LANGUAGECERT Academic

LESSON PLAN

Listening Part 4

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Foreword

LANGUAGECERT Academic

Lesson Plan for Teachers

Listening Part 4

This lesson plan has been produced by teachers for teachers preparing students for the **LANGUAGECERT Academic** test. It should help students relate their knowledge of previous lessons with task types to be expected on their test day.

The suggested lesson plan revolves around the Listening part of the **LANGUAGECERT Academic** test and presents tasks set at C2 level (CEFR). Depending on the level of the students, tasks may need to be adapted accordingly.

All **LANGUAGECERT Academic** lesson plans reflect a step-by-step approach and clearly indicate the lesson aim(s) and sub-aims, approximate duration, target language, material(s) used, assumptions, anticipated problems, suggested solutions and more.

We naturally encourage you to create similar tasks and the support material for both teachers and candidates available on our website (www.LANGUAGECERT.org) can certainly assist in this direction.

We hope our lesson plans will prove useful and we wish your students good luck on their **LANGUAGECERT Academic** test - when the time comes!

Acronyms:

Ss: students

IW: individual work

PW: pair work

Q: question

LESSON PLAN		
Skill focus: Listening	**Level: C2**	**Length of lesson: 45 minutes (approx.)**
Lesson aim(s) Practice in a part of the LANGUAGECERT Academic Listening test **Sub-aim(s)** Consolidating language recently taught related to the 'media' Practising and reminding students of a few Listening strategies **Target language** Vocabulary related to the 'media'		
Materials • LANGUAGECERT Academic - Practice Paper #3 (Listening Part 4)		
Assumptions • Language set at approx. C2 level (knowledge and skills) • Awareness of language related to the media/scientific research (communication with audiences/language used by the Press/etc) • Awareness of basic Listening test taking strategies		
Anticipated problems • Some students not at C2 level but aiming at C2 level certification • Some students finding the recorded text too dense with information • Students not aware of this part of the test		**Solutions to these problems** • Spot Ss' strengths/weaknesses early enough and guiding them as to how they can fill their gaps • Remind Ss that the text may be dense with information and that they will need to disregard some; remind Ss that they will be given one minute to look at the questions before the listening begins and that they should skim read questions/possible answers so they know what to listen out for • After the listening task, ask some Ss to summarise/share with the class the main features of this part of the

	Listening test (format/content/ etc) and strategies that can help them
Exam preparation aims • Helping students become acquainted with the Listening component of the test • Sharing with students listening strategies applicable on their test day • Helping students feel comfortable and confident by creating a friendly/supportive atmosphere for even more active participation	**Reflection & analysis of the lesson** • Which part of the lesson seems to have challenged Ss more? Why? • Did the tasks help Ss become even more aware of their upcoming test? How can you tell? • Did Ss effectively "wrap up" the lesson when asked what they might need to remember for their test day? Any evidence?

Listening Part 4

You hear part of a podcast discussion about how the findings of scientific research are reported in the media. You will hear the discussion twice. Choose the correct answers. You have one minute to read through the questions.

25. What does Peter say about press releases issued by university press officers?

a) The tone they take varies enormously from university to university.
b) It's not in the university's best interests for them to be too over the top.
c) Some press officers misunderstand their fundamental purpose.

26. What is Peter's concern about the first few lines of press releases?

a) More effort goes into writing them than into the rest of the text.
b) The influence they have on readers isn't appreciated by press officers.
c) Inaccuracies in them seem to stick in people's memories for a long time.

27. What does Marion feel is lacking from press releases about scientific findings?

a) evidence to support the claims being made
b) warnings about the limitations of the study
c) information that puts the findings into context

28. What do Peter and Marion agree about the overhyping of study results?

a) Preventing it involves controlling many variables.
b) There's no need for it to happen as often as it does.
c) Scientists need to monitor it and intervene if necessary.

29. Marion says that when dealing with science press releases, journalists

a) accept them with little scrutiny.
b) are wary of challenging them.
c) treat them as low priority.

30. What is Marion's feeling about science media centres?

a) She's convinced they're superior to any other solution.
b) She can't understand why they're not more popular.
c) She's keen to confirm her suspicion that they are effective.

TIME (mins)	STAGE/AIM/ INTERACTION	MATERIALS USED & PROCEDURE
10	**Pre-listening** **Warm-up** **IW**	• Briefly introduce Ss to topic ("How the findings of scientific research are reported in the media"). • Initially elicit what we mean by "*media*" (or "*mass media*") and by "*scientific research*". Following their attempts, and if necessary, clarify that: - by "*media*" we mean the means of communication such as radio, television, newspapers, magazines, the internet used to reach or influence people, - by "*scientific research*" we mean "research aiming to contribute towards science by the systematic collection, interpretation and evaluation of data". (you may wish to write both definitions on the board to help Ss remember these details and answer the questions that follow). • Then, ask the class a few related questions, e.g.: - Do you think the public needs to be informed about scientific research findings? Why (not)? - Can you guess any problem faced when scientific research findings are reported in the media? • Elicit Ss' responses, encourage a short class discussion and do not reveal the content of the recording yet.

