Yashwantrao
Chavan
Maharashtra
Open University

ज्ञानगंगा घरोघरी

Ability Enhancement Course (AEC)
Under Graduation Programs
Listening and Speaking Skills in English
Course Code : AECL101
Book Code : AECL1011



DEVELOP YOUR LISTENING SKILLS

BOOK 1 | SEMESTER - I

Yashwantrao
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Open
University,
Nashik

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Book 1: Develop Your Listening Skills

Author: Nagarjun Wadekar

Unit 1. Listening Skills

Unit 2. The English Sound System

Unit 3. Basic Conversational Skills – I

Unit 4. Basic Conversational Skills – II

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Vice Chancellor's Message

Dear Students,

I heartily congratulate you on your admission for Bachelor of Arts (BA) Program offered as per the National Education Policy, 2020 at Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University.

Since last thirty-five years, the university has made an attempt to fulfill the educational needs of the students of the state by providing skill-based education programs as per the needs of the society. The flexible nature of the education programs, such as extended time to complete the education program, minimum tuition fees and student-centered methodology etc. are the features of the open education system. While democratizing the opportunity of education, the university has brought many students into the mainstream of education who could not afford education due to economic disadvantage.

Keeping in mind the changing needs of the times and the feedback from various stakeholders, new educational programs are developed by the university. Quality books of various educational programs developed by experts in the respective field are made available to the students. I am proud that these books developed by the Open University have become an identity of the university. In this way, the Open University has contributed to the development of the State by creating an education system that brings knowledge to every household.

English language has gained significance since it helps in developing personal as well as professional career. It enhances a variety of skills that significantly contributes to professional career advancement and personality development. Taking this into consideration the two courses on *'Listening and Speaking Skills in English'* and *'Reading and Writing Skills in English'* have been developed by the university. Pursuing these courses will improve one's oral and written communication skills, and career skills such as group discussion, interview skills etc. which are extremely important for professional as well as personal growth.

In the traditional education system, regular classes are conducted in colleges every day, while in the distance education system, counselling sessions are organized on holidays. This concept expects students to complete their education while performing their professional duties and shouldering family responsibilities. Before the counselling session, it is necessary to go through the relevant syllabus, books, and its components. So that it becomes easier to clear doubts and queries during contact sessions. The university believes that the ideal counseling session should be a discussion forum rather than a monotonous lecture. The university has made available various interviews and lectures of experts on university's website; you must take benefit of the same.

In today's era of information technology, emphasis is being placed on paperless administration using digital technology in administration. As a part of this, the university's various academic courses have been made available in digital format on the website www.ycmou.ac.in. I am sure that will be useful to students, teachers and general readers. Your feedback on these courses and reading materials is most welcome.

Best wishes for your future endeavors!

Vice-Chancellor

Ability Enhancement Course (AEC) (2 credits)

Under Graduation Programs

Course Structure

Listening and Speaking Skills in English (AECL101)

Book 1: Develop Your Listening Skills

Unit 1: Listening Skills

Unit 2: The English Sound System

Unit 3: Basic Conversational Skills – I

Unit 4: Basic Conversational Skills – II

Book 2: Develop Your Speaking Skills

Unit 1: Group Discussion

Unit 2: Interview Skills

Unit 3: Telephonic Communication

Listening and Speaking Skills in English (AECL101)

The university has introduced the undergraduate programs as per National Education Policy, 2020. This course is introduced under the category of 'Ability Enhancement Courses (AEC)' with an aim to enhance your abilities to be a better communicator. The course on 'Listening and Speaking Skills' consists of two books *'Develop Your Listening Skills'* and *'Develop Your Speaking Skills'* of one credit each divided into seven units.

In this course you would learn about the listening and speaking skills. As listening skill is one very important skill but often neglected, and to be a good speaker one has to be a very good listener first. In the first book, *'Develop Your Listening Skills'* you would learn about the importance of listening skills, barriers to listening skills and tips to become a good listener. You would also learn the English sound system and get the basic conversational skills along with sample dialogues in formal and informal settings.

In the first unit, *'Listening Skills'* you would learn about the listening skills, importance of listening skills and barriers to listening and how to overcome that. You would often realize that you can read and write in English but when it comes to speaking you face some challenges. That is because you do not have practice or enough of exposure to the listening to and speaking in English. In the second unit, '*The English Sound System*' we would learn about the English sound and how to improve our spoken English

In the third and fourth unit, on '*Basic Conversational Skills'* you would learn about some basic conversational skills with some sample situations and possible dialogues or interaction in the given situation. These days along with your essential qualification you also need excellent communication skills while applying to any job and getting through any group discussion and interview.

In the second book, *'Develop Your Speaking Skills'* you would learn about the group discussion, how to open and close discussion and take turns to have a healthy discussion, interview skills and how to interact with various people over telephone.

These skills are essential as life skills these days. In a competitive era only, those get an opportunity who are able to communicate effectively in various situations. Every language also has its own beauty and customs. Hence, it is absolutely essential to keep this in mind while using the English in various context.

Listening and Speaking Skills in English: Objectives and Outcomes

Course Objectives (COs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- To introduce strategies for active and critical listening, and develop ability to understand spoken English in different contexts.
- To familiarize with correct pronunciation, stress, and intonation, and build confidence in speaking English in academic and social settings.
- To introduce to basic patterns of everyday conversation, and to teach the use of polite expressions, greetings, and small talk, and thus enable them to initiate and sustain short interactions.
- To develop extended conversational abilities in formal and informal situations, and to encourage use of cohesive devices in spoken discourse, and thus to enhance interactional competence and turn-taking skills.
- To prepare in effective participation in group discussions, and to enable them to articulate opinions respectfully and persuasively.
- To prepare for different types of interviews, and teach verbal and non-verbal communication techniques for interviews, and thus to build confidence and self-presentation skills.
- To develop clarity and accuracy in communication without visual cues, and to train in effective telephonic manners and etiquette, and thus to familiarize with both formal and informal phone conversations.

Course Outcomes:

On successful completion of this course, learners will be able to:

- Students will be able to identify, comprehend, and interpret main ideas and supporting details in spoken English across different contexts using active and critical listening strategies.
- Students will demonstrate correct pronunciation, stress, and intonation in spoken English, showing increased fluency and confidence in both academic and social interactions.
- Students will be able to initiate and sustain basic conversations using polite expressions, greetings, and small talk appropriate to different situations.
- Students will engage effectively in extended conversations in formal and informal contexts, using cohesive devices and demonstrating good interactional competence and turn-taking skills.
- Students will participate constructively in group discussions, express opinions logically and respectfully, and respond persuasively to others' viewpoints.
- Students will perform effectively in interviews, applying suitable verbal and non-verbal communication techniques with confidence and professional self-presentation.
- Students will communicate accurately and courteously over the telephone, demonstrating clarity, appropriate etiquette, and the ability to handle both formal and informal telephonic interaction.

Book 1: Develop Your Listening Skills (AECL1011)

This is the first book under the course on 'Listening and Speaking Skill's in English that has been introduced under the category of 'Ability Enhancement Courses (AEC)' with an aim to enhance your abilities to be a better communicator.

You would often realize that you can read and write in English but when it comes to speaking you face some challenges. That is because you lack practice or do not have enough of exposure to listening to and speaking in English. In this book, '*Develop Your Listening Skills'* you would learn about the importance of and ways to improve your listening skills. Listening skill is one very important skill but it is often neglected, and to be a good speaker one has to be a very good listener first.

In the first unit you would learn about the listening skills, importance of listening and hearing versus listening, types of listening, note-taking techniques, listening and synthesizing different point of views, evaluating arguments and evidence, and barriers to effective listening and how to overcome those, and be a successful listener.

In the second unit you would learn about the English sound system, and how to pronounce with appropriate stress on certain words or syllables to make the desired meaning clear. You would also learn how meaning changes with shift in intonation, and how to improve your spoken English.

In the third unit you would learn about some basic conversational skills with some sample situations and possible dialogues or interactions in the given situations. Here you would learn how to use different expressions for different purposes, and in formal and informal settings. In this unit you would also learn how to greet and introduce yourself and others, requesting and responding to requests, agreeing and disagreeing with others politely.

In the fourth unit you would learn how to make suggestions without challenging them, ask for information politely, request for permissions and respond to the requests made by others, and apologize sincerely and appropriately.

UNIT 1: LISTENING SKILLS

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the concept of listening and outline the types of listening.
- Identify the importance of listening and the barriers to effective listening.
- Describe the ten commandments of listening.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Effective listening is very important for making any work productive and fruitful. Only when one listens attentively to the speaker one can gain a clear understanding of the concepts. Good listening is important for effective communication. However, listening requires attention, or conforming to the task at hand despite distractions. It needs concentration, which means, at a time making one particular problem the focus of your thoughts. Listening is a skill. One needs to be trained to acquire this skill which plays an important role in learning.

Good listening skills are very important for students as they are still in the formative years of their life. Attentive listening to classroom lectures and teachings can enable to understand the subject matter clearly, and encourage to ask questions for clarification of any doubts. It will enable to gain extra knowledge besides bookish knowledge. A student who does not listen attentively to what the teacher says will find it difficult to cope up with his studies and examinations. Attentive listening helps in retaining the concepts which can be further applied to practical use. In this unit we would learn about listening and effective ways to productive listening.

1.2 Subject Analysis

1.2.1 Listening: An Overview

Good listening is the key to good conversation. Listening is the assimilation of the meanings of words and sentences by the brain. Listening is an important part of good communication. Let us look at an example to understand this concept better. A scholar was invited to give a speech on a topic. The students heard the speech peacefully. When the speaker encouraged the students to ask questions, they asked eleven questions one after another. Instead of answering their questions, the speaker asked them if anyone could repeat all the questions. Many students tried but nobody could recall more than five questions. However, the speaker could recall all the eleven questions in the same sequence as they had been asked and answered them all, too.

1.2.1.1 Importance of Listening and Listening vs. hearing

Research shows that most people spend 32.7 per cent of their time listening, 25.8 per cent time speaking and 22.6 per cent time writing. Therefore, the maximum time that people spend is on the activity of listening.

Why do you think these students could not recall the questions asked by their friends? Did they not hear the questions? Think about it. Listening should not be confused with hearing.

In hearing, the ears receive sound waves and transfer them to the brain. Hearing does not necessarily mean the understanding of that which is being heard.

In listening, the ears receive the sound waves, the receiver understands the meaning of the sounds/language and the message is transferred to the brain.

1.2.1.2 Types of Listening

Listening can be of several types, which are as follows:

- **Discriminative listening:**

  As a listener, you can tell the difference between various sounds, languages and pronunciations. You can separate the sounds familiar to you from what is unfamiliar.

- **Comprehensive listening:**

  You can understand what is being said or what a sound means. As a speaker speaks, the listener does not find any difficulty in understanding that which is being spoken. He can comprehend at the same time the ideas and concepts that are being spoken. Comprehensive listening is extremely helpful for students as they can simultaneously assimilate the speaker's concepts and notions.

- **Evaluative listening:**

  This is also called critical listening. It means you are able to analyse the message being received as logical or illogical. This kind of listening gets the listener into an analysis mode who constantly analyses whether what he is listening to is actually good or bad. He evaluates the speaker and his speech and tries to reach a conclusion about the effectiveness of the speech.

- **Attentive/Active listening:**

  This involves paying close attention to the words being said and absorbing them. This is the best form of listening because the listener concentrates on what is being said, makes eye contact if possible, and encourages the speaker to continue. The listener can recall what had been said later.

- **Pretense/Passive listening:**

  This is more hearing than listening. Your facial expression may show that you are listening but in reality, you may not be doing so. You may be present physically but your mind may be somewhere else. This can lead to misunderstanding in communication.

