Pearson English International Certificate

Lesson Plan Ideas:
Skill Building Activities

Listen and Repeat
Task Introduction

- Listen and Repeat tasks assess test learners’ ability to comprehend and reproduce spoken English accurately, using knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.
- These tasks assess both listening and speaking skills.
- These tasks require test takers to listen to a sentence or, at higher levels, a short, spoken text and to then repeat what they have heard in natural spoken English.
- Test takers do 10-12 Listen and Repeat tasks at all levels.
- The difficulty level of the sentences that test takers must repeat varies in terms of vocabulary level, sentence length and sentence complexity according to the level of the test.
- When speaking, test takers should speak fluently, use accurate pronunciation and repeat every word they have heard in the correct order.
- At the start of each Listen and Repeat task, the Audio Status box will count down from 3 seconds and then the recording will begin.
- On screen, the task will look like this:

The recording will last between 3 and 9 seconds.
- The recording is only played once.
- Test takers then have up to 15 seconds to repeat what they have heard.
- Test takers’ score will be lower if they fail to repeat every word, if they repeat words in the wrong order, or if they add words that have not featured on the recording.
Strategies for Success

- Listen carefully. Test takers should make sure they pay attention to every word on the recording. Many words in a sentence are unstressed, particularly shorter words like ‘a’ ‘the’ ‘of’ and ‘on’. If test takers do not listen carefully, they may omit words like this when trying to repeat the sentence. This will mean their score is reduced.

- Test takers should not start speaking until the microphone opens, because their voice will not be recorded. Wait until the Audio Status box says ‘Recording’ like this:

- Wait for a tone before recording your response. Test takers should listen, wait for the tone and for the Audio Status box to say ‘recording’ and begin repeating what they have heard.

- Stay focused. There are 10-12 Listen and Repeat tasks in a row. Test takers must pay close attention to each recording. After one has finished, test takers need to forget about that recording and make sure they are focusing on the next task.

- Listen carefully to how the speaker says the sentence, not just to what they say. In order to repeat the sentence accurately, test takers will need to notice how the speaker uses intonation and syllable stress, especially on longer words such as ‘graduation’ and ‘educational’.

- Do not worry about copying the speaker’s accent. Although it is necessary to pronounce words accurately with appropriate stress, it is not necessary to copy the accent of the speakers in the recordings.

- Speak at a normal volume. Speaking too quietly may mean that your voice is not recorded successfully. Speaking too loudly can lead to the recording being distorted.

- Do not rush: test takers should speak at a steady, natural pace. Speaking too quickly will reduce test takers’ score, as they will not be speaking with natural fluency.
Listen and Repeat: Activities for all learners

The sentences used in the Listen and Repeat tasks will vary in terms of vocabulary level, sentence length and sentence complexity according to the level of the test. Test takers at lower levels are likely to be presented with shorter, simpler sentence containing more common language, while higher-level test takers can expect longer sentences, often with multiple clauses and containing more high-level vocabulary.

Learners of all levels will need to understand the requirements of the task and to get used to listening and repeating sentences. All learners should also be trying to build their vocabulary so that they are familiar with the words they hear on the recordings.

Understanding the task

After introducing the Listen and Repeat task to your learners and explaining the Strategies for Success on page 1, check that they have understood by using the following True/False questions and/or write-in gap-fill summary.

True/False questions

1. Listen and Repeat tasks assess both listening and speaking skills. True/ False
2. Test takers must repeat a few simple words for each task. True/ False
3. There are 6 Listen and Repeat tasks on each test. True/ False
4. Test takers only need to repeat key words. True/ False

Answers: 1) True. 2) False: They must repeat a sentence or a short, spoken text. 3) False: There are 10-12. 4) False: Test takers should repeat every word.

Write-in Gap-fill summary

For Listen and Repeat tasks, test takers should use their knowledge of (i) _______ and vocabulary to repeat a sentence. When listening to the sentence, they should (ii) _______ on every word they hear. The recording will last between 3 and (iii) _______ seconds. When repeating the sentence, test takers should make sure that they pronounce every word (iv) _______ but they do not need to copy the speaker’s (v) _______.

Answers: (i) grammar (ii) focus/concentrate (iii) 9 (iv) accurately (v) accent
Listen and Repeat: Activities for all learners

Creating Listen and Repeat practice tasks for your learners

Creating your own Listen and Repeat practice tasks before class can allow you to target specific vocabulary and sentence structures that you have been working on with your learners. It can also give your learners more opportunities to get ready for the test. Higher-level learners could be asked to write their own sentences for use in practice activities.