15	**While-listening** **Listening, answering questions, feedback** **PW**	• Ask Ss to form pairs, carefully skim read the questions/possible answers during the 1 minute that will be given prior to listening to the recording so that know what to listen out for. • Remind Ss that they will hear the recording twice (tell them that during the first listening they may wish to answer as many questions as they can and during the second one answer the remaining questions). • Warn Ss that the text will be dense with information and that they will need to disregard some. • After they have answered the questions, ask pairs to compare them and share them with the class. Remind Ss to be ready to justify their responses. • Elicit Ss' answers and provide feedback (refer to the related transcript for the actual words used by the speakers if needed).
20	**Post-listening** **Further exploitation of topic** **IW**	**Whole class discussion:** ask students these follow-up questions: - What kind of language should press releases be expressed in so that everyone can understand them? Why? - (For more advanced Ss) Do you agree with one of the speakers' claim that "the findings of scientific research should not be reported by scientists or press officers but by independent experts who act as intermediaries"? Why (not)? **Wrapping up:** upon completion of the Listening task, ask the class what they might need to remember about this part of the Listening section for their upcoming test (e.g.

		task type to be expected, likely content, length, duration, useful strategies they can use).
	Homework	• **Writing task:** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following opinion: "The media generally overstate facts and misinform the public". Write a short article of approximately 250 words for your college magazine.

Transcript:

Pres: On the podcast today, we're examining the issue of how the findings of scientific research get reported in the media, namely the problem of exaggeration and hype – what are the causes and what can be done about it? With me are Dr Peter Summer, a psychologist with a special interest in the representation of science in the media, and Dr Marion Grayson, professor of science communication at Redbridge University.

M/F: Hello /Hi [overlapping]

Pres: Peter, let's start with the role of the university press officer. They put out a press release when scientists at the university publish a study with the hope that journalists pick this up and write a story on it. Would you say that there's an intrinsic motivation for press officers to overstate study findings?

M: It's inevitable there'll be some exaggerations because there's pressure to get publicity for the institution. That's their job after all! But having said that, there's also a very strong, competing desire to present the institution as trustworthy. Ultimately for the university it's more important to keep that stamp of authority than for any individual science story to get splashed across the press.

Pres: So which elements of a press release are most critical to get right?

M: The first few lines – the bit that's there to hook the reader. Some press officers assume that, as long as they explain the study's findings accurately in the body of the press release, it doesn't matter if the first few lines are simplistic. I would strongly disagree with that. We know from psychology that what you read first affects how you interpret the rest. That's why getting it right matters.

Pres: Marion, do you agree?

F: Absolutely. I've recently been looking at the use of buzzwords in press releases and there's been a big rise recently. The kind of words I'm talking about are 'ground-breaking', 'world first' and 'landmark study' – you get the idea. What the public doesn't understand is that most scientific results don't qualify as 'ground-breaking'. A single study will almost never revolutionise an entire scientific discipline. What counts is the broader body of knowledge to which that single publication adds, and what we can learn from that addition to further build on it. We need the complete picture, and that's not something press releases deliver.

Pres: So are press officers ultimately to blame for overhyped science stories getting into the press?

F: Scientists, press officers and journalists are all involved and often shift the blame onto each other. Of course, press officers are responsible for misinformation in press releases, but at the same time journalists are responsible if inaccuracies get to the public via their articles. Crucially though, if the press office publishes hyped-up press releases, then it's the job of the scientist to notice this and protest.

Pres: Peter, what do you think?

M: The thing is, if it all goes wrong, it's the scientist who'll be held accountable, not the press officer-, so scientists have to keep an eye on what's being said about their work. At the same time, universities need to make sure they train press officers to do their job properly in the first place so that they're consistently releasing correct information.

Pres: And what about the role of journalists, Marion?

F: You know, very few newspapers have dedicated science journalists these days – most science news is written by general journalists who don't have a science background. So they take university press releases at face value, something they'd never do with press releases from a company or political party. Any hype then feeds into the articles that journalists write, and then you have the risk of the public being misinformed.

Pres: So, what are the solutions? Peter let me ask you first.

M: Well, one would be the journalistic 'quote code.' This mandates that whenever a journalist writes about a study, they have to call an independent expert, ask for an assessment of the research and then quote them in the final article.

F: And in the meantime, until that's taken up widely, science media centres can bridge the gap. These exist in a number of countries and act as intermediaries between scientists and journalists. They collect independent comments on new studies for the benefit of journalists. My intuition tells me that their approach really works, but as a science-communication researcher, I'm itching to investigate and quantify the difference they make. But anyway, yes, the upshot is that journalists should always quote an independent expert to show readers that they've done their job properly.

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