

Steps to Success in Listening and Speaking

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Irene E. Schoenberg



Topics from A to Z, Book 1: Steps to Success in Listening and Speaking

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Contents

Unit 1	Actors	a
Unit 2	Books	2 6
Unit 3	Chocolate	
Unit 4	Diamonds and Other Jewelry	10
Unit 5	Emergencies and Disasters	14
Unit 6	Fables and Fairy Tales	18
Unit 7	Gestures	· 22
Unit 8	Hairstyles	26
Unit 9	Ice	30
Unit 10	Junk and Garbage	<i>34</i>
Unit 11	Kandinsky, Klee, and Modern Art	38
Unit 12	Laughter	42
Unit 13	Masks	46
Unit 14	Names, Nicknames, and Titles	50
Unit 15		54
Unit 16	Ounces and Other Measurements	<i>5</i> 8
Unit 17	Photography Queens	62
Unit 18		66
Unit 19	"Red" Idioms	70
Unit 20	Strange and Unusual Things	74
Unit 21	Tai Chi and Other Martial Arts	78
Unit 22	Uncles	82
univ 22 Unit 23	Vending Machines	86
unit 23 Unit 24	Weddings	90
	X+4=?	94
Unit 25	Yen, Peso, and Other Currencies	98
Unit 26	Z008	102
Tapescript		109

Scope and Sequence

Unit	Title	Functions
g Page 2	Actors	Expressing opinions about actors and acting
Z Page 6	Books	Talking about book preferences; Comparing books and computers
3 Page 10	Chocolate	Discussing chocolate eating habits
Page 14	Diamonds and Other Jewelry	Expressing attitudes toward diamonds; Talking about jewelry preferences
5 Page 18	Emergencies and Disasters	Telling about disasters and emergencies; Sharing opinions about disaster movies
B Page 22	Fables and Fairy Tales	Talking about favorite fairy tales; Expressing opinions about scary stories
Page 26	Gestures	Guessing gestures; Comparing body language of men and women
Page 30	Hairstyles	Talking about haircuts; Describing different types of hairstyles
F 9	Ice	Telling what winter sports you like; Expressing opinions about weather and work
90 Page 38	Junk and Garbage	Talking about throwing things away; Expressing opinions about flea markets
JJ Page 4	Kandin8ky, Klee, and Modern Art	Talking about preferences in art; Expressing opinions about art and beauty
92 Page 4	Laughter	Telling about things that make you laugh; Expressing opinions about laughter as medicine
92 Page S	Masks	Describing masks; Giving opinions about costume parties

Trying Out for a Play Facts about Antonio Banderas	Sharing information and opinions about acting and actors; Buying movie tickets	Famous Actors
Where People Get Books J.K. Rowling and Harry Potter	Buying a book at a bookstore	Books as Gifts
Chocolate and Health Canache: A Type of Chocolate	Giving and accepting a gift	Foods with Chocolate; Word Game
How Experts Judge Diamonds The Hope Diamond	Information Gap: Stones and metals	The Crown Jewels and the Tower of London
1. A Blackout 2. Forest Fires in Canada	Discussing what to do in an emergency	Warning Signs
1. Hans Christian Andersen's "The Ugly Duckling" 2. Aesop's Fable- "Sour Grapes"	Story: The Miser	Maurice Sendak Illustration
1. A Universal Gesture 2. Customs in Brazil	Learning body parts and Describing gestures	American Gestures
An Appointment at the Hair Salon Wigs in Great Britain	Talking about preferences in men's hairstyles	Unusual Hairstyles for Women
Ice Sculptures The Inuit of Canada	Using ice breakers	Building an Igloo
Space Junk Throwing Away Something Valuable	Discussing ideas from environmentalists	How Workers Save Things
Similarities between Kandinsky and Klee How to Understand Art	Discussing how much a painting is worth	Kandinsky Painting: Contrasting Sounds
1. What Makes People Laugh 2. Why It's Good to Laugh	Giving the end to a story- reading a story aloud	Different Ways People Laugh
1. Masks in Venice 2. A Mask from Burkino Faso	Describing masks and costumes	Yup'ik Masks

Scope and Sequence

Unit	Title	Functions
GLAL Page 54	Names, Nicknames, and Titles	Discussing names and nicknames; Expressing opinions about remembering names
95 Page 58	Ounces and Other Measurements	Asking and answering questions about using measurements; Giving an opinion about a measurement system
96 Page 62	Photography	Talking about photos; Expressing opinions about photos at parties
977 Page 56	Queens	Exchanging information and expressing opinions about royalty
96 Page 70	"Red" Idioms	Talking about the color red; Expressing opinions about teens and the color red
ID) Page 74	Strange and Unusual Things	Describing a strange event; Expressing opinions about unusual food
20 Page 78	Tai Chi and Other Martial Arts	Telling how you relax; Expressing preferences about watching sports
ZI Page 82	Uncles	Describing uncles; Expressing opinions about relatives and friends
<u>22</u> Page 86	Vending Machine s	Talking about vending machine purchases; Expressing opinions about food from vending machines
<u>2</u> 3 Page 90	Weddings	Describing wedding preferences, traditions, and gifts; Expressing opinions about marriage and family
ZZ Page 94	X+4=?	Discussing puzzle preferences; Giving opinions about the value of puzzles
25 Page 98	Yen, Pe80, and Other Currencie8	Describing coins; Expressing opinions about money and happiness
26 Page 102	Z008	Describing a pet; Discussing sayings about animals

