

e-learning

Level – Upper Intermediate or above

Suggestions for use in the classroom

This dictation is appropriate for classes at Upper Intermediate level or above. Although the dictation is only about 1½ minutes long, the ideas below will need about one hour of class time if you use them all!

1 Lead-in

You can prepare the students for the dictation by using the following activity:

Ask the students to brainstorm different kinds of technological aids that can help in learning a language. You could put the students into groups and see which group comes up with the most ideas.

Suggestions:

Cassette / CD / DVD players, computers (specially-designed language-learning programmes on CD or the Internet, spell-check on Microsoft Word), electronic dictionaries / translation devices, telephones (e.g. telephone lessons), etc.

Ask the students (1) to give more specific details of how this technology can be used, (2) if they have ever used any of these things themselves and (3) to evaluate the relative usefulness of this technology for language-learning.

2 The dictation

It is usually best for students to listen to the complete text at least once without stopping before they are asked to take notes. When they listen again, you will need to pause from time to time to allow students to write. The script has suggested pause marks. One of the values of dictations is to train students' short-term memory, so the sections between pauses should be short enough for the exercise to be do-able, but long enough to be challenging.

You could use the suggestion below to vary this procedure.

Photocopy and cut up the dictation into three sections as below:

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✂ -----

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Divide the class into three groups. Give one person in each group a section of the dictation, which they must dictate to the others.

When this has been completed, rearrange the class into groups of three so that in each group each student has a different part of the text. The groups must decide on the best order of the three parts of the text in order to complete the advertisement.

3 Follow-up

You can use one or all of the exercises below to explore the language in the dictation.

a Spelling

Ask students to complete this task before you show them a correct written version of the dictation.

Tell the students to look at what they have written and to underline all the adjectives that rhyme with **variable**.

Ask them, in pairs, to check their spelling. At first, they should use their knowledge / intuition. Afterwards, they can check their answers in the dictionary.

Answers:

-ible spelling: *flexible, incredible, inexhaustible, accessible, compatible*

-able spelling: *enjoyable, available, unbeatable.*

Then ask them to find out which of these word endings is more common. To do this, they should use the Sound Search function on the *Macmillan English Dictionary CD-ROM*. They should type in */*bl/*

Answer:

-able spellings are much more common.

Note: Native speakers find it very hard to get the correct spelling for many of these words! For many people, the only way to be sure is to check in the dictionary.

Draw students' attention to the word *confidence* in the dictation. Ask them to spell it. Point out that this word carries a noun suffix that also causes problems with spelling because both *-ence* and *-ance* are pronounced the same.

Make a selection (as many or as few as you like) of words from the lists below, jumble them up, and dictate them to the students. (All of these words are very common – i.e. words with two or three stars in MED.)

-ance: *acceptance, ambulance, appearance, assistance, assurance, guidance, maintenance, performance, resistance, significance.*

-ence: *conference, confidence, difference, evidence, existence, experience, independence, intelligence, preference, violence.*

Finally, students can use the Sound Search function on the CD-ROM to find similar words.

b Compounding

Tell the students to read the two short paragraphs on Compounding on page LA15 in the middle of their dictionaries. Then ask them to look at their dictations again and find all the compound nouns and adjectives. Ask them to use their dictionaries to check that they have written them correctly.

Note: the dictionary gives information about the most common ways these words are written and sometimes includes alternatives. In many cases, native speakers are not entirely confident about how to write these words either.

c Technological language

Ask the students to find all the examples of technological language in the dictation. Then tell them to turn to pages LA18-19 in the middle of their dictionaries, where many of these words are explained. Ask them to translate these words and expressions into their own language.

Note: in some cases, there may be no translation because the English word is preferred.

To conclude the lesson, you could ask students what they think of the product that is advertised in the dictation. Does it sound appealing? Would they like to try it? What are its probable advantages and disadvantages? Does it sound like good value? Could programmes of this kind replace more traditional classrooms?