

Module 6

Speech: Listening Comprehension

In this module, the focus is on listening. Your teacher will read out a passage while you listen carefully. She will then ask you to discuss what you understand by the passage. During a second reading, you will be told to provide answers to the questions below.

(The teacher now reads the passage in Appendix Two)

Questions

1. From this we can know that the crocodile is
 - a. the largest animal in the world.
 - b. the largest reptile in the world.
 - c. the largest land animal.
2. When the speaker used the term "extant", he means that the crocodile
 - a. is still found today.
 - b. has long disappeared from the world.
 - c. is very commonly found around us.
3. From the passage we can conclude that the crocodile
 - a. is much bigger than other reptiles that once existed.
 - b. has the same shape as other reptiles that once existed.
 - c. is much smaller than other reptiles that once existed.
4. From the passage we can say that the crocodile can be found
 - a. mainly around water bodies.
 - b. anywhere in the world.
 - c. only around the seas.
5. The crocodile is called a lizard because it
 - a. eats exactly what lizards eat.
 - b. has a shape similar to a lizard.
 - c. is found where lizards are found.

Structure: Pronouns and Antecedents

In this module we shall study the consistent relationship that must exist between a pronoun and the word that a pronoun refers to.

The word that a pronoun refers to is the pronoun's antecedent, e.g.:

Peter gave his car away.

The word **his**™ refers to **Peter**. Therefore, **Peter** is the antecedent of **his**. A pronoun (his) should agree with its antecedent (Peter) in number (singular/plural), gender (masculine/feminine) and person (first, second or third person). When this is not so, we say something is wrong. For example:

- i. A student would not mind stealing rather than not getting what *they* want.
- ii. *Children* can speak many languages although *it* may not be their mother tongue.
- iii. If *anybody* comes *into* my office, *you* will find clean floors.

In sentence (i) the pronoun *they* refers to the antecedent, a *student*. The pronoun is plural while the antecedent is singular. This is wrong. Similarly **it** in sentence (ii) refers to **languages**. The pronoun is singular while the antecedent is plural. This is incorrect. In sentence (iii), there is no agreement in person. **Anybody** is in the third person while **you** is in the second person.

The correct versions of the sentences should be:

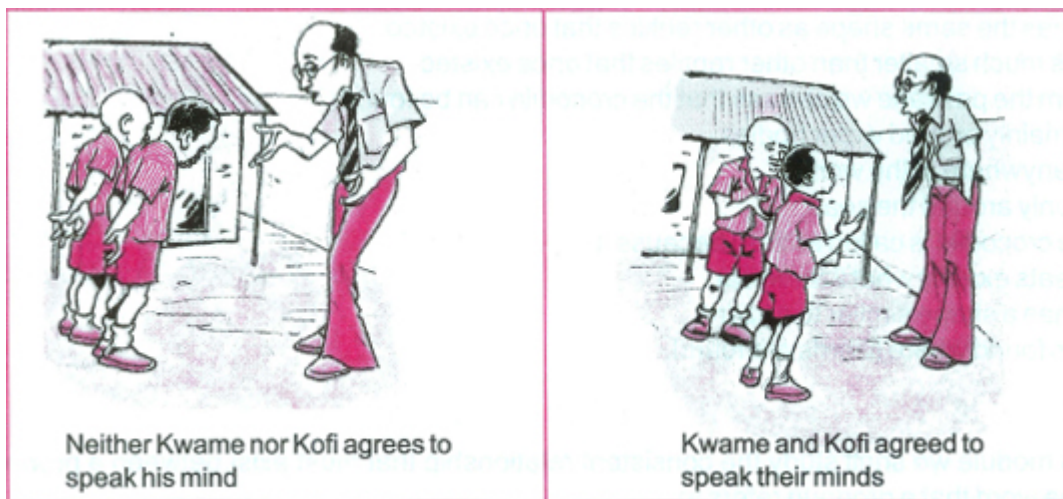
- i. A student would not mind stealing rather than not getting what he or she wants.
- ii. Children can speak many languages although they may not be their mother tongue.
- iii. If anybody comes into my office, he or she will find clean floors.
Or: iv. If you come into my office, you will find clean floors.

Agreement in number

If an antecedent is singular, the pronoun that refers to it must also be singular. If, on the other hand, the antecedent is plural, the pronoun that refers to the antecedent must also be plural.

Study the following sentences:

- a. The **farmers** left the market because **they were** unhappy.
- b. One girl gave her wallet to me.
- c. The **boys** offered **their** breakfast to the beggars.
- d. Neither Kwame nor Kofi agrees to speak his mind.
- e. Kwame and Kofi agreed to speak their minds.