- **Selective listening:**

  The listener does not listen all the time and lets his mind wander on and off. People usually do this if they do not respect the speaker or feel that they know better. A feeling of superiority in the listener leads to this type of listening. This most often happens when young children are being reprimanded by their parents or teachers or are being given advice regarding something.

1.2.1.3 Note-taking techniques

Note-taking is an important academic skill that is closely connected to the art of effective listening. Developing the ability to listen attentively and record information accurately is essential for successful learning. Note-taking is not a mechanical activity of writing down everything the

speaker says; rather, it is an active process of listening, understanding, selecting, and organizing information.

Effective note-taking begins with focused listening. You must pay attention to the speaker's tone, emphasis, and repetition to identify key ideas and supporting details. Listening with concentration helps to distinguish between essential and non-essential information. Once the main ideas are grasped, they can be summarized in the student's own words, which aids both comprehension and retention. Note-taking and listening skills complement each other. While listening builds understanding, note-taking ensures that this understanding is retained and can be reviewed later. Together, they form the foundation of effective academic learning and lifelong communication skills.

1.2.1.4 Listening and synthesizing multiple viewpoints

Listening is one of the most essential communication skills for academic and professional success. Developing the ability to listen attentively and synthesise multiple viewpoints is crucial to becoming effective learners and critical thinkers. In your day-to-day life you would encounter diverse ideas, opinions, and perspectives. Active listening enables you not only to hear these viewpoints but to understand, compare, and evaluate them objectively.

When you listen carefully, they can identify the underlying logic, evidence, and emotions behind each opinion. This helps you to move beyond personal bias and develop a balanced understanding of complex issues. Synthesising multiple viewpoints involves integrating different ideas to form a coherent and informed perspective. It is a higher-order thinking skill that requires attentive listening, note-taking, and reflection. By practising this skill, you would learn to respect differing opinions, engage in constructive dialogue, and build their own reasoned arguments.

The importance of this skill extends beyond any classroom—it prepares one for teamwork, leadership, and decision-making in real-life situations. Listening and synthesising multiple viewpoints nurture open-mindedness, empathy, and intellectual maturity, which are the hallmarks of effective communication and responsible citizenship.

1.2.1.5 Evaluating arguments and evidence

Listening is not merely a passive act of hearing words; it is an active process that allows us to critically engage with information. Developing the ability to evaluate arguments and evidence is essential for academic success and informed decision-making. Effective listening skills form the foundation of this ability. When you listen attentively, you can identify the main claims being made, distinguish between facts and opinions, and recognize the reasoning behind arguments.

Evaluating arguments involves assessing the logic, relevance, and credibility of the points presented. Listening carefully enables students to notice inconsistencies, biases, or unsupported assertions in a speaker's presentation. Similarly, evaluating evidence requires attention to detail: understanding the source, context, and reliability of data, examples, or references cited. Without attentive listening, one may misinterpret information, accept weak arguments, or overlook important nuances.

Moreover, active listening promotes synthesis of multiple viewpoints. In discussions, lectures, or debates, you are exposed to diverse perspectives. Listening critically allows them to compare, contrast, and integrate these viewpoints, fostering deeper understanding and better-informed conclusions.

Listening skills are indispensable for evaluating arguments and evidence. They empower you to think critically, engage thoughtfully in academic discourse, and make decisions based on reasoned judgment. Cultivating these skills early enhances learning, supports intellectual growth, and prepares them for the analytical demands of higher education and professional life.

1.2.1.6 Non-verbal aspects

Listening is a multifaceted skill that goes beyond merely hearing words; it involves understanding both verbal and nonverbal cues to fully grasp the meaning of communication. Recognizing these aspects is crucial for effective learning, interaction, and personal development. Verbal aspects of communication include the words, tone, pitch, pace, and clarity of the speaker. Attentive listening to these elements helps students comprehend the speaker's message accurately, identify key points, and evaluate arguments critically. For example, a change in tone can indicate emphasis or emotion, guiding the listener to pay closer attention to important ideas.

Nonverbal aspects, such as facial expressions, gestures, posture, eye contact, and pauses, convey meaning that may not be explicitly stated. By observing these cues, you can interpret emotions, attitudes, and intentions, enhancing understanding and empathy. Nonverbal signals often reinforce or contradict verbal messages, making careful listening essential to avoid misinterpretation.

Active engagement with both verbal and nonverbal cues strengthens critical thinking, improves communication, and fosters collaborative learning. In academic settings, attentive listening enables students to participate meaningfully in discussions, group projects, and presentations. It also develops interpersonal awareness, which is vital for professional and social interactions. Understanding the verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication is a cornerstone of effective listening. Cultivating these skills enhances comprehension, builds stronger relationships, and equips you to navigate complex academic and real-world environments with confidence.

Check Your Progress – I

A. Fill in the Blanks.

1. ---------- is the assimilation of the meanings of words and sentences by the brain.
2. In ---------- listening, you can tell the difference between various sounds, languages and pronunciations.
3. ---------- listening enables good understanding of what the speaker is talking about.

B. Answer the following questions in one word.

1. What is listening an important part of?
2. Name the activity in which the ears receive sound waves and transfer them to the brain.

3. What listening is evaluative listening also called?
4. What kind of an impression do you create on others by being a good listener?

1.2.2 Barriers of Effective Listening

There are a number of factors that prevent effective listening. When we hear, we only recognize sounds, but when we listen, this hearing is accompanied by an intentional and purposeful act of the mind. To listen means to derive meaning from what is heard. One may hear the words that another person utters, without really understanding them. Let us look at some of the factors that impede effective hearing.

1.2.2.1 Physical Barriers

A classroom that has plenty of resources to inspire the child's thinking, openness to ideas, creativity, etc. will inspire learning plenty of colorful pictures, maps, borders, etc. make the classroom fun and an exciting place to learn. Also, good lighting and modern equipment aid creativity and learning in a major way. Good physical conditions enhance the attention of the students and enable them to pay attention to what the teacher is saying. It makes listening effective thereby resulting in more reception of information. Moreover, if classes are made more interactive and the students asked to engage in various activities, effective listening will be encouraged.

Noise, poor sound reproduction, interruptions and uncomfortable seating can prevent proper listening. If a microphone or telephone has disturbances, parts of the message may not be heard or be unclear. Interruptions by people talking and phones ringing can disturb the listener's concentration. If too much information is given at one time, it is difficult for the listener to absorb it.

When all your attention is focused on what is being said, the other noises take backseat in your consciousness. Unless of course, the noises are too powerful.

- **Excess Transmission of Message**

Also known as message overload, this forms yet another barrier to effective listening. This happens at a time when it becomes compulsory for you to listen to a rapid sequence of messages. After a certain limit, your receptivity goes down. You discover that it is just not possible for you to listen with the same amount of attention. Dealing with an overflow of information is similar to juggling you can manage to have just a few things going at the same time.

- **Passive Listening**

Passive listening forms another barrier to effective listening. Passive listening essentially happens when the listener listens to the speaker attentively but does not react in any manner. It is allowing the other person to speak without interrupting him. In passive listening, the listener does not nod or display any other signs of interest. The listener hears and understands exactly that which the speaker is speaking but shows no signs to verify it. This makes the speaker to doubt if he/she is being correctly heard and understood. Since the listener shows no enthusiasm, the speaker feels discouraged as well as confused. He cannot make out if the listener is able to absorb and comprehend that which he is saying. In this way, passive listening forms a barrier to effective listening.

- **Selective Listening**

This occurs when the listener listens only to that which he wants to listen to and pays no attention to the rest of what is being said. The listener listens according to his choice and desire. This can assume many forms and result in one giving vent to one's understanding in destructive ways. An instance is to turn into a passive aggressive by act as if he is hearing and agreeing to what was said when in reality the intention is not to carry out that which was told, but make the other person think you will. A classic example is that of a teenager, being scolded by his parents on returning home late at night. The teenager chooses to listen to only selective things that are being told. He may nod his head and give his approval not to repeat the act in future, while he does not mean the same. Another form is to perform that which you desired to hear rather than that which was actually said. Continuous selective listening is known to be one of the best ways to break a relationship or ruin a career. A popular example of selective listening is shown in the following figure.

1.2.2.2 People-related Barriers

Besides the aforementioned barriers, people-related barriers also hinder effective listening. People-related barriers are as follows:

- **Pre-conceived notions**

Certain times preconceived notions and deep-rooted beliefs render it impossible for the listener to be receptive to the speaker. For example, when two politicians who belong to two different parties' debate over a political Issue, it is quite expected that one will not give the other a fair hearing. For breaking down this barrier, some control must be achieved over the automatic responses and a decision taken only when the other person has been given an impartial hearing.

- **Preoccupation**

Certain times our preoccupation with other concerns creates a barrier to effective listening. As students, each one of you must have experienced times when you could not register anything of that which was being said in the class, due to your thoughts being on the farewell party that was to be arranged the following evening.

It is recommended that a listener be constantly aware of such preoccupied thoughts and prevent it from getting into the way of effective listening. Also, one must validate what the speaker is saying by nodding sometimes and affirming with some kind of a verbal expression or 'I get it statement.

- **Casual attitude**

A casual attitude also forms a barrier to effective listening. When one is casual to what is being said, the person does not listen with concentration and tends to miss out on a lot of things being said. The listener finds it unimportant to listen to all that is being said. Since hearing is comparatively easy, it is presumed that it can be done with little concentration and effort. This attitude is often a major barrier to listening.

- **Self-centered attitude**

One cause for several people being poor listeners is due to their possessing a self-centered attitude. Such people are so obsessed with themselves that they have neither the inclination nor the patience to listen to what others have to say. The individual has a know-it-all attitude which forms a barrier to effective listening. Moreover, he is so filled with superiority complex that he thinks of others as being inferior and therefore, does not feel the need to listen to them.

- **Disrupting the Speaker**

Irrespective of the fact that you are eager to add to the conversation, or you do not wish to forget that which you have to say disruptions always have a harmful effect on communications. Take into consideration the following effects:

Disrupting the speaker shows your disinterest. When you interrupt a speaker, the signal it gives is that you are only concerned about what you have to say. It means that you are not interested in listening to the speaker but are more concerned about putting your thoughts and ideas across. This creates and instant barrier between you and the speaker.

Disrupting the speaker creates a gap between you and the speaker. In addition to a control issue, interruption (sometimes deliberately) brings about an instant gap between you and your speaker. Do not interrupt the speaker until unless you have to ask a question for clarification, like 'Can you repeat what you just said, please? 1 am not certain if I could get you.' Or, "What exactly do you mean by saying that'? Before asking a question, consider if your question can wait till the speaker finishes. It is always advisable, to note down your questions and put them forth when the speaker has finished. In case you feel that your question cannot wait, ask your question without any hesitation. However, do not question the speaker frequently, as it will not distract not only the speaker, but also other listeners.

- **Adopting the Judge and Jump Syndrome**

Prior to collecting the information, which is required in case one desires to respond in a responsible manner, people frequently draw conclusions against the speaker or the message that he or she is attempting to put forth. They assume as to where the speaker's topic is headed and jump in to distract the speaker or to prove to be ahead of the speaker before others. This is to show one's smartness in a manner saying, 'I'm summing it up and saying it before he can! However, jumping in on someone stops communication and creates almost immediately, competitive barriers between you and the speaker.

Susan Berkley, author of *Speak to Influence*, wrote that 'when you wait two seconds before responding. You show the speaker that you're processing what he or she has said. This pause is an acknowledgement that you've really heard the other person's message. Also, don't respond for longer than twenty seconds. Have you ever noticed that the most popular person at parties is not the guy who goes on and on about himself, but the one who asks the right questions so others can talk about themselves? This is the sign of a great listener!"

- **Listening with Expectations**

Instead of actively listening in an attempt to create a relationship, people sometimes only take active part in the process to have the speaker say that which they want to hear. This is known as 'superficial listening". It shows very clearly that one is manipulating the speaker and this can get slightly embarrassing for everyone, particularly when done before a group of people. In case you adopt this form of listening, your objectives are extremely transparent. This kind of listening puts the listener in a negative light, where people around will feel that the listener cannot be trusted. Do not use listening as a technique to get what you want.

An example of this could be a student being spoken to by a teacher in a Parent - Teachers meet. The student gives all kinds of excuses for his poor performance, blaming fellow-students, methods of teaching etc. thereby diverting the teacher from focusing on the student in discussion and his bad results. The student here wants the teacher to say that he actually is a good student, but it is only conditions and other factors that have resulted in his poor performance. The student does not own up any of his mistakes and tries to get out of the teacher that which he wants to hear. This causes embarrassment to both the parents and the teacher.

- **Concentrating on appearance, rather than the speech**

Everybody does this at some point of time. People bring pre-determined judgments, irrespective of whether they have been gained from real practice in the field or merely carried forward from parents or peers.

This is a tough hindrance to overcome. The looks and appearance of a person form a physical barrier in the mind of the listener, who gets busy judging the speakers on the clothes, hairdo, make-up etc. In some cases, the listener gets so busy noticing the appearance and outfit of the speaker that he completely loses attention from what the speaker is saying.

Even in a classroom, students get so engaged in seeing the teacher's physical appearance, that they lose track of the class and the lecture being delivered. Many a times, teachers use some methods to get back the student's attention, like calling out the class once in every few minutes, or suddenly asking a student to repeat what was just said, etc.

An effective way of solving this is to be strongly determined to remove all such hindrances and concentrate on what the listener is saying.

- **Allowing your eyes to convey your thoughts**

Research has shown that when a person looks down and to the left, he is trying to recollect something. When he looks directly to the left, he is processing a thought. When he looks up to the left, he is concentrating on a new thought. And when he looks up to the right, he is planning his subsequent move. Since these are such subconscious gestures, the speaker will unavoidably move her eyes when talking to you. However, your drifting eyes may be interpreted by the speaker as an indication of monotony or non-interest.

Your eyes convey that you are an involved, active listener. Thus, your eyes must remain directly focused on the speaker. However, do not follow the speaker's eyes. While developing his/her next idea, the speaker's eyes will tend to drift, it should not be followed by the listener as this will make the speaker lose control of thought since eye contact with him/her has been dropped.

Remember, as a good listener, you must concentrate on what the speaker is saying without allowing either your thoughts or ideas to drift.

1.2.3 Successful listening in the future

Listening is a learning process that continues throughout one's lifetime. It involves effort, commitment and focus. The rewards are manifold. Once you conquer these barriers and dedicate yourself to practicing good listening skills, you can single-handedly enhance and motivate greater cooperation in your business and personal relationships.

Besides the factors mentioned above, selective and passive listening also form barriers to effective listening. Also, hearing deficiencies, either by birth or accident form a barrier to effective listening. However, in a majority of the cases such deficiencies can be cured and people made to listen clearly.

Therefore, we can sum up the people-related barriers as follows:

- If the physical condition of the listener is not good, listening attentively is difficult. Similarly, if the speaker is unwell, he cannot communicate clearly and the listening quality will definitely be affected.
- If the speaker has a speech defect, or speaks too fast, or speaks in an accent that is not easily understood by the listener, the listener will not be able to listen well.
- If the listener lets his mind wander, there will be gaps in his listening and understanding. Also, if personal worries are occupying his thoughts, he will not listen attentively.
- If the listener is not impressed by the speaker, he will not listen carefully.
- Some listeners are impatient and can interrupt with their own opinions. Others have an 'I know it all' attitude and are not willing to listen to another opinion.

Poor Listening Habits

- Listening, similar to a majority of human behavior, follows a regular pattern. Almost all of us develop some poor listening habits that finally create a pattern. Some of the most common bad listening habits are as follows:
- **Pretending to pay attention:** Many of us pretend that we are paying attention to what is being told, while our thoughts in reality are somewhere else.
- **Listening only for facts:** In trying to look for the facts, the main idea is almost always forgotten.
- **Evading tough material which is not of interest**: Certain times we lose focus when what we hear is tough, not familiar or merely uninteresting. In case, we practice this frequently, this turning off becomes a consistent pattern.
- **Focusing on delivery:** Sometimes we are so concerned with how someone says something that we pay scant attention to what he or she is actually saying

1.2.3.1 Ten Commandments for Effective Listening

An unknown writer has laid down the following Ten Commandments that are essential for good listening.

1. **Stop talking:** You cannot talk and listen at the same time.
2. **Put the speaker at ease:** If, as a listener, you face the speaker calmly and make him feel comfortable, the speaker can put across his thoughts clearly.
3. **Show you want to listen**: You must show the speaker that you are willing to listen. Sit still, look at the speaker and keep a pencil and pad ready to take notes.
4. **Remove distractions:** Switch off your mobile phone, close the door, stop chewing and focus on the speaker.
5. **Put yourself in the speaker's place:** Sometimes the speaker may be nervous and may have a problem, such as a speech problem. Look at him encouragingly and nod now and then, showing him that you can understand him and are interested in what he is saying.
6. **Be patient:** The listener must wait for the speaker to finish speaking. Interruptions and distracting movements should be avoided.
7. **Do not lose your temper:** Even if you do not agree with the speaker's opinions, do not react immediately. Every person has the right to speak out his mind.
8. **Do not argue or criticize:** If listeners keep arguing with or criticizing what the speaker is saying, communication will stop.
9. **Ask the right questions:** Asking meaningful questions will encourage the speaker and show that you are really interested in what he is saying.
10. **Do not talk, listen:** The tenth commandment is a repeat of the first commandment: Stop talking!

Check Your Progress-II

A. State whether the following statements are TRUE or FALSE.

1. When we listen, we only recognize sounds.
2. Certain times hearing deficiencies are the main cause for poor listening.
3. Noise, poor sound reproduction, interruptions and uncomfortable seating can aid proper listening.
4. It is not possible to deal with a sequence of messages for a long period of time.
5. You can talk and listen at the same time.

B. Answer the following questions in one word or a single sentence:

1. What is another word for physiological barriers?
2. What happens if you do not listen?
3. What is excess transmission of message also known as?
4. What will happen to communication if listeners keep arguing with or criticizing?
5. What does the tenth commandment state?

1.2.3.2 Importance of Listening

We have been gifted with two ears and one tongue by nature. This is nature's gentle way of telling us that we must do more listening and less of speaking. Listening is the single most important aspect of learning. If you were asked to give a one-word description of listening, you would instantly say hearing. However, hearing is different from listening. Hearing is physical

While listening is hearing with a purpose. Listening is a very important activity, especially for students. Listening to what e teacher is saying in a class will enable a student to understand clearly the information given and retain it. It will help him keep abreast with the latest developments and be aware all the ongoing events. When you listen attentively, you Chance your knowledge about people, situations, the world d life in general.

In classroom teaching, it is the responsibility of the teacher, to enhance the listening skills of the students. A teacher who talks too much or fidgets a lot while teaching the students tends to create boredom and distraction, respectively. Instead of making their sessions into mini-lectures, teachers must encourage active participation by the students. Teachers too must listen attentively to what their student has to say to be able to answer the student's question to accuracy.

Listening enables you to learn a subject. The information that you receive verbally can be understood better quickly (for example, a teacher explaining). Attentive listening helps in gaining clear understanding of what the speaker is saying without there being any communication gap. You create a good impression on others by being a good listener. If you listen properly, you can understand others and make sensible conversation with the speaker. You can understand the emotional and logical aspects of any argument, and also present facts and opinions effectively. Effective listening also enables you to reach logical conclusions.

If you are perceived as a bad listener, then oftentimes people will try to avoid you altogether rather than spend the energy it requires to communicate complex matters to you. You might then find yourself missing out on a lot of opportunities that would come to you quite readily otherwise. Good listeners are also quite adept at showing support in the work place. They are people who sense when something is going wrong, and then offer to "jump right in" when they are given the chance. This earns you a lot of respect. Try to be aware of things that are happening in your environment at all times even if they do not directly concern you.

We can say that when you do not listen you do not learn. When you do not listen, you prevent opportunity. The truth that you do not listen shows that your mind is closed. Not listening carefully prevents intelligence. When you do not listen there is nothing new, there are only your reactions. If you want to enjoy life to the maximum, listening is crucial.

Check Your Progress – III

Bus starts from its starting point with five people in it. At the next stop, two people get off the bus while one gets in. At the next stop, three people get in with none getting off. Two stops later, four people get off, while two get in. At the next stop one person gets in while none get off. At the next stop, one person gets off while two get in.

How many bus stops were there?

1.3 Let us Sum Up

In this unit, you have learned that good listening is the key to good conversation. Listening is the assimilation of the meanings of words and sentences by the brain. Listening is an important part of good communication Let us look at an example to understand this concept better. Listening is the single most important aspect of learning. If you were asked to give a one-word description of listening, you would instantly say hearing. However, hearing is different from listening. Hearing is physical while listening is hearing with a purpose.

However, there are two barriers to effective listening. They are physical barriers and people-related barriers. Physical barriers include excess transmission of message, selective listening and passive listening. People-related barriers include pre-conceived notions, preoccupation, casual attitude, self-centered attitude, disrupting the speaker, adopting the judge and jump syndrome, listening with expectations, concentrating on appearance rather than speech and eye contact.

It is the responsibility of a teacher, to enhance the listening skills of students. Innovative resources to inspire the students' thinking, openness to ideas, creativity, etc. will inspire learning. Plenty of colorful pictures, maps, borders, etc. make the classroom fun and an exciting place to learn. Also, good lighting and modern equipment aid creativity and learning in a major way.

Passive listening essentially happens when the listener listens to the speaker attentively but does not react in any manner. It is allowing the other person to speak without interrupting him. In passive listening, the listener does not nod or display any other signs of interest. In this unit we also learnt that selective listening occurs when the listener listens only to that which he wants to listen to and pays no attention to the rest of what is being said. The listener listens according to his choice and desire.

1.4 Glossary

- **Hearing:** The process of receiving sound waves and transferring them to the brain.
- **Listening:** The process of receiving sound waves, understanding the meaning of the sound waves and transferring the message to the brain.
- **Pronunciation:** Way in which a word or sound in a particular language is spoken.
- **Evaluation:** The process of analyzing if a message is logical or illogical.
- **Barriers:** Objects of persons that obstruct smooth or effective communication
- **Distractions:** Factors that divert a listener's attention.
- **Commandments:** Laws or rules applied in order to improve listening skills.

1.5 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'

Check Your Progress - I

A. **Fill in the Blanks.**

1. Listening
2. Discriminative
3. Attentive

B. **Answer the following questions in one word.**

1. Good communication
2. Hearing
3. Critical
4. Good

Check Your Progress - II

A. **State whether the following statements are TRUE or FALSE.**

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. False

B. **Answer the following questions in one word or a single sentence.**

1. Human-related barriers.
2. You do not learn.
3. Message overload.
4. Communication will stop.
5. Stop talking.

Check Your Progress – III

- Six Stops

1.6 Questions for Practice

1. What is the difference between hearing and listening?
2. Name the two types of barriers to effective listening.
3. List any five commandments of listening.
4. Describe the different types of listening.
5. What are the benefits of listening carefully?
6. Explain the people-related barriers to listening.

1.7 Online Resources for Listening Skills

The following are some of the online sources for improving listening skills:

1. www.esl-lab.com (Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab): It offers a wide range of listening exercises at different levels — easy, medium, and difficult. Each lesson comes with pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening activities to test comprehension.
2. www.listenaminute.com : This site provides one-minute listening activities on various topics. It includes downloadable MP3 files, scripts, and quizzes to practice listening comprehension in short, manageable sections.
3. www.elllo.org : ELLLO (English Listening Lesson Library Online) features over 3,000 free listening activities, including audio and video lessons from native and non-native English speakers around the world. Each lesson includes transcripts, vocabulary support, and comprehension questions.
4. www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish : This site provides excellent listening resources with current topics, news stories, interviews, and series such as "6 Minute English" and "The English We Speak." It helps learners improve their listening and understanding of authentic spoken English.
5. www.ted.com : TED Talks are a valuable resource for improving listening and comprehension skills. Learners can watch talks on various subjects, with transcripts and subtitles available in multiple languages to aid understanding.
6. www.voanews.com/learningenglish :Voice of America's Learning English platform offers slow-speed news reports, interviews, and features for English learners. It's great for developing listening skills using real-life, informative content.
7. www.learningenglish.britishcouncil.org : Offers self-study lessons organised by CEFR (A1–C1). Includes recordings of different situations and interactive exercises.
8. www.speechling.com : Provides free listening practice with thousands of sentences; also dictation, vocabulary, and quizzes.

Along with these online sources, there are a few mobile apps that will help you improve your listening skills:

- BBC Learning English App
- TED Audio Collective (TED Talks App)
- English Listening and Speaking by Miracle Funbox
- Listen English Daily Practice by Awabe
- VOA Learning English App
- Learn English Podcasts by British Council
- All Ears English
- Listen English daily practice

1.8 Suggested Reading

1. Novak, Joseph Donald and D.B. Gowin. *Learning How to Learn*. Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.
2. Kesselman-Turkel, Judi and Franklynn Peterson. *Study Smarts: How to Learn More in Less Time.* Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press
3. Wren, P.C, H. Martin and N.D.V. Prasada Rao. *High School English Grammar & Composition*. Delhi: S. Chand & Company Ltd.
4. V. Sasikumar et al, 2007, *A Course in Listening and Speaking vol. I and II*, Foundation Books, Delhi

UNIT 2: The English Sound System

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2.0 Objectives

After reading this unit, you will be able to -

- Understand the sound system of English language.
- Explain the pure vowels and diphthongs, and distinguish between the different consonants.
- Identify the syllable (s) in a word, mark stress in a word and sentences.
- Divide long sentences or utterances into tone groups.
- Use appropriate tones according to different functions of utterances.

2.1 Introduction

Discussion of oral communication should always begin with the production of sounds and proper pronunciation of words or sentences. Hence, you should learn the sound system of the English language. You should know the number of sounds both vowel and consonants in English and their production and representation in different signs. You should also know some important concepts like phoneme, syllable and stress. English is a stress timed language. Stress is an important aspect as a change in a stress brings about a change in the meaning as well. Similarly, you should know how to divide a long sentence into tone or breath groups so that listeners understand you properly. Another important aspect that you should know is the stress in a connected speech. You should know the appropriate use of various tones. This unit will teach you these basic aspects about the English sound system.

2.2 Subject Analysis

2.2.1 The English Sound System

Language is a sign system. When we use language for communication we use this sign system. The system of Language usually operates at two levels: sounds and letters. Sounds are spoken and heard; letters are written and seen. Sounds are studied in Phonology and phonetics. They are the two branches of linguistics, a science of language. Letters are studied in graphology. There are different numbers of letters and sounds in English. English has forty-four (44) speech sounds and twenty-six (26) letters. So, it seems that there is no one to one correspondence between the two. For example, the letter “c” is pronounced as /k/ in cat and /s/ in city. Therefore, English has a separate phonetic script.

The speech sounds are also called phonemes. So, there are 44 phonemes in English. Out of them, 20 are vowels and 24 are consonants. Out of the 20 vowels, 12 are the pure vowels and 8 Diphthongs.

Check Your Progress – I

Attempt the following.

1. State whether the following sentences are true or false.
   i. Sounds are studied in graphology.
   ii. Language is a sign system.
2. What is a speech sound called?
3. How many letters are there in the English language?
4. What is linguistics?
5. State the number of vowels and consonants in English.

2.2.2 The English Vowels

- **Vowels**

A vowel sound in English is a speech sound produced without any blockage or restriction of airflow through the mouth. The air passes freely from the lungs through the vocal cords and out of the mouth, and the shape and position of the tongue and lips determine which vowel sound is made. Vowel sounds are the core of syllables, meaning every syllable in English must contain at least one vowel sound. In English, there are five main vowel letters — A, E, I, O, U — but they represent around 20 vowel sounds (depending on accent).

Examples of vowel sounds include:

/iː/ as in fleece, see, sea, seat, machine,

/I / as in kit, bid, sit, hymn, minute

/uː/ as in blue, two, group, pool, goose

/U/ as in foot, good, put

/e/ as in dress, bed, head, many

/æ/ as in cat, trap, bad

/aː/ as in start, father

/ɔː/ as in call, thought, law, north, war

/ɒ/ as in lot, odd, wash

/ɜː/ as in nurse, stir, learn, refer

/ə/ as in about, common, standard

/ʌ/ as in cup, strut, mud, love, blood

In short, a vowel sound is any sound made with open vocal passage, forming the nucleus of a syllable in English words.

The English language has 12 pure vowels and 8 diphthongs. A list of these vowels and diphthongs is given below. Diphthongs are vowels with a glide or smooth movement from one vowel quality to another vowel quality. For each vowel sound, there is a separate phonetic symbol and it is placed within oblique or slanting bars. Among pure vowels, some are relatively long. These vowels have the mark of /:/ to indicate their length. It means that vowels having the mark of /:/ are long vowels. The symbols for diphthongs have two letters each, one to indicate the vowel quality at the beginning, and the other, the vowel quality towards which the glide takes place.

- **Diphthongs**

In the English sound system, diphthongs are complex vowel sounds that begin with one vowel sound and glide smoothly into another within the same syllable.

The term diphthong comes from Greek, meaning “two sounds” (di = two, phthong = sound). Unlike pure vowels (monophthongs), which have a single, steady sound, diphthongs involve a movement or glide of the tongue from one vowel position to another.

For example, in English:

/eI/ as in say, day, rain, face, break

/aI/ as in my, try, cry, high, time, price,

/ɔI / as in boy, toy, coin, choice

/əʊ/ (or /oʊ/ in American English) as in go, no, home, show, goat

/aʊ/ as in now, cow, laud, mouth

/ɪə/ as in near, here, their, weary

/eə/ as in fair, square, various

/ ʊə/ as in poor, jury, cure, tour

A diphthong is a single syllabic sound in which the speech organs move from one vowel position to another, producing a smooth and connected transition between two vowel qualities.

Check Your Progress – II

1. **Identify the vowel sound and write down the phonetic symbol for the vowel sound in each of the following word. Make use of a good dictionary.**

For example: Book = /U/

a) bed

b) cat

c) read

d) law

` e) girl

f) cut

g) not

h) ask

i) bit

j) boon

2. The following pairs of words are distinguished by the Vowel sound in them. Write in the blanks the correct symbols for the vowels that bring about the difference:

1. 'Sit' _____	a) 'Seat'_____
2. 'Pool'_____	b) 'pull' _____
3. 'bed' _____	c) 'bad'_____
4. 'pot'_____	d) 'port'_____
5. 'fad'_____	e) 'fade'_____

1. Identify the diphthongs in the following words and write their phonetic symbols.

Sr. No.	Word	Diphthong
a.	ago	
b.	plate	
c.	Cow	
d.	near	
e.	air	

2.2.3 The English Consonants

In the English sound system, consonant sounds are the speech sounds produced when the airflow from the lungs is partly or completely blocked by the speech organs such as the lips, teeth, tongue, or palate. Unlike vowels, which are produced with a free flow of air, consonants involve some degree of obstruction in the vocal tract.

Consonant sounds are classified according to three main features:

1. Place of articulation – where the airflow is blocked or restricted (e.g., lips, teeth, alveolar ridge, palate).
    - Examples: /p/ (bilabial), /t/ (alveolar), /k/ (velar)
2. Manner of articulation – how the airflow is obstructed (e.g., completely stopped, partially blocked, or through the nose).
    - Examples: /p/ (plosive), /f/ (fricative), /m/ (nasal)
3. Voicing – whether the vocal cords vibrate or not during the sound's production.
    - Voiced sounds: /b/, /d/, /g/, /z/
    - Voiceless sounds: /p/, /t/, /k/, /s/

A consonant sound is a speech sound made by obstructing or restricting the airflow through the mouth or nose, and it plays an important role in shaping syllables and distinguishing words in English. There are 24 consonant sounds in Received Pronunciation (Standard British English). Each consonant is represented by a phonetic symbol. They are enlisted below:

Consonants:

/p/ as in pen, copy, happen

/b/ as in back, baby, job

/t/ as in tea, tight, button

/d/ as in day, ladder, odd

/k/ as in key, clock, school

/g/ as in get, giggle, ghost

/tʃ/ as in church, match, nature

/dʒ/ as in judge, age, soldier

/f/ as in fat, coffee, rough, photo

/v/ as in view, heavy, move

/θ/ as in thing, author, path

/ð/ as in this, other, smooth

/s/ as in soon, cease, sister

/z/ as in zero, music, roses, buzz

/ʃ/ as in ship, sure, national

/ʒ/ as in pleasure, vision

/h/ as in hot, whole, ahead

/m/ as in more, hammer, sum

/n/ as in nice, know, funny, sun

/ŋ/ as in ring, anger, thanks, sung

/l/ as in light, valley, feel

/r/ as in right, wrong, sorry, arrange

/j/ as in yet, use, beauty, few

/w/ as in wet, one, when, queen

Vowels and Consonants are the elements of the syllable. Their proper knowledge helps us pronounce the English words. Remember these sounds for improving your pronunciation. If you use a wrong sound, your pronunciation becomes unacceptable. For example, the pronunciation of word ‘synergy’ is /sI'nədʒi/. But some people pronounce it as /'saInədʒi/, something that is not

acceptable. So, whenever you learn a new word, look up a dictionary and find its pronunciation. A good speaker is the one who pronounce words accurately.

Check Your Progress – III

Write the phonetic symbols for the consonant sounds represented by the italicized letters in the following words:

a) res*t* = _____

b) *c*ow = _____

c) ju*dg*e = _____

d) *f*etch = _____

e) *p*leasure = _____

2. The following pairs of words are distinguished by the Consonant sounds in them. Write in the blanks the correct symbols for the consonants which bring about the difference:

1. 'sat' _____	a) 'rat'_____
2. 'book'_____	b) 'hook' _____
3. 'get' _____	c) 'met'_____
4. 'shun'_____	d) 'sun'_____
5. 'thank'_____	e) 'tank'_____

2.2.4 The Syllable

The Sound Unit higher than a phoneme is called a 'syllable'. We can explain the syllable in terms of the air-stream mechanism. When we speak, the air coming from the lungs, does not come out in a continuous stream. The muscles of the chest push the air out in small puffs at the rate of approximately five times a second. In the production of a word, each puff of air produces a syllable. If the puff of air is produced with greater breath force, it creates a stressed syllable.

e.g. The word tailor has two syllables tai - /teI/ and /bl/.

The syllabic division is shown by a hyphen. e.g. /ˊteI - bl/

There are two types of syllables. The stressed syllable and the unstressed syllable. The stressed syllable is a prominent syllable in a word which is spoken with a greater breath force. The other syllables are unstressed as they are pronounced with normal breath force.

Vowels and consonants are the two elements of the syllable. Vowel is its central element while consonant is the optional element. Normally there is no syllable without vowels. There can

be consonants before and after a vowel. The symbol ‘v’ is used to refer to vowels and ‘c’ for consonants. Let us study some of the syllabic structures.

Word	**Syllable**	**Structure**
Rat	/'ræt/	CVC
Cry	/'krai/	CCV
ask	/'a:sk/	VCC
Books	/'bUks/	CVCC
Bright	/'brait/	CCVC
Wrist	/'wrIst/	CCVCC
Street	/'stri:t/	CCCVC
Bulbs	/'bʌlbz/	CVCCC
stamps	/'stæmps/	CCVCCC
strands	/'strændz/	CCCVCCC

Types of Words according to Syllable

The words are classified according to the number syllables they contain. So we have monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic word.

a) Monosyllabic Words: There is only one syllable in this type of words.

e.g. ear / Iə / inn /In/

b) Disyllabic Words: If there are two syllables in a word, that word is called a disyllabic word.

e.g. waiter /'we-Itə/ server /'sɜ:-və (r)/

c) Trisyllabic Word: This type of word has three syllables.

e.g. exception /Ik-'sep-ʃn/ progressive / prə-'gre-sIv/

d) Polysyllabic Words: If there are more than three syllables in a word, that word is called a polysyllabic word.

e.g. examination /Ig-ˌzæ-mI-'neI-ʃn/ decentralization /ˌdi:-ˌ sen-trə-laɪ-ˈzeɪ-ʃn/

Thus, we have learnt that a syllable is a very important concept in the English language in which a long word is divided. An English word may have one or more syllables. They also help us in pronouncing the word accurately as it indicates which syllable to be stressed. We will study the stress in the coming pages.

Check Your Progress – IV

A) State the number of syllables in the following words

1. letter
2. man
3. educate
4. beautiful
5. departmental

B) Identify the structure of following words in terms of C and V.

1. marry
2. note
3. dream
4. strip
5. texts

2.2.5 The Stress in English

English is a stress-timed language. Stress is the degree of force that a speaker uses to pronounce a word or a syllable. It shows the prominence of certain syllables in a word. It is shown by a vertical stroke before the stressed syllable. It is an important feature of the English language. This is because the change in stress brings about a change in the meaning of the utterance. There are two types of stress in English:

1. The Word Stress
2. The Sentence Stress

There is one more stress in English. It is the grammatical stress.

- **The Word Stress**

The word stress is also called word accent. If a word has more than one syllable, one of the syllables, stands out from the others. For example, in the word table /teIbl/, the first syllable /tei/ is more prominent than the second syllable /bl/. The syllable which is more prominent than others, receives the stress/accent.

If there are two prominent syllables, the first prominent syllable takes the primary stress and the second takes the secondary stress.

The primary stress is marked with a vertical bar above and in front of the syllable. For example, /ˈpensl/

The secondary stress is marked with a vertical bar below and in front of the syllable. For example, /Ig-ˌzæ-mI-'neI-ʃn/

- **The Grammatical Stress**

The grammatical stress depends upon the function of the word. If the word is a noun or adjective in a sentence, it receives the stress on the first syllable. But if the same word is a verb in a sentence, then it receives the stress on the second syllable. e. g.

Nouns/Adjectives	**Verb**
'conduct	con'duct
'digest	di'gest
'object	ob'ject
'present	pre'sent

- **The Sentence Stress**

In a sentence, some words are stressed while some words remain unstressed. The words which are important for the meaning are stressed. These important words are generally – nouns, interrogative pronouns, main verbs, adjectives and adverbs. These words are called the 'content words.' The other words such as articles, demonstrative, relative and personal pronouns, auxiliary verbs, prepositions and conjunctions are not normally stressed. These words are called the 'structural or grammatical words.'

e.g. 1. Rahul talked about his plans to establish a glass manufacturing unit.
2. It would have been better not to have done it swiftly.

Both the sentences have eleven words each. However, both the sentences do not have same number of words which are to be stressed. The first sentence has seven content words to be stressed while the second has only three. The underlined words are to be stressed.

Check Your Progress – V

A) Mark the stressed syllable in the following words.

1. phone
2. satisfy
3. accidental
4. illegal
5. demonstration

B) Mark the stressed syllables in the following sentences.

1. Rahul is a nice guy.
2. It is raining.
3. I have got a new car.
4. There is a book on Indian History in the Central Library
5. Shut up!

2.2.6 The Intonation Pattern

As we speak, our vocal cords open and close. This opening and closing of the vocal cords are called the vibrations. They determine the pitch of the voice. As a listener, we observe that the speaker doesn't always speak on the same note. That is, he doesn't speak on the same level. Sometimes the pitch rises, sometimes it falls and sometimes it remains on the same level. These various patterns on the pitch of the voice are called the intonation pattern of the language. These patterns help us understand whether the utterance is a question or a statement or a command or a request…etc.

One more thing that a speaker should keep in mind is that he has to divide the long utterance into meaningful groups. It helps the listener to understand the utterance better. Similarly, we cannot go on speaking as we run out of breath if we do so. Hence, we have to take pauses during our speech. To facilitate the listener's understanding, we have to take pauses appropriate points. Hence, we divide a long utterance into meaningful groups. These groups are known as tone groups. Usually, punctuation marks help us divide the utterance into groups.

e.g. When I went to Nashik, / I saw the famous Godavari Ghat.
As I see it/ there is no scope for change.

Kinds of the Tones:

There are a number of tones used in English. The important tones are mentioned below:

1. The falling tone [⟍]
2. The rising tone [/]
3. The falling-rising tone [V]

Let us discuss the uses of these tones.

The Uses of the Falling tone:

1. In ordinary statements made without any intention or implied meaning.

e.g. ⟍ She is going.
⟍ It is raining now.

2. In Wh-questions seeking information:

e.g. Where are ⟍ you going?
What is ⟍ your name?

3. In commands

e.g. Go ⟍ and post it.
Shut the ⟍ window.

4. In exclamations

e. g. ⟍ What a beautiful girl!
How ⟍ annoying!

The Uses of the Rising Tone:

1. In incomplete utterances and also the statements with implications:

e.g. If I / go there, I'll buy you a new \ toy.

Luckily, the snake didn't bite the \ mother.

2. In Yes-No type questions:

e.g. Can you do it?

Is father at home?

3. In Wh-questions showing intimacy or friendliness etc.:

e.g. How's your / headache?

What's the / matter?

4. In polite requests or encouraging invitations

e.g. Please be \ comfortable.

Could I borrow your / newspaper? Could I borrow your / newspaper?

The Uses of the falling-rising tone:

The falling-rising tone is used when **something is being implied or suggested** by the speaker.

e.g. She is ^{V}clever (but not dependable).

Your essay is ^{V}good (but your handwriting is not).

Check Your Progress – VI

A) Mark the tone groups in the following sentences:

1. If you watch English programmes, your English will improve.
2. It wasn't that interesting.
3. Help me, if you can.
4. Naturally, the children behaved very well.
5. All right Papa, I will do it myself.

B) State whether following sentences would receive a rising or falling or falling-rising tone.

1. Rahul is an Indian.
2. Keep quiet.
3. You are great?
4. If you want to achieve success in life, you must work hard.
5. How's your sister?

2. 3 Let us Sum up

In this unit, we learnt that to be a better speaker of English language, we must learn its sound system. There are 20 vowels and 24 consonants sounds while there are only 26 letters in English. Hence, there is no one to one correspondence between the letters and sounds. So also, every word consists of one or more syllables which are made up of vowels and consonants. One of the syllables is prominent which receives a stress. It is called a stressed syllable which is produced with a greater breath force as compared to the other syllables. Just as a word has its stress, a sentence too has a stress, that is, content words are stressed while grammatical words remain unstressed. English speech is not spoken on a level pitch always. The speaker changes the pitch or tone according to the function of the sentence. There are different patterns of tone, known as the intonation patterns. The falling and rising are the two important intonation patterns. So, in this unit, we have learnt the basics of the sound system which enable us to pronounce English words and sentences appropriately.

2. 4 Glossary

- **Linguistics:** The scientific study of language.
- **Phonetics:** The scientific study of the articulation, transmission and reception of speech sound in general.
- **Phonology:** The scientific study of the articulation, transmission and reception of speech sound of a particular language.
- **Phoneme:** Any one of the sets of the distinctive smallest units of sound in a language.
- **Syllable:** A unit of speech that is typically larger than a sound but smaller than a word, which consists of a vowel and usually one or more consonants.
- **Vowel:** A speech sound in the production of which the mouth is open and there is no obstruction or friction to the air coming from the lungs through the mouth.
- **Consonant:** A speech sound produced by completely or partly stopping the flow of air from the mouth.
- **Stress:** A term used to refer to the degree of force used in producing a syllable so that

  it is heard as being more emphatic than the other syllables in a word.
- **Intonation:** The use of distinctive patterns of pitch or tones in speech such as falling and rising.

2. 5 Answers to Check Your Progress

Check Your Progress – I

Attempt the following.

1. State whether the following sentences are true or false.
   i. Sounds are studied in graphology. = False
   ii. Language is a sign system. = True
2. A speech sound is called a phoneme.
3. There are 26 letters in the English language.
4. Linguistics is the scientific study of language.
5. There are 20 vowels and 24 consonants in English.

Check Your Progress – II

1. Identify the vowel sound and write down the phonetic symbol for the vowel sound in each of the following word. Make use of a good dictionary.

For example: Book = /U/

a) bed = /e/

b) cat = /æ/

c) read = /i:/

d) law = /ɔ: /

` e) girl = /ɜ: /

f) cut = /ʌ /

g) not = /ɒ /

h) ask = /a:/

i) bit = /I /

j) boon = /u: /

2. The following pairs of words are distinguished by the Vowel sound in them. Write in the blanks the correct symbols for the vowels that bring about the difference:

1. 'Sit' = /I/	a) 'Seat'= /i: /
2. 'Pool' = /u:/	b) 'pull' = /U/
3. 'bed' = /e/	c) 'bad'= /æ/
4. 'pot' = /ɒ /	d) 'port'= /ɔ: /
5. 'fad' = /æ/	e) 'fade'= /eI/

3. Identify the diphthongs in the following words and write their phonetic symbols

Sr. No.	Word	Diphthong
a.	ago	/əU /
b.	plate	/eI/
c.	cow	/aU /
d.	near	/Iə /
e.	air	/eə /

Check Your Progress – III

Write the phonetic symbols for the consonant sounds represented by the italicized letters in the following words:

a) res*t* = /t/

b) *c*ow = /k/

c) ju*dg*e = /dʒ/

d) *f*etch = /tʃ/

e) *p*leasure = /p/

2. The following pairs of words are distinguished by the Consonant sounds in them. Write in the blanks the correct symbols for the consonants which bring about the difference:

1. 'sat' = /s/	a) 'rat'= /r/
2. 'book' = /b/	b) 'hook' = /h/
3. 'get' = /g/	c) 'met' = /m/
4. 'shun' = /ʃ/	d) 'sun'= /s/

5. ‘thank’ = /θ/ e) ‘tank’= /t/

Check Your Progress – IV

A) State the number of syllables in the following words

1. letter = two syllables
2. man = one syllable
3. educate= two syllables
4. beautiful = three syllables
5. departmental = four syllables

B) Identify the structure of following words in terms of C and V:

1. marry = CVCV
2. note = CVC
3. dream = CCVC
4. strip = CCCVC
5. texts = CVCCC

Check Your Progress – V

A) Mark the stressed syllable in the following words

1. 'phone
2. 'satisfy
3. acci'dental
4. i'llegal
5. demon'stration

B) Mark the stressed syllables in the following sentences.

1. 'Rahul is a 'nice 'guy.
2. It is 'raining.
3. I have 'got a 'new 'car.
4. There is a 'book on 'Indian 'History in the 'Central 'Library
5. 'Shut up!

Check Your Progress – VI

A) Mark the tone groups in the following sentences:

1. /If you watch English programmes/your English will improve/
2. /It wasn't that interesting/
3. /Help me/ if you can/
4. /Naturally/ the children behaved very well/
5. /All right Papa/ I will do it myself/

B) State whether the following sentences would receive a rising or falling or falling-rising tone.

1. Rahul is an ⟋Indian.
2. Keep ⟋quiet.
3. You are ⟋ᵛgreat?
4. If you want to achieve success in ⟋life/ you must work hard⟍.
5. How's your ⟋sister?

2.6 Questions for Practice

1. Write short notes on the following.

i. The English Sound System

ii. The Vowel Sounds in English

iii. The Consonant Sounds in English

iv. The Concept of Syllable

v. The Intonation Pattern in English

vi. Types of Stress in English

2. Identify the sounds represented by italics in the following words.

i. m*ea*t ii. *c*ool iii. G*a*te iv ca*tch* v. b*u*t

3. Mark the tone groups in the following sentences and state whether the sentences would receive a rising or falling or falling-rising tone.

a. Please, bring me a glass of water.

b. Close the door.

c. What a beautiful picture?

d. If you work slowly, the project will not be completed on time.

e. Meena is a sincere girl.

4. Classify the following words according to the number of syllables they contain.

a. police b. already c. amusement d. ball e. local

5. Mark the stressed syllable in the following words.

i. balloon ii. Reason iii. Increase iv. congratulation v. hope

2.7 Online Sources for Learning the English Sound System

The following are some of the online sources for improving your pronunciation:

1. http://www.antimoon.com/how/pronunc-soundsipa.htm: It contains Information about sounds and their phonetic representation, and audio. Audio help us distinguish between two sounds. IPA symbols are discussed and explained.
2. http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/pronunciation: There are programs based on each sound unit to facilitate their learning. Extensive practice examples are given to reinforce learning.
3. https://elt.oup.com/student/englishfile/elementary/c_pronunciation: Files containing information about sounds, syllable, stress etc are in flash format. So you need a plug-in to view these files.
4. http://www.really-learn-english.com/word-pronunciation.html: There are lesions on each sound. You can choose a lesson to learn a sound. Tips and rules for production of sounds are given in separate lessons.

2.8 Suggested Reading

1. Bansal R. K. and Harrison J. B. *Spoken English for India*, Madras. Orient Longman. 1972
2. Yadugiri M. A. *The Pronunciation of English*. New Delhi. Viva Book. 2013
3. O'Connor, J. D. *Better English Pronunciation*. London. Cambridge University Press.
4. Sethi and Dhamija P. V. *A Course in Phonetics and Spoken English*. New Delhi. Prentice-Hall. 1997.

UNIT 3: BASIC CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS – I

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3.0 Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Use conversational skills for different purposes.
- Greet people in different situations and respond to greetings.
- Introduce yourself and introduce others.
- Make requests and respond to requests.
- Show agreements and disagreements in formal and informal settings.

3.1 Introduction

Every language has four basic skills viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing. The first two skills are frequently used. However, while learning a language in schools and colleges first two skills are often neglected. The focus is more on reading and writing in the classroom. As a result, many learners do not achieve sufficient mastery over these skills. In India, English is taught with a prescribed text. The teacher reads and explains the topics from the text and assigns some writing tasks. Students' abilities are also tested through a written exam at the end of the year. They are not given any listening practice and not encouraged to speak in the class. If you know how to read and write in a particular language but lack the ability to speak, you are not a good communicator. What is most important is your ability to communicate orally as there is hardly any communication through written mode these days. This is not intended to neglect the importance of writing. We all agree that we speak more than we write. Hence, now the focus of language teaching is shifting to teaching of listening and speaking skills. Reading and writing are introduced and learned at later stages. In this unit, we are going to study how to use English speaking skills for practical purposes.

3.2 Subject Analysis

3.2.1 Conversational Skills for Different Purposes – I

Every one of us has a desire to speak English but finds it difficult. Many of us can speak in English on topics related to our field or occupation. However, we don't know how to use English in day-to-day communication. In the coming pages, we will learn how to greet and give introduction in English; how to make requests; express agreement and disagreement; make suggestions; seek permissions; ask for required information; and express apology. Before discussing all these practical usages of English, we must learn some basic things such as **formal and informal** communication. This is because every language has different forms or ways of speaking in formal and informal situations.

Normally we use formal speech with strangers and people of higher status while informal speech is used with family, friends and colleagues. So also, the level of formality depends on the speaker's relationship with others, the setting, the topic for discussion and many other factors. Students should know these two different speaking styles and the reason for choosing the most appropriate style in a given situation. The characteristics of informal style are omission, ellipsis, contraction and a faster speaking rate. The formal style, on the contrary, tends to use complete sentences and coherent expressions. Consider the following examples of these two styles:

Formal	**Informal**
How are you?	How you doing?
I'm afraid I have to be going.	Got to go now.
I'd like to invite you to dinner tonight.	How about dinner tonight?

3.2.2 Greetings and Introducing

It is very important to open a conversation. Through greetings we can open a conversation, make our presence felt, show attention to others and indicate the kind of relationship we have with them. They help us establish contact with another person. Greetings should not be understood literally. People say 'Good morning!' for the sake of saying. However, greetings have to be returned or responded. For example,

A: Good morning! How are you?

B: Morning! Fine, thank you. How about you?

Let us first learn the expressions used in greetings along with possible responses. They are discussed as follows.

Scale of formality	Greetings	Possible Responses
More formal	Good morning/afternoon/evening.	Good morning/afternoon/evening.
	How nice to see you!	Same here. I'm too pleased to meet you.
	I'm pleased to meet you.	The pleasure is mine.
	Hello, Rakesh	Hello, Meena
	How are you?	Fine, thanks. And you? or Pretty well, thank. And you?
	How do you do?	How do you do?
	Hi, Yash.	Hi, Sandy.
	What's new?	Nothing.
	How you doing?	Not great.
	Long time, no see.	Yeah.
More informal	What's up?	Nothing special.

Greetings on Special Occasion

1. Happy Birthday!
2. Congratulations!
3. Best of Luck!
4. Happy New Year!
5. Happy Marriage Anniversary!
6. Merry Christmas!
7. Eid Mubarak!
8. Happy Diwali!

Specimen Dialogues

1. Meeting at the Market (Informal)

A: Good afternoon, Rama. Nice to see you again!

B: Good afternoon, dear Prakash! Really delightful to see you!

A: What you doing here?

B: I am shopping for my birthday party. It is on Monday.

A: That's nice. Wish you happy birthday in advance.

B: Thanks. How about you?

A: I am with one of my relatives. She is buying something for her in the store.

Note: 'What you doing here?' is actually 'What are you doing here?'

2. At the Office (formal)

A: Hello, Mr. Rakesh.

B: Hello Sir. Good morning.

A: Morning. How are you feeling today?

B: Quite better sir. Two days leave has really helped me recover fast. Thank you very much.

A. It's all right. Get back to work now.

B. Yes Sir.

Some more Conversations:

Conversation I:

A: Hello, good morning! I am Rohit Pawar. I am from Mumbai.

B: Good morning! Nice meeting you Mr. Rohit. My name is Sonia. I am from Nashik. I have come to Pune for sightseeing.

A: Oh! Pune has many tourist destinations. I am studying in Modern College, Pune. Can I help you in showing some fine tourist spots?

B: Great! It is really a very kind of you. Thank you very much.

A: It's my pleasure.

Conversation II:

Vijay, a fresher meets Vaishali, another fresher.

Vijay: Hello. Good afternoon! I am Vijay. I have taken admission to F. Y. B. Sc. in this college.

Vaishali: Hi. Afternoon! I am Vaishali. I too am in the same class. I am from Solapur.

Vijay: I am from Solapur. And you?

Vaishali: I am from Satara. By the way, I have to go as I ought to apply for hostel accommodation. Bye, bye.

Vijay: Ok. See you again. Bye, bye.

Conversation III:

(Meena walks along a street after her dinner. Just then a friend meets her. Time around 10 pm.)

Friend: Good evening, Meena.

Meena: Good evening.

Friend: All alone?

Meena: Yeah. Just having a stroll. And you?

Friend: I too. My doctor has suggested me to take a walk after dinner.

Meena: I regularly come here for a stroll.

Friend: Very good. Good night.

Meena: Good night.

Check Your Progress – I

List out the appropriate responses to the following greetings.

Greeting	**Response**
Good evening!	
Wish You Happy New Year.	
It's wonderful to see you again.	
How about you?	
Merry Christmas!	
Hi!	

3.2.3 Introducing Yourself and Others

There are occasions when you have to introduce yourself to unfamiliar people in situations such as functions, parties, interviews, seminars, conferences, meetings etc.

Similarly, people introduce themselves to you or sometimes you have to introduce some people to others. Formal introduction consists of two things: telling the names and, if needed, give more information.

As far as body language is concerned, people usually shake hands while introducing. However, man should wait for the woman to offer a hand. Sometimes, you have to reintroduce yourself when people do not remember you. In this unit, you will learn to introduce yourself and others. The following are the expressions used to introduce yourself and others.

Scale of formality	**Expressions** **Introducing Yourself**	**Possible Responses**
More formal ↕ More informal	May I introduce myself? I am Rahul.	Glad to meet you. I am Ramesh.
	Hello, my name is Madhu.	Pleased to meet you. I am Rohini.
	Allow me to introduce me. I am Nandita.	Nice name. I am Sharad.
	Hi. I am Rakesh from Solapur.	Wonderful to see you. I am Jyotsna.
	I don't think we've met earlier. I am Vipul.	Nice meeting you. My name is Prasanna.

Scale of formality	Expressions Introducing Others	Possible Responses
More formal	I have the privilege of introducing Mr. Shirish.	I've heard a lot about you. Nice to meet you.
	I take this opportunity to introduce Mrs. Priyanka.	She is a genius! Thanks for introducing her to me. I am Prashant.
	May I introduce you to Pramod?	Pleased to meet you. I am Rohit.
	Would you like to meet Prem?	Glad to meet you. I have attended your lectures. I am Sudhir.
	I'd like you to meet Prashant.	Exciting to meet you. I am Sharad.
	Please meet my brother, Rahul.	Hi, bro. How are you?
	Have you met Shantanu?	Shantanu, the emerging star. Nice meeting you.
More informal	This is Minakshi.	Hello, Minakshi! How do you do?

Specimen Dialogues

1. A Chance Meeting

A: Excuse me. Are you Mr. Mohan?

B: No. I am Prakash. I come from Srirampur. May I know your name, please?

A: Yeah. I am Sushma. I am from Ratnagiri.

B: Nice meeting you. Bye.

A. Glad to meet you too. Bye.

2. At the Seminar

A: Hello, I am Dr. Pramod. May I know your name please?

B: Hi! My name is Dr. Rahul. I am an Assistant Professor in English, at KSW College, Parbhani.

A: I am also working as Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Sigma University, Bhopal.

B: I am pleased to meet you.

A: Pleasure is mine.

B: I'd like to introduce you to my colleague, Dr. Sandhip.

A: Nice meeting you Sir.

B: This is Dr. Pramod from Bhopal.

C: Good to see you Sir.

A: Thanks for your company at the Seminar.

Some More Conversations:

Conversation - I

At the Cinema Hall

Harish: Hello. Good evening. I am Harish.

Pramod: Hi. Good evening.

Harish: I am from Nashik Road. And you?

Pramod: My name is Pramod from CIDCO.

Harish: I have come to watch Batman v/s Superman.

Pramod: I too. Nice meeting you. I was looking for a partner.

Harish. Same here. It would be a pleasure watching movie together.

Pramod: Let's go then.

Harish: Okay.

Conversation – II

At the Seminar:

Santosh: Excuse me Sir. May I introduce myself? I am Santosh from Nagpur.

Roshan: Hello. I am Rohan from Amaravati. I am a first-year student of Journalism in Shivaji Mahavidyalaya, Amarvati.

Santosh: Oh! Very good. I also studied in the same college up to my graduation.

Roshan: How do you do?

Santosh: How do you do?

Conversation – III

At a Group Seminar

(Members are introducing themselves)

A: Hello, friends! I would like to request you to introduce yourselves for better interaction.

B. Good afternoon, Sir! I am Balaji from Pune. I did M. B. A. from IMMRT, Pune. My specialization is in Marketing. Presently I am working as Marketing Executive in Mahindra & Mahindra, Chakan, Pune.

C. Good afternoon, Sir! My name is Irfan from Nashik. I am an Arts graduate from Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Nashik. I have also done a Diploma in Software Engineering from CDAC, Pune. I have my own Computer institute.

D: Good afternoon to all! I am Alfia from Wardha. I have completed my Post-Graduation in Fashion Designing from Ira Fashion Institute, Wardha. I work as a fashion designer.

E: Namaste Sir, Good afternoon! Let me introduce myself. I am Moses from Jalgaon. I am a commerce graduate. I am studying for C. A. final exam.

F: Good afternoon, Sir! I am Dnyaneshwar from Parbhani. I did my Post Graduation in Organic Chemistry from Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad. I qualified SET exam recently. I am looking for a job of a lecturer.

A: Well done! Thank you very much for introducing yourselves. Now we will proceed for the group seminar at the Central Hall of this building. See you all there. Bye, bye.

Check Your Progress – II

1. Write two expressions each for introducing yourself and introducing others

3.2.4 Requesting and Responding to Requests

We have to request others to get some favor or get some work done for you. There are direct or indirect request being made by us. Therefore, it is essential to learn how to make requests. The most common expression for making requests is *please*. Just by adding *please* to any imperative or interrogative sentence, we can make requests. However, there are other ways of making requests also. Let us learn the expressions used to make requests and to respond to requests made to you.

Scale of formality	**Expressions**	**Possible Responses**
More formal  More informal	I hope you don't mind me asking whether you could drop me at the office.	Certainly.
	I'm sorry to trouble you, but could you help me to get across?	Of course.
	Would it be possible for you to help me?	It's my pleasure.
	Do you mind shutting the door?	Right away.
	Could you lend me your pen, please?	Sorry, because I need it.
	Can you gift wrap this for me?	Yeah.
	Mind posting my letter?	No chance. I am busy.

Similarly, you can offer help to others by using the following expressions:

- May I help you?
- Do you wish some assistance?
- Is someone helping you?
- Would you like some help?
- Would you care for some advice?
- Let me get it for you.
- What can I do for you?

Specimen Dialogues

1. **In an Examination Hall**

Student A: Excuse me Sir, Can I use a calculator to do this sum?

Teacher: No way. You have to do it without calculator.

Student B: Sir, I am not feeling well. Do you mind me remaining absent tomorrow?

Teacher. Yes. Take care.

2. **At a Hotel Reception**

A: Good morning.

B: Good morning, Madam.

A: May I help you?

B: Yeah. Could I get a room in your hotel, please?

A: Of course. For how many people?

B: I need a single bed room.

A: We have two rooms vacant, one is non-AC and another AC.

B: Can I get the room with AC?

A: Certainly. You will be charged Rs. 700/- per day.

B: All right. No problem. Give me the key, please.

A: Here you are, Room No. 304. Go straight and then take left please.

B: Thank you very much. Do you mind helping me in taking my luggage to the room?

A: Our man will bring the luggage. Don't worry.

B: It's really very kind of you.

Check Your Progress – III

Turn each of the following into polite requests as shown in the example.

Example: Close the door. (to a stranger in the bus)

Could you please close the door?

a) Keep quiet. (to children)

_____

b) Lend me hundred rupees. (to a friend)

_____

c) Tell me the time. (to a fellow passenger)

_____

d) Type a letter for me. (to your colleague)

_____

e) Give me one day leave. (to your boss)

_____

3.2.5 Agreeing and Disagreeing

In everyday conversations, people express their opinions, views and thoughts. You probably agree with some and disagree with others. You agree with the thoughts, views or opinions which are acceptable to you.

However, a person who always agrees everything and has no individual opinion or thought is not respected. Hence, if you find the opinions and thoughts of anybody unacceptable, feel free to express your disagreement.

There are situations when you partially agree or partially disagree with someone. In the coming pages, you will learn various expressions used for showing both agreement and disagreement.

Scale of formality	**Expressions** **Agreement**
More formal 	I'd like to endorse that opinion.
	I agree completely with you.
	That's just what I think.
	That's exactly my view.
	I couldn't agree more.
	I'm with you there.
	You're right.
	Yes. I agree.
More informal	How true.

Scale of formality	Expressions Partial Agreement
More formal  More informal	There is some truth in what you say, still…
	I suppose you are partly right but…
	That may be so, but…
	I take your point, still…
	To a certain extent you're right, but…
	That's all very well, but…
	Might be true, but…
	Yes, but…
	Ok, but…

Scale of formality	Expressions Disagreement
More formal  More informal	I'm sorry but I have to disagree.
	I'm afraid I couldn't agree less.
	I'm not at all convinced.
	I'm afraid I disagree.
	I refuse to believe that.
	I don't think that's right.
	You cannot be serious.
	You're dead wrong.
	No way.

Check Your Progress – IV

Write two expressions each of agreeing, partly agreeing and disagreeing.

3.3 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit, you have acquired various spoken expressions for greeting, introducing yourself and others, requesting, agreeing and disagreeing. You have also learned the formal and informal ways of speaking.

3.4 Glossary

- **Formal:** Suitable for official or important occasion.
- **Informal:** Suitable for relaxed or friendly occasions where it is not required to follow strict rules of how to behave or do something.
- **Agreeing:** To say that you have the same opinion as somebody

3.5 Answers to Check Your Progress

Check Your Progress – I

Greeting	**Response**
Good evening.	Good evening
Wish you Happy New Year.	Same to you. Or Happy New year
It's wonderful to see you again.	Same here
How about you?	Fine. Thank you.
Merry Christmas!	Merry Christmas!
Hi!	Hi! Or Hello!

Check Your Progress – II

Introducing Yourself:

- May I introduce myself? I am Rahul.
- Hello, my name is Sudha.
- I am Sharad.

Introducing Others:

- I have the privilege of introducing Mr. David.
- I take this opportunity to introduce Ms. Sailaja.
- My I introduce Mr. Nilesh?

Check Your Progress – III

a) Will you please keep quiet?
b) Please lend me hundred rupees.
c) Do you mind telling me the time please?
d) Mind typing a letter for me? OR Could you type a letter for me, please?
e) I'm sorry to trouble you, but could I get one day leave?

Check Your Progress – IV

Agreeing

- I'd like to endorse that opinion.
- Yes. I agree.

Partly Agreeing

- I suppose you are partly right but…
- That's all very well, but…

Disagreeing

- I'm sorry but I have to disagree.
- I don't think that's right.

3.6 Questions for Practice

1. Complete the dialogue given below by choosing words and phrases given in the bracket.

(No, fine, pretty well, good morning!)

A: Good morning, uncle.

B: _____. How are you?

A: _____thanks. How about you?

B: _____. Thank you.

A: May I help you?

B. _____, thanks. I want to take some rest.

2. You want to take admission for First Year B. A. Course at YCMOU Study Centre in your locality. Write a dialogue between the Co-ordinator of the centre and you. Use expressions of greetings and introducing oneself.

3. Fill in the blanks using one or more words in each blank.

A: Good morning. I am _____. I come _____.

B: Hello. Good morning. My name is _____ from _____.

A: I have just joined this institute as _____. And you?

B: I have been working as _____.

A: I don't have many friends here.

B: Please meet _____ from my department.

A: Pleased to _____. I am _____.

B: Now you have one more friend.

4. Suppose a reporter is asking you some personal questions. Fill in the blanks to complete your dialogue with the reporter.

Reporter: Good morning, Sir. I am _____, a reporter of Lokmat.

You: _____.

R: I am going to ask you some personal questions. Do you _____?

Y: No. I don't mind. Go ahead.

R: Please tell me your full name.

Y: _____.

R: Where are you from?

Y: _____

R: What's your profession?

Y: _____.

R. How long have you been living in this city?

Y. _____

R. What is your view about the city?

Y. _____

R. Thank you very much Sir.

Y. _____

5. Underline the expressions of request in the following dialogue:

A: Can you help me in finding my watch, please?

B: Of course.

A: I am very clumsy in keeping my things.

B: Please don't curse yourself. (Finds the watch.) Here is your watch.

A: Thanks dear. I am really grateful to you as I am already late for the office.

B: Please bring some sweets on your way back to home.

A: Certainly.

6. A, B and C have passed twelfth exams recently. They want to take admission. A likes distance mode as he is a working professional. So, he has decided to take admission in YCMOU, Nashik. B is against the distance mode since he thinks that it does not promise him a good career. So, he wants to join a regular university mode. C. is for both modes of instruction. Hence, he is not able to take a proper decision. Write a dialogue in which A, B and C discuss various options for admission, agreeing and disagreeing with each other.

3.7 Online Sources for Conversational Skills

The following are some of the online sources for improving Conversational skills.

1. www.speaking24.com: It contains free English Conversation lesson plans.
2. www.talkenglish.com: It has English Speaking and Listening lesson plans.
3. www.englishclub.com: It has sections on grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, writing, business English, English videos, games and quizzes. It is a very entertaining and informative site.
4. www.elt.oup.com: It has English improvement courses for young, teenage and adult learners. It deals with business English, English for specific purposes, Grammar and vocabulary, and graded reading. There is a famous 'Headway' series to help students learn English at all levels elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate and upper-intermediate. It contains many fun and interesting activities. So also, there is free online Oxford dictionary for reference and vocabulary building.

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3.8 Suggested Readings

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5. O'Brien, Terry., *Effective Speaking Skills*, Rupa Publication, 2011

UNIT 4: BASIC CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS - II

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4.3 Let Us Sum Up

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4.0 Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Use Conversational skills for different purposes.
- Give suggestions in formal and in informal situations.
- Ask for information about food, weather, time, prices etc.
- Seek and give permissions, and apologize in different context.

4.1 Introduction

You have learnt a few basic conversational skills in the last unit. This unit is a continuation of that unit. Here, you will learn how to give suggestions, ask for information about food, weather, time, prices etc. and how to apologize. These basic conversational skills will enable you to communicate in English better in different situations. Let us begin with suggesting.

1.2 Subject Analysis

1.2.1 Conversational Skills for Different Purposes – II

In our day-to-day conversions we ask for information and give information, in our daily discussions, in meetings we ask for suggestions or give suggestions. Many times, while asking for something we ask for permissions and when requested for something we give permissions. Sometimes, we apologize over something we feel sorry about or express our regrets. However, as discussed earlier we have to be attentive to what is being said and respect the speaker and while responding or expressing our opinions, we have to be polite in all situations. Let us see some expressions we may use in various situations while giving suggestions, asking for information or asking for permissions and while apologizing.

4.2.2 Suggesting

Every time we get to discuss something, a plan, project, problem, programme organization etc. different people offer different suggestions. Suggestions which are practical or feasible are accepted while the impractical or irrelevant ones are rejected. Let us learn how to put forth suggestions. The following are the expressions used to offer suggestions:

Scale of formality	Expressions	Possible Responses
More formal	Would you mind me suggesting something?	Of course not.
	May I suggest another thing then?	Yes, go ahead.
	I'd like to suggest that we should go to Mahabaleshwar for the trip.	What an idea!
	Would it be a good idea to book a flight?	No chance.
	We might as well borrow money from Bhaskar.	That's possible.
	Let's report his behaviour.	You are right. We must report it.
More informal	Why not borrow money from uncle?	That's not possible.
	Shall we keep it only between you and me?	That's true.

Specimen Dialogues

Planning the venue of college trip

Sonam: We have to plan our college trip.

Priyanka: Wow! Where are we going?

Sonam: Not decided yet. May I suggest something? We should go to Bhandardara.

Rahul: I have been to Bhandardara once. It's not such a good spot. Let's go to Saputara.

Priyanka: No way. There is nothing great to see at Saputara. Shall we go to Matheran?

Sonam: That's good suggestion. We should go to Matheran.

Rahul: I too agree with you.

Check Your Progress – I

Offer suggestions by using above expressions.

i. Suggest your friend to hire a taxi.
ii. Suggest your teacher to arrange for the farewell party.
iii. Make suggestions to your parents to go for a picnic.
iv. Suggest your brother to join Indian Army.

4.2.3 Asking for information

Man is a curious animal; s/he always strives to get more and more information. S/he seeks information by way of requesting and interrogating. But one has to frame questions appropriately to get required information. So, let's learn how to get information.

- **Asking the Time:** The following expressions are used to ask the time.

Expressions	**Possible Responses**
What time do you have?	It's nine o'clock sharp.
What's the time?	It's quarter to ten.
Excuse me. What time is it?	It's almost six.
Do you have any idea about the time?	Yes. It's ten past three.
At what time is the lecture?	It is at nine o'clock.
On what day is the conference?	Conference is on Saturday.

In what month is the next meeting?	The next meeting is in March.
At what time of the day is the show?	The show is at seven o'clock.
Are you sure your watch is right?	It may be a few minutes slow.

- **Asking for Directions:** The following expressions help us to ask for directions.

Expressions	**Possible Responses**
Where's the railway station?	It's near the Post office.
How far is the railway station from here?	About a half a mile, I suppose.
Where is the National college?	It's three blocks that way.
Where is the airport?	It's south of the city.
What is the best way to reach the bus stop?	Take the service road 9 to the west.
How can I find out a drugstore?	There's one near the telephone exchange.

- **Asking about Activities:** Look at the following expression seeking information about activities.

Expressions	**Possible Responses**
What time do you get up?	I get up at six o'clock.
What do you usually do in the afternoon?	I usually watch T. V.
When do you have your lunch?	I have my lunch at one o'clock.
What did I you do last night	I watched IPL final match.
Where are you going tonight?	I am planning to visit Shri Ram temple.
What are you going to do tonight?	I am going to study.
What do you do in you free time?	I play cricket.
What do you read these days?	I am reading some Marathi novels.

- **Asking about Prices:**

Expressions	**Possible Responses**
How much does the basket cost?	It costs nine hundred rupees.
How much is the badminton racket?	It's five hundred only.
How much are these things all together?	Let's see. They are one thousand fifty only.
How much are the tomatoes?	Twenty-five per kilogram.
What does the mobile cost?	It's twenty-nine thousand only.
What is the starting price for the washing machine?	The prices start from fifteen thousand.
What would it cost to have the laptop repaired?	I'd estimate eight hundred rupees.

- **Asking about weather:**

Expressions	**Possible Responses**
What's the weather like in Nashik?	It's normally windy and cold.
How's the weather?	It's raining outside now.
How are the winters here in general?	They're usually rather mild.
Is it raining now?	Yes, it is. It's raining very hard.
How cold is it outside?	It's ten below.
What's the temperature?	It's five above.
Does it ever snow in your country?	No. It does not snow in my place.
Is the weather different at your place?	Yes. It never gets as hot there as it does here.
What's the weather like in August here?	It's cloudy and gray in August here.

- **Asking about food**

Expressions	**Possible Responses**
What's the food like in Vidharbha?	It's spicy and salty.
What did you have for breakfast?	I had *poha* and *Idli Sambar*.

How did you have your eggs?	Soft boiled, as usual.
What kind of *paratha* do you order?	Mostly potato and cheese.
What vegetables do you like with your dinner?	Tomato and spinach.
What would you like for your main course?	I' m going to have chicken for the main course.
Do you like vegetables?	Yeah. I mean, I don't like all.
How do you like your tea?	With less sugar and creamy milk.

Check Your Progress – II

- Write one expression each to enquire about time, direction, activities, weather and food.

4.2.4 Seeking and Giving Permission

In our day-to-day life we have to seek permissions on several occasions for various purposes. Many think that we have to seek permissions in formal settings only. But sometimes, we have to seek permissions in informal situations. Permissions are mostly sought from strangers, seniors and elderly people. However, sometimes we seek permissions from familiar people, juniors and young ones. It is a matter of courtesy to seek permissions even from younger ones whenever required.

There are occasions when people ask permissions from you. Sometimes you give permissions and other times you refuse to give them. Even if you refuse permission, you have to be courteous so as a person seeking permission should not feel insulted.

Scale of formality	**Expressions** **Seeking permission**	**Possible Responses** **Giving permission**	**Possible Responses** **Refusing Permission**
More formal  More informal	May I have the permission to use your car today?	Certainly.	I'm afraid you can't do that.
	Is it ok with you if I use your parking lot for a while?	All right.	Sorry, I need it.
	Do you mind if I could intervene?	Go ahead.	Sorry, no way.
	I was wondering if l could use your tablet.	Of course you can.	I'd like to, but you can't.
	May I borrow your umbrella?	Sure.	Certainly not.
	Let me use your pen.	That's fine.	Sorry.
	Mind if I take the bottle?	Feel free to.	Not possible.

Specimen Dialogue

Candidate: May I come in Sir?

Interviewer: Certainly.

Candidate: Can I have a seat?

Interviewer: Yes. Have a seat.

Candidate: Thank you very much.

Interviewer: Please tell something about you.

Candidate: May I start with my personal details.

Interviewer: Yes. Of course!

Check Your Progress – III

- Write two expressions each for seeking and giving permission
- Using the above expressions, ask the person in the second column for permission for the purpose mentioned in the third column and write your request for permission in the last column.

Sr. No.	Person	Purpose	Seeking permission
1.	Teacher	to see your answer sheets	
2.	Father	to go for picnic	
3.	Classmate	to borrow his/her book.	
4.	Neighbour	to use his balcony	
5.	Co-passenger	to take his window seat	

4.2.5 Apologizing

To err is human. But that does not mean you should not regret committing a mistake. So, if your behavior or action causes harm or inconvenience to others, you should apologize (show regret) to them. Apology varies depending on the formality of the situation and severity of the mistake. For example, apology for violating a traffic rule and for pushing somebody in the queue are different. The following are the expressions used to make an apology:

Scale of formality	Expressions	Possible Responses
More formal  More informal	Forgive me. I am terribly sorry about…	It's all right.
	Please accept my apologies for…	I understand completely.
	I would like to apologize for…	You really don't have anything to apologize for.
	That was hasty/careless of me. I am sorry.	I wouldn't worry about it if I were you.
	I apologize for…	Oh, that's all right. It can happen to anyone.
	I am very/extremely sorry about …	Oh! Well, that's life.
	I am sorry.	No problem.
	Oh! Sorry!	Don't worry about it.
	My fault.	It's not your fault.

Specimen Dialogue

Student: May I come in Madam?

Teacher: Yes. But why have you been late today?

Student: I am sorry but I overslept.

Teacher: It's all right this time. Don't come late again. You know, it disturbs the whole class.

Student: Yes, I agree. I won't let it happen again.

Check Your Progress – IV

- Express apologies for the following mistakes.

Reason	Apology
Being late in the class.	
Hurting somebody's feeling.	
Being impolite.	
Dialing a wrong number.	
Taking somebody else's things unknowingly.	

4.3 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit, you have acquired some more conversational skills such as suggesting, seeking permission and information, and apologizing. We have seen multiple examples that tell us how we can vary the degree of politeness or formality by using certain expressions. With friends and family, we may use little informal expressions but as we go out in society and professional life, we have to be more courteous. It's only a matter of few magical words that can define your personality. Practice these skills regularly and use them in appropriate situations.

4.4 Glossary

- **Suggestion:** An idea or plan that you mention for somebody else to think about and implement.
- **Permission:** the act of allowing somebody to do something.
- **Apology:** a word or a statement saying sorry for wrong doing or causing trouble.
- **Regret:** to feel sorry about something you have done or about something that you have not been able to do.

4.5 Answers to Check Your Progress

Check Your Progress – I

a) Let's hire a taxi.
b) I would like to suggest that we should arrange the farewell party.
c) Would it be a good idea to go for a picnic?
d) Why don't you join Indian Army?

Check Your Progress – II

- What time do you have? (time)
- How far is the railway station from here? (direction)
- What do you do in you free time? (activities)
- What does the mobile cost? (price)

- What's the weather like in Nashik? (weather)
- What did you have for breakfast? (food)

Check Your Progress – III

Seeking permission

- May I have the permission to use office today?
- Mind if I take the bottle?

Giving Permission

- Of course you can/ Certainly!
- Feel free to!

Check Your Progress – IV

Reason	**Apology**
Being late in the class.	I would like to apologize for being late.
Hurting somebody's feeling.	I am extremely sorry for hurting your feelings.
Being impolite.	I am so sorry.
Dialing a wrong number.	I am very sorry.
Taking somebody else's things unknowingly.	That was hasty/careless of me. I am sorry.

4.6 Questions for Practice

1. Imagine that you and your friend are planning for various days (rose day, traditional day, chocolate days etc.) to be celebrated in your college. Write a dialogue between both of you making suggestions about your participation in them.
2. Complete the following dialogue with appropriate phrases and expressions:

   A: Good morning, Sir.
   B: _____.
   A: _____.
   B: The railway station is three blocks away that way.
   A: _____. Is there a restaurant nearby?
   B: _____.
   A: Thanks a ton!

At the restaurant

B: (to the waiter) The menu, please?

C: _____.

B: _____.

C: Sandwiches and Some South Indian dishes.

B: Medu Vada, please.

C: _____.

(After finishing the breakfast)

B: _____.

C: _____.

B:_____.

3. Your family is planning a vacation in Kerala. A travel agent has come to discuss the same with your father. Write a dialogue between him and the travel agent discussing the journey, food, weather and cost of the tour.
4. Complete the conversational exchanges given below, using appropriate word/words.

a) A: I am extremely _____.
   B: It's all _____.

b) A: I _____for coming late.
   B: _____.

c) A: I am _____.
   B: I _____ completely.

d) A: My _____.
   B: It's not _____.

e) A: _____me. I am _____.
   B: _____ about it.

4.7 Online Sources for Conversational Skills

The following are some of the online sources for improving Conversational skills.

1. www.speaking24.com: It contains free English Conversation lesson plans.
2. www.talkenglish.com: It has English Speaking and Listening lesson plans.
3. www.englishclub.com: It has sections on grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, writing, business English, English videos, games and quizzes. It is a very entertaining and informative site.

4. www.elt.oup.com: It has English improvement courses for young, teenage and adult learners. It deals with business English, English for specific purposes, Grammar and vocabulary, and graded reading. There is a famous 'Headway' series to help students learn English at all levels elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate and upper-intermediate. It contains many fun and interesting activities. So also, there is free online Oxford dictionary for reference and vocabulary building.

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