Listen and Repeat tasks usually feature sentences of between 7 and 15 words with the length varying according to the level of the test. You may want to select sentences from reading texts or write your own. The sentences should be about general topics and should not include specialised or technical language. To ensure they are at the right level for your learners to prepare for the test, you can use Pearson’s GSE Teacher Toolkit.

There are two ways you could use the Pearson’s GSE Teacher Toolkit.

**Approach 1**

1. First, find or write a sentence you think might be good for practice.
2. Next, select the ‘Text Analyzer’ function on the GSE Teacher Toolkit.
3. Then, copy and paste the sentence into the ‘Text’ field. (You’ll also need to give your text a title; e.g. ‘Listen and Repeat practice’)
4. Click ‘Analyze my text’
Approach 1 (Continued)

5. Check the ‘CEFR Level’

6. If the CEFR level does not match your learners’ needs, remove/add higher level vocabulary accordingly. If the level matches the test level you expect them to take, you can be sure your sentence would be useful for practice.
Listen and Repeat:
Activities for all learners

Approach 2

1. Select the ‘Vocabulary’ function on the GSE Teacher Toolkit.

2. Use the ‘Who are you teaching?’ ‘Topic’ ‘Grammatical category’ and ‘Choose a range on CEFR’

3. Click ‘Show results’ and review the word list that is created.

4. Use the words to create sentences for your learners, or you can ask them to create their own
**Listen and Repeat:**
Activities for A1/A2

At A1 level, learners should be able to follow speech that is very slow and carefully articulated. At A2, they should be able to understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority, such as personal and family information, shopping, local geography and employment, when spoken clearly and slowly. Listen and Repeat tasks test the ability to do this by assessing listening and speaking skills, including understanding of grammar and vocabulary and the ability to reconstruct what has been heard. You can help your learners prepare for the test by using the A2 example practice sentence below, other practice tasks on page 4, or by creating your own practice sentences.

The hospital is on the corner, opposite the museum.

**Drilling**

For Listen and Repeat tasks, test takers must get used to focusing on every word they hear and repeating it accurately. To help them develop this skill, it is useful to regularly use drilling in class, especially with lower level learners. Drilling will be a familiar teaching technique for most teachers, one that is regularly used to develop learners’ speaking ability, especially rhythm, stress and pronunciation. But drilling can be a very effective way to develop learners’ listening skills too, as long as you vary what it is they are needing to repeat.

• First, say a few words or a short sentence to your group. Gradually build up in terms of length, vocabulary level and complexity according to your learners’ needs.

• Then, have your learners repeat what you have said.

• Use the same words/sentence again once or twice until they are able to repeat it accurately.

• Next, change the sentence and ask them to repeat what you have said again.

• Keep changing the words or sentence that your learners need to repeat at irregular intervals to ensure they are actively listening.

• You might want to introduce some kind of fun penalty for learners who repeat the wrong words or can’t repeat the sentence fully. For example, learners who repeat the previous sentence could be asked to pull a funny face or put one hand on their head.

• You could also introduce movement by getting all the learners on their toes and asking them to move across the room: one step forward for each correctly repeated sentence and one step back if they make a mistake.
**Listen and Repeat:**

**Activities for A1/A2**

### Telephone game

**Preparing for the Telephone game:**

Get some short phrases and/or sentences ready to use for practice. Select vocabulary according to the needs of your learners. Divide your group into two or more teams. The telephone game works best with larger teams of at least 4 or 5 learners. Ask learners to line up in their teams facing your board or somewhere else they can write, such as paper stuck to the wall. They should have around one metre between each team member. Give the member of each team who is closest to the board something to write with, such as a marker pen or chalk.

**Playing the Telephone game:**

1. You need to stand near the learners who are furthest from the board at first. Whisper a short sentence to the member of each team who is furthest from the board.

2. On the count of three (or ‘ready, steady, go!’), tell the learners that they must pass the sentence down the line by whispering it to their nearest teammate. Make sure they know that they should whisper, not shout. Shouting would risk members of other teams hearing.

3. When the message (i.e. the sentence) reaches the front of the line, the learner holding the pen/chalk should write it on the board/paper.