Listening	Conversation Practice	Check This Out
Quiz Show: The Name Game Naming Babies in Germany	Choosing nicknames	Puzzle: Find the Names
1. Prefixes 2. Quiz Show: Ask Any Question	Guessing distances and weights	Common Measurements
The Life of Alfred Steiglitz Conversation about a Photo	Talking about a photo you took	Photograph by Brett Weston
1. Queen Liliuokalani 2. The Queen Mary 2	Telling a fairy tale	Palaces around the World
1. The origin of the idiom, "cut through the red tape" 2. Psychology of the Colors Red and Blue	Creating situations with "red"	Idioms and Colors
1. Unusual Laws 2. Stories from the Guinness Book of World Records	Talking about medical surprises	Life on other Planets: E.T.
A Radio Ad for Tai Chi Telephone Conversation about Tai Chi Classes	Teaching classmates a martial arts	Yin and Yang
1. A Description of Relatives 2. "I'll be a monkey's uncle."	Telling about a special relative	Cartoon: Large Families
Unusual Things from Vending Machines Cell Phones in South Korea	Discussing the future of vending machines	Out of Order Vending Machine
A Wedding Custom in Thailand A Bridal Shower Invitation	Describing a wedding	Cartoon: Why People Marry
Children's Riddles A Puzzle: The Weight of Five Dogs	Information Gap: Riddles	A Match Puzzle
Changing Money at an Airpor A Coin Collector	Matching currency and countries; Describing a bill	Cartoon: Time Traveller's Cheques
The History of Zoos Facts about Zoos	GAMES: Animal Alphabet; Guess the Animal	Poster: Balance in Life

Preface

Topics from A-Z, Book 1 is the first of a conversation/listening series written for beginning to low-intermediate level adult and young adult students. Each text contains 26 four-page units, one for each letter of the alphabet. Each unit in Book 1 consists of Facts, Talk about Your Experience, Give Your Opinion, Listening Comprehension 1 and 2, Conversation Practice, and Check This Out. Authentic art and photographs help to maintain student interest throughout the text.

Opening Art

Each unit starts with an engaging piece of art and an accompanying question that get students involved in the unit's content. For example, in Unit 1, "Actors," students look at an illustration of Jennifer Lopez as a teenager and read clues to try to guess who she is. In Unit 8, "Hairstyles," students see illustrations of "before" and "after" hairstyles and give their preferences.

Facts

In this section, groups of students work together trying to answer five or six multiple choice or true/false questions. Illustrations help students understand new words. Some questions are language-based, aiming to increase students' knowledge of words and phrases. Others are fun facts about the context. For example, Unit 1, "Actors," includes these questions:

1. Comedies a	nre	4.	Were you right?
a. funny	b. sad	c. serious	
2. A r	makes movies.	•	
a. direction	b. director	c. directory	
3. The main ac	tor is the	•	
a. moon	b. sun	c. star	

Next, students listen to the facts and compare them to their guesses. Finally, students read the facts aloud and try to remember them. Some will remember all the facts; others will remember only one or two. In time students discover their own learning style. Some write the sentences or take notes. Others read them several times. Some work alone. Others prefer to work with a partner.

Language experts generally agree that students learn best when they focus on, repeat, and try to remember an item. Memory is thus a key to language improvement. In this section, students develop their skills at memorizing interesting and helpful content.

THIR HOURT TOUT Experience

In this part, students work with a partner to give personal answers to a set of guided questions. Even the most reticent student can participate in this activity. For example, in Unit 6, "Fables and Fairy Tales," students ask each other the following:

	AON	YOUR PARTXER
What's your favorite fairy tale or fable? What is it about?		
• Did a story ever scare you? What was it about?		
• Do you like to read to children? Why or why not?		
Do you like to write your own stories?		

After students have spoken with a partner, a class discussion or a survey gets students to talk to a larger group. The language is controlled, the topics are non-threatening, and the result is that the whole class becomes involved. For example, in Unit 6, students find three classmates who know the same fable, fairy tale, or children's story. Then they write as much as they can about it. Afterwards students read their work to the class.

Give Your Opinion

This section helps students learn how to politely agree or disagree with someone in English. Students hear opinions on tape. A box to the side shows responses, such as: "I think so, too," or "I don't think so." For example, in Unit 6, students hear and respond to the following opinions:

Most fairy tales are too scary for young children.

I think that's true.
I remember crying and worrying after I heard the story of Hansel and Gretel.



I don't agree.
I think children love fairy tales with scary parts.



Students are given an example and encouraged to add their own ideas. In supporting their opinions, students develop critical thinking skills.

Responses
I think that's true.
I don't agree.

Listening Comprehension 1 and 2

These sections include a variety of listening activities. In some, students supply missing words or phrases. In some, they indicate comprehension, and in some, they do tasks based on the listening.

The content is practical and interesting. For example, students hear radio programs, telephone conversations, and "fun facts" stories. Again, the level of the language is controlled, though the content is geared to adults and young adults.

Conversation Practice

In this part, a variety of activities help students improve their conversation skills. For example, in the unit about Queens, students study several vocabulary words, then work with a partner to use the words in a story. In the unit on Martial Arts, students teach a group of classmates a martial arts or lead them in a type of exercise. In the unit on Diamonds, students do an Information Gap in which they find out where various gems and metals are from. Some units provide students with social language (functions) that they practice in conversations. In other units, there is a focus on new vocabulary, while others get students to discuss something they had previously heard or read.

Check This Out

A final piece of art — a cartoon, an advertisement, a puzzle, a painting — in combination with a short task, gets students motivated once again to consider and talk about another aspect of the topic.

Students are the final arbiters of the value of a text. I thank my students at the International English Language Institute, Hunter College, CUNY, both for their helpful comments and for their enthusiastic reaction to the materials in *Topics from A to Z*.

Publishers are the ones who decide whether or not to use their resources to develop and produce a book. My thanks to all the people at Pearson Education who supported the concept of this series and helped bring it to fruition:

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