

Listening L3LLO6

Understanding idiomatic and colloquial language

Learning Outcome 6: Understand high-frequency idioms and can grasp the meaning of some colloquial language when it is encountered in a clear context

BEFORE LISTENING

PREVIEWING A The words and phrases below are used in the listening. Complete the sentences with the correct words and phrases.

ballpark break figure hand ice neck pain

1. When you _____ something, you hit it so that it goes into many pieces.
2. Can you give me the _____ for the total cost of the project?
3. A place where people do a sport like baseball is a _____.
4. Your _____ is the part of your body that connects your head with your body.
5. When you have _____ in a part of your body, it hurts.
6. When water freezes because it's very cold, it becomes _____.

CRITICAL THINKING: INFER B Read the example of an idiom below. An idiom is a phrase whose words have another meaning, that's not their normal meaning. When you hear an idiom, you need to use the context to infer its meaning. Work in pairs. Try to infer the meaning of the idiom below.

I always wake up early. The early bird catches the worm!

WHILE LISTENING

CHECKING PREDICTIONS

C You're going to listen to conversations with the underlined phrases below in them. Work in pairs. Discuss what you think the meaning of each phrase is before you listen.

1. I can give you a hand with your homework if you like. _____
2. Writing this job application is a real pain in the neck. _____
3. Could you give me a ball park figure for the total cost? _____
4. Let's sit down and have a tea together to break the ice. _____
5. Faisal passed the test with flying colors. _____
6. Only time will tell how successful the company becomes. _____

LISTENING FOR MAIN IDEAS

▶ **3.1 D** Listen to three conversations. Write the numbers of the conversations (1, 2 or 3) next to the phrases in Exercise C that are used in the conversation.

LISTENING FOR DETAILS

▶ **3.2 E** Listen again. Match the phrases from Exercise C to their meanings.

1. I can give you a hand with your homework if you like.
2. Writing this job application is a real pain in the neck.
3. Could you give me a ball park figure for the total cost?
4. Let's sit down and have a tea together to break the ice.
5. Faisal passed the test with flying colors.
6. Only time will tell how successful the company becomes.

- a. an estimate of what something will be
- b. to do extremely well at something
- c. to be very difficult and annoying
- d. to help someone to do something
- e. to will find something out in the future
- f. to start to feel relaxed with someone after you meet him/her

LISTENING SKILL Understanding meaning from context

When you are not familiar with a word that a speaker says, you can sometimes guess the meaning of the word or fill in the gaps using the context or situation itself.

Strategies:

- Don't panic. You don't always understand every word of what a speaker says in your first language, either.
- Use context clues to fill in the blanks. What did you understand just before or just after the missing part? What did the speaker probably say?
- Listen for words and phrases that signal a definition or explanation (e.g., What that means is...).

F Go online and find some more idiomatic expressions like the ones on this worksheet online. Practice trying to understand their meaning from the context they are used in.

AFTER LISTENING

G What colloquial words or phrases and idiomatic language do people use in Arabic? Make a list of four or five of these words and expressions. Then make notes on how you could explain their meaning to someone who doesn't speak Arabic.

H Work in pairs. Take turns explaining the words and phrases to each other in English.