4. The first team to write the full sentence correctly wins and gets a point.

5. Change the order of team members each time you play; i.e. let different learners write on the board/be the first to receive the sentence from you.

It is important that your learners are repeating the sentences accurately. If lower-level learners struggle to pass on full sentences, you can vary this activity by having them pass sentences on in chunks, a few words at a time.
Listen and Repeat: Activities for B1/B2

At B1 level, learners can understand straightforward, factual information about common, everyday or job-related topics, as long as speech is clearly articulated in a familiar accent. At B2, they should be able to understand standard spoken language on both familiar and unfamiliar topics in personal, social and professional life. Listen and Repeat tasks test the ability to do this by assessing listening and speaking skills, including understanding of grammar and vocabulary and the ability to reconstruct what has been heard. You can help your learners prepare for the test by using the B2 example practice sentence below, other practice tasks on page 4, or by creating your own practice sentences.

Some physiotherapists recommend sports massages to patients who are not professional athletes.

Back-to-back interview

To get learners ready for Listen and Repeat tasks, it is important for them to practice listening without seeing the person speaking. In face-to-face communication, we naturally look at people’s mouths when they are talking, especially when listening to another language. Test takers won’t be able to do this during the test, so they need to get used to not relying on seeing the person they are listening to. Back-to-back interview activities can help to develop this ability.

Divide your group into pairs and ask each pair to sit back-to-back. Give one member of each pair a written list of questions, such as 'What job do you do?' 'Where are you from?' etc. Have that member of the pair ask the questions to the other and write down their answers on paper. This will ensure both are listening carefully to each other.

Select questions based on language your learners need to practice using. If they already know each other well, or even if they don’t, you can use role play cards to make the activity more engaging and fun. Write the names of popular celebrities on cards, one name per card. Then hand a card to the learners who are answering the question. Tell them they must answer in the character of the celebrity whose name is on the card. At the end of the questions, the learner who has been asking them should guess who the celebrity is.
**Listen and Repeat:**

**Activities for B1/B2**

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### Spot the difference

When doing Listen and Repeat tasks, test takers need to focus carefully on every word they hear. It is especially common for learners to omit or replace shorter, unstressed words, particularly articles (‘a’ ‘an’ ‘the’) and prepositions (‘of’ ‘on’ etc.) To get your learners focused on these parts of sentences, it can be helpful to play ‘Spot the difference’ games that focus on small changes.

- First, read a sentence, such as “Some physiotherapists recommend sports massages to patients who are not professional athletes.”

- Then, read the sentence again but change one, small word; e.g. “Some physiotherapists recommend sports massages for patients who are not professional athletes.”

- Ask your learners which word was different. You may need to repeat the two sentences if they can’t spot the difference straightaway.

You can make spot the difference activities more fun by awarding points to individuals/teams for correctly spotting the difference. You could also try to incorporate note-taking skills by asking them to first write down the difference and compare it with a partner/team.

Here are some more example sentences that could be used for Spot the difference:

1. **People were confused by the changes to the train timetable.**
   - **People were confused about the changes to the train timetable.**

2. **The presenter explained a way to increase the company’s profits.**
   - **The presenter explained the way to increase the company’s profits.**

3. **She put her clothes in the large cupboard outside the bedroom.**
   - **She put her clothes into the large cupboard outside the bedroom.**

You can vary this activity by adding more than one difference to the sentences. For example, in the third example above in addition to changing ‘in’ to ‘into’ you could also change ‘the large cupboard’ to ‘a large cupboard’, ‘outside’ to ‘inside’ and/or ‘the bedroom’ to ‘her bedroom’.
Listen and Repeat:
Activities for B1/B2

Rhythm: Stressed words only

One area of spoken language that B1 and B2 learners often struggle with is rhythm or, what some people call, sentence stress – that is, the arrangement of stressed and unstressed words within a sentence. Improving the rhythm of their speech can help learners to sound more natural and native-like, which can improve their speaking score for Listen and Repeat tasks. One useful practice activity can be to get learners reading out only the stressed parts of sentences:

1. Identify some sentences to work with. (These can come from anywhere for the purposes of this activity, but they should include vocabulary the learners are comfortable with.)

2. Ask learners to underline the main content words; i.e. the words they think should be stressed. (e.g. “She bought some tomatoes and eggs from the supermarket”)

3. Read the sentence yourself, making clear which words are stressed and which are not.

4. Ask learners to read the stressed words aloud a few times at a natural speed.

5. Then ask them to read the full sentence, including the unstressed words, without slowing down; i.e. at the same speed as they had been saying only the stressed words.