In sentence (a), the pronoun **they** refers to **farmers**. **Farmers** is the antecedent of **they**. Therefore both the pronoun and the antecedent are plural. In sentence (b), the pronoun **her** refers to **girl**. The pronoun and its antecedents are singular. In sentence (c), **their** refers to **boys**. **Boys** is the antecedent of **their**. Both **their** and **boys** are plural.

As a rule, two or three singular antecedents linked with *either... or* and *neither ...nor* always take a singular pronoun. This is why in sentence (d), a singular pronoun **his** is used to refer to the antecedent **neither Kwame nor Kofi**. But in sentence (e) the antecedent **Kwame and Kofi** is plural. This is why a plural pronoun, *their*, is used to refer to the antecedents.

Agreement of pronouns and antecedents in gender

Pronouns must agree with their antecedents in gender as well. That means that if the antecedent is masculine, the pronoun that refers to it must also be masculine. If the antecedent is feminine, the pronoun referring to it should also be feminine. Read the following sentences:

- Mrs Okon did **her** best.
- Neither of the **men** achieved **his** purpose.
- The **dog** licked **its** puppy.

In sentence (a), the feminine pronoun agrees with Mrs Okon. In sentence (b), **his** agrees in gender with **men** and in sentence (c) the neuter gender, **its**, agrees with **puppy**.

Antecedents that refer to males and females

When an antecedent refers to both a male and a female, some students are unsure of what pronoun to use. In such situations should we use a masculine pronoun, a feminine pronoun or a plural pronoun? Read the following sentences carefully. Which version do you think is most acceptable?

- Everybody has submitted his assignments.
- Everybody has submitted his or her assignments.
- Everybody has submitted their assignments.

If *everybody* involves female students, sentence (a) is not acceptable in modern English. Because people are very sensitive about gender issues, writers use words that embrace both the female and the male gender. This is why words like **chairperson** is preferable to **chairman**, **humankind** is preferable to **mankind** and **spokesperson** is preferable to **spokesman**, etc. Sentence (b),

Everybody has submitted his or her assignments

is acceptable because the pronoun **his** or **her** recognises both sexes that make up the antecedent, **everybody**. Some experts however find the use of **his** or **her** clumsy. It is such experts who prefer to use versions like sentence (c). However, while some experts accept this way out, others frown at it.

In conclusion, sentence (a) is unacceptable. Sentences like (c) are used in books by many foreign experts. It is also used in informal English, while sentence (b) is the most acceptable of the three sentences. Even then, some writers prefer to use more neutral words, e.g.

All students have submitted **their** assignments.

You will discover other sentences whose antecedents embrace both males and females later.

Exercise

A. From the words or group of words indicated in A–D, choose the word or group of words that best completes each of the following sentences:

- | | |
|---|--|
| i. Each of these men hadbags searched. | A. his B. her C. their D. its |
| ii. He needs to take..... job seriously. | A. his B. their C. his D. or her one's |
| iii. Did Carol or Rita lose self esteem? | A. their B. her C. she D. them |
| iv. If you come to my school,.....will find many beautiful flowers. | A. they B. one C. you D. people. |
| v. Musa caught the rabbits and killed..... | A. it B. C. him. D. her them |

B. Form 10 sentences from the box below:

		calls,	tell him or her	that I am on leave.
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	anybody	asks,	tell them	that I travelled.
If	somebody	applies,	inform him or her	that we left.
When	anyone	arrives,	remind them	that she has gone.
		visits,	assure him or her assure them	that it is well.

Reading Comprehension

First read through the following points very carefully.

Have you ever thought of the following?

- 💡 *That available reading materials continues to increase at a serious rate?*
- 💡 *That on a daily basis, whatever your profession might be, you will need to read a lot of material if you are to continue to make progress?*

Very clearly, the implications are that:

- *You must continue to constantly learn to enhance your reading ability.*
- *You should develop an almost culpable curiosity in all reading materials around you.*
- *You should master the various reading styles, from scanning and skimming to intensive reading, etc.*

Study the following picture and suggest what it is trying to illustrate.



Now, read the following passage as rapidly as you can. Time yourself.

Need for Reading Efficiency

Ability to read and *comprehend* much is very *essential* in a world where there is an ever continuing information *explosion*. Information explosion refers to the phenomenon of having far too much information than one can cope with. There is a lot of simply printed material being turned out

from the very many printing houses. To *illustrate* this, consider the words of a former United States President, Lyndon Johnson. He said that the world was engaged in a breakneck *race* towards discovery. To illustrate his point, he pointed out that in the next 24 hours, the printed research findings from all over the world would fill seven sets of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. He *estimated* that such research findings accumulated over a period of one year would require a man to read around the clock, day and night, for the next 460 years!

Now, come to think of it, the research findings for one year alone would take a person 460 years read. These do not include “softer” materials such as novels, magazines, newspapers, and other textbooks. Really, the world is daily *deluged* with a flood of printed materials. It is hopeless trying to read all the available materials; in fact, it is difficult, perhaps impossible, for one to read in one day all the newspapers and magazines printed in any one day in Nigeria today.

We also need to put all this in the context of the period in question. Lyndon Johnson was speaking several decades ago when publication facilities were less adequate than they are now. If he were to dwell on the same issue today, he would be speaking of a person requiring perhaps about a thousand years to read through all the materials published in one day. So, it is even more impossible to read everything one would like to read.

But one must try. The first essential step is to develop an interest in reading. Second, one has to develop a fast reading rate and a high comprehension level. Finally, it is essential to develop a high degree of reading *flexibility*. Reading flexibility embraces ability to vary one’s reading speed to fit the textual difficulty of the material, and also according to the purpose for which one is reading.

All this *dictates* that the mature reader should be adaptable; able to adapt his rate of reading to the purpose with which he approaches the reading task, and to the difficulty level of the material. To improve his reading ability and cover as much as possible, he should read as often as he possibly can, trying all the while to improve himself. (435 words)

A. Now do the following:

- a. Record your reading time.
- b. Calculate your reading speed and record this in the appropriate place.
- c. Use appendix 1 to categorise your reading speed, and record this too.

B. Without referring to the passage, answer the following questions:

1. What does the author mean by “information explosion” ?
 - A. That there are very many media of information.
 - B. That there are many more printed materials than we need.

- C. That there is too much information than we can cope with.
 - D. That there are many more newspapers than are needed.
2. What did Lyndon Johnson mean by the term "break-neck race"?
- A. Unhealthy rivalry.
 - B. Keen competition.
 - C. Struggle for recognition.
 - D. Struggle for survival.
3. From paragraph 2, we can conclude that research publications are
- A. generally specialised, and not easy to understand.
 - B. generally specialised, but not difficult.
 - C. those in common everyday language.
 - D. those in general language but on uncommon issues.
4. When the writer says, "But one must try", he means that one should
- A. attempt to read everything in print.
 - B. try to read as many of the materials available.
 - C. try to know about all things happening around.
 - D. attempt to be conversant with issues around him.
5. What is the keyword in reading flexibility?
- A. Comprehension.
 - B. Reading rate.
 - C. Ability to recall.
 - D. Adaptability.

Now score and record your attempt. Then calculate your reading efficiency index. Record this also in the appropriate place.

C. Read the passage again and answer the following questions.

- 6. What is the basic difference between research publications and general publications?
- 7. Why did Lyndon Johnson refer to the quest for knowledge as "break-neck race"?
- 8. Why is the word "softer" in quotation marks?
- 9. For each of the following words, find another one which means virtually the same thing:
 - i. comprehend ii. essential iii. explosion iv. illustrate
 - v. race vi. estimate vii. deluge viii. flexibility

D. Summary work

In three closely connected sentences, summarise the connection

between Lyndon Johnson's claim and what this should mean to learners.

Vocabulary Development

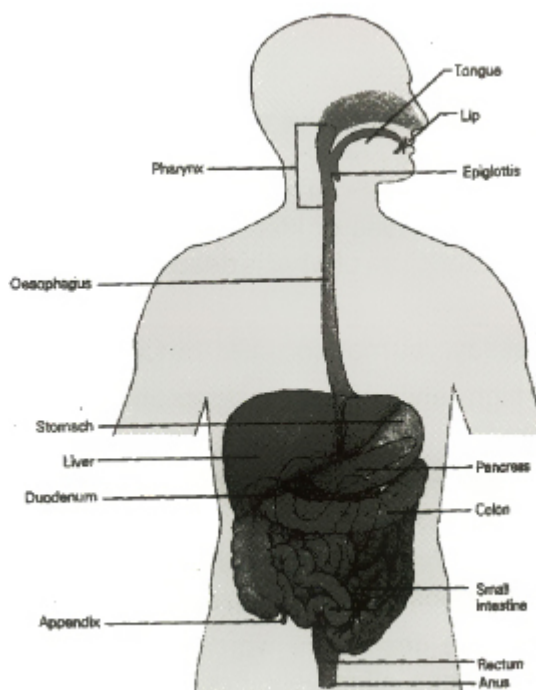
Words associated with the human internal body system and function

In this module, you will be exposed to words associated with the human internal body system. They are also referred to as **register of human internal body system**. Study the picture in the next page carefully:

Again, study the table below containing some parts of the human internal body system.

lungs	small intestine	brain	diaphragm
liver	anus	arteries	muscle
kidney	urethra	nerves	membrane
oