective meaning to be full of regret: "The boy sat in the corner feeling deeply regretful that he had hit his friend." *Regrettable* is an adjective meaning deplorable or unfortunate: "Although closing the store is the right decision, the fact that so many employees will lose their jobs is regrettable."

**Ring vs. Wring:** *Ring* is a noun that refers to a piece of jewelry that goes around your finger: "A ring on the fourth finger of your left hand is symbolic of marriage." *Wring* is a verb that means to twist something: "Wring out the towel before you bring it in the house."

**Seam vs. Seem:** *Seam* is a noun that refers to the place where two pieces of material are sewn together: "I lost my money when the seam of my pocket came undone." *Seem* is a verb that describes how something (e.g., a situation or a conversation) appears: "It seems like he doesn't care what we do tonight."

**Sense vs. Since:** *Sense* is a noun that refers to the five ways we perceive stimuli from our surroundings (hearing, touch, sight, smell, and taste): "His terrible cold meant he had no sense of taste or smell." *Since* is a preposition referring to time past: "He has lived in that house since he was 12 years old."

**Shear vs. Sheer:** *Shear* is a verb that means to cut or to remove: "The farmer sheared the wool from the sheep." *Sheer* is an adjective that means transparent: "The sheer material allowed the sunlight to shine through, giving the room a bright and happy feel."

**Stationary vs. Stationery:** *Stationary* is an adjective meaning still or not moving: "The car was stationary as it sat at a red light." *Stationery* is a noun meaning writing paper and other office supplies: "She wrote the love letter on scented stationery."

**Storey vs. Story:** *Storey* is the UK spelling of the noun meaning a floor of a building or structure: "The 110-storey building dominated the city's skyline." *Story* is the US spelling of the same noun, and it also means a narrative: "The little girl wanted to hear a story before bed."

**Suit vs. Suite:** *Suit* is a noun meaning an article of clothing: "The groom wore a suit to his wedding." It is also a verb meaning to be appropriate: "I don't think this hat suits me very well." *Suite* is a noun meaning a set of things forming a series or combination: "The hotel suite included a living room, sitting room, kitchenette, and bathroom."

**Taut vs. Taught vs. Tout:** *Taut* is an adjective used to describe something that is tight or stretched: "The taut wire was positioned at ankle height, ready to trip the intruder." *Taught* is the past tense of the verb *teach*, which means to educate or instruct someone how to do something: "The professor taught her students how to solve the equation." *Tout* is a verb that means to hype up, advertise, or promote: "This singer is touted as the best in the country."

**Than vs. Then:** *Than* is a conjunction and is used in comparative statements: "I'd rather go out for dinner than cook something here." *Then* can be an adverb, adjective, or a noun, and it is related to time: "The toddler's lip began to quiver, and then he started to cry."

**Their vs. There vs. They're:** *Their* is a pronoun and is the possessive of *they*: "The children rode their bikes to the park." *There* is an adverb and pronoun meaning *that place*: "What will they do when they get there?" *They're* is a contraction of *they are*: "They're going to play on the swings."

**Waive vs. Wave:** *Waive* is a verb that means to relinquish something: "We will waive the registration fee if you sign up today!" *Wave* is a noun that refers to a hand gesture typically used to signify hello or goodbye: "Wave goodbye to your friends, Tom; they're leaving."

**Wary vs. Weary:** *Wary* is an adjective that means careful: "Be wary of the roads; they're slippery." *Weary* is an adjective that means tired and with little energy: "I'm feeling weary after going on that run without eating breakfast."

**Weather vs. Whether:** *Weather* is an umbrella term for various measures of the environment: "The weather is going to be clear all day." *Whether* is a conjunction that is used to draw attention to alternatives: "Whether or not you win determines whether you get a gold medal."

**Who's vs. Whose:** *Who's* is a contraction of *who is*: "Who's going to claim responsibility for this mess?" *Whose* is a pronoun and is the possessive of *who* or *which*: "Whose pencil is this?"

**Wound vs. Wound:** *Wound* can be a noun that means an injury. It can also be a verb that means to injure: "She was wounded by the sword." *Wound* is also a verb that is a participle of the verb *wind*: "He followed the river as it wound through the forest."

**Your vs. You're:** *Your* is a pronoun and is the possessive form of *you*: "Your bicycle is so cool!" *You're* is a contraction of *you are*: "You're not being very nice."