This activity can really help learners to improve the rhythm of their speech, raising their awareness of how unstressed words actually sound in nature spoken English.
**Listen and Repeat:**
**Activities for C1/C2**

At C1 level, learners should be able to understand speech about abstract and complex that contains idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. At C2, they should have no difficulty understanding any kind of spoken language delivered by a native English speaker. Listen and Repeat tasks test the ability to do this by assessing listening and speaking skills, including understanding of grammar and vocabulary and the ability to reconstruct what has been heard. You can help your learners prepare for the test by using the C1 example practice sentence below, other practice tasks on page 4, or by creating your own practice sentences.

**Students failing to abide by the rules will be severely reprimanded.**

**Video clip challenge**

Clips from online TV shows or amateur videos that have been uploaded can provide exciting and authentic listening practice that can help learners get ready for Listen and Repeat tasks. At C1/C1 levels, test takers are likely to be exposed to a wide range of vocabulary, colloquial language and a variety of accents. To get them used to this, it is important to practice with as wide a range of materials as possible. Online video platforms can be an excellent source of practice material, and you are likely to find younger learners especially are able to use these comfortably.

Divide your learners into groups of 2–5 with one internet-connected device per group. Ask learners to take it in turns to find a video and to ask their partner/to pick someone in the group to repeat a sentence from it. The learner holding the device should play part of the video. (Many online video platforms have transcripts that can help them to locate a sentence, or they can simply start from the beginning.) They should pause after one sentence, and another learner should try to repeat what they have heard. If the learner can repeat the sentence correctly, they get a point. If they cannot, the person who selected the video gets a point.

This method of allocating points will encourage learners to select trickier content. You may want point them in the direction of certain material, e.g. ‘Canadian accents’ or ‘common slang’, to meet the needs of your group. The more internet-connected devices you have for this activity, the better. You may want learners to use smart phones if they have access to them in class. It can also help to have some kind of counters (e.g. pieces of card, plastic coins) for keeping score of points.
Listen and Repeat:
Activities for C1/C2

C1/C2 Vocabulary Taboo Race

Vocabulary Taboo Races can help learners develop their understanding of vocabulary while also practicing listening closely to every word they hear.

- Identify a list of 10–20 higher-level words that your learners already know. (You can use the GSE Teacher Toolkit to identify C1/C2 vocabulary, if necessary.)
- Write each word on to a separate, small piece of card.
- Divide your group into teams of 3–5.
- Give each team a set of 5 cards face down.
- Explain that one learner must pick one card and show it to their group without looking at it themself. Other members of the group should then try to describe the meaning of the word to the learner who is holding the card, without using the word itself. (Using the word itself is ‘taboo’.)
- The learner holding the card should try to guess what word is being described. Once they have correctly said the word they are holding, it is another member of the group’s turn to pick up a card.
- Groups should repeat this until they have got through all the words in their set.
- Explain to learners that this is a race and that they should try to get through the list as quickly as possible.

This activity usually works best if different groups are dealing with different words in their sets. This avoids the possibility of one group listening to another. If you want groups to be working with the same words, you will need to write each word on one card for each group and ask them to do their explaining in hushed voices so that other teams cannot hear.
Listen and Repeat:
Practice Tasks A2

There is no uniform at this school.

My sister practises dancing every day.

The hotel has a very large swimming pool.

You can catch the bus outside the college.
Listen and Repeat: Practice Tasks B1

The travellers should arrive at their destination before midnight.

It is impossible for people to solve this puzzle.

The police believe the owner of the car lives abroad.

Peter’s flight was delayed so he got into Tokyo later than he expected.

Concrete is an excellent building material because it is inexpensive and lasts well.
Listen and Repeat: Practice Tasks B2

Providing you have the determination to succeed, being an entrepreneur can be highly rewarding.

My condition makes it hard for my body to digest rich or fatty food.

My favourite part of the walk is the part by the waterfront and pier.

According to the map, the cathedral must be nearby.
Listen and Repeat: Practice Tasks C1

Without being particularly superstitious, I occasionally read my horoscope just for fun.

To prevent the cake from sticking, you should first grease the tin with butter.

A vacation on a houseboat taught me the benefits of travelling light.

The film satirises certain aspects of contemporary politics and media.
Be yourself in English.