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LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Listening comprehension is probably the most difficult task (noun=exercise, job) for almost all learners of English as a foreign language. The most important thing is to listen, and that means as often as possible. The next step is to find listening resources. This is where the Internet really comes in handy (idiom = to be useful) as a tool for English students. First you need to: **Strategies**: Once you have begun to listen on a regular basis, you might still be frustrated (adjective=upset) by limited understanding. Here is some of the advice for the students: Accept the fact that you are **not** going to understand everything. Keep cool (idiom=stay relaxed) when you do not understand - even if you continue to not understand for a long time. Do not translate into your native language (synonym=mother tongue) Listen for the gist (noun=general idea) of the conversation. Don't concentrate on detail until you have understood the main ideas. Firstly, translating creates a barrier (noun=wall, separation) between the listener and the speaker. Secondly, most people repeat themselves constantly. By remaining calm (adjective=relaxed), I noticed that - even if I spaced out (idiom=to not pay attention) I could usually understand what the speaker had said. I had discovered some of the most important things about listening comprehension: *Translating creates a barrier between yourself and the person who is speaking*. While you are listening to another person speaking a foreign language (English in this case), the temptation is to immediately translate into your native language. This temptation becomes much stronger when you hear a word you don't understand. This is only natural as we want to understand everything that is said. However, when you translate into your native language, you are taking the *focus* of your attention away from the speaker and concentrating on the translation process taking place in your brain. This would be fine if you could put the speaker on hold (phrasal verb=to make a person wait). In real life however, the person continues talking while you translate. This situation obviously leads to less -not more- understanding. I have discovered that translation leads to a kind of block (noun=no movement or activity) in my brain which sometimes doesn't allow me to understand anything at all! Think for a moment about your friends, family and colleagues. When they speak in your native tongue, do they repeat themselves? I don't mean literally (adverb=word for word), I mean the general idea. If they are like most people I have met, they probably do. That means that whenever you listen to someone speaking, it is very likely (adjective=probable) that he/she will repeat the information, giving you a second, third or even fourth chance to understand what has been said. Use keywords (noun=principal words) or keyphrases to help you understand the general ideas. If you understand "New York", "business trip", "last year" you can assume (verb=to take for granted, suppose) that the person is speaking about a business trip to New York last year. This may seem obvious to you, but remember that understanding the main idea will help you to understand the detail as the person continues to speak. *Listen for Context* .Let's imagine that your English speaking friend says "...I bought this great *tuner* at JR's. It was really cheap and now I can finally listen to National Public Radio broadcasts." You don't understand what a *tune* is. If you

focus on the word *tuner* you might become frustrated. However, if you think in context (noun=the situation explained during the conversation) you probably will understand.