

USING DICTATION WITH ADULT LEARNERS

Dictation exercises are useful for both literacy and English as a Second Language Learners. It helps students improve listening, speaking grammar and writing skills. Dictation exercises can be created from any material the student has read and discussed. Paragraphs from stories, newspaper articles and internet sites can be used. The paragraphs should not be overly long, but the level can be adjusted by leaving out more or fewer words to be filled in.

Tips for making dictation exercises positive experiences for your student:

1. In the beginning, have the student read the paragraph first and discuss it. Teach any unfamiliar vocabulary.
2. Read the dictation at a normal pace and try to speak as normally as possible.
3. You can repeat the text several times, if necessary. However, if you have to repeat more than three times, the text or the level is probably too difficult.
4. Students can self-correct or work with the tutor to check for errors.
5. Students often like to try more difficult levels after they become familiar with the text.
6. If the goal is to improve listening skills for English as a Second Language learners, you can dictate the text without reading it first, *if* all the words are part of the learner's vocabulary.

Here is a sample to get you started.

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Telemarketing Calls

I was cooking dinner last night at 6:00 p.m. The telephone rang. When I answered the phone, I heard no sound, then a click. Then a man said, "I'm calling to offer you a special rate on long distance service." I told him "No, thank you" and hung up.

Ten minutes later the telephone rang again. "Hello, how are you today?" a woman asked. I said, "Who is this?" She said, "My name is Kathy Smith and I'm calling on behalf of Ventana Window Company. We are offering a 10 percent discount on new windows this month." I told her "No, thank you" and hung up.

Five minutes later, the telephone rang again. A man said "I'm calling from First Bank to tell you that you qualify for a Gold credit card. All you have to do is tell us your Social Security number and we'll send it to you." "No, thank you," I said, "And please don't call this number again."

Discussion

1. Have you had any phone calls like this? What were they about? What did you do?
2. Why did these 3 calls come at dinner time?
3. Should you give your social security number to someone who calls you on the phone? Why or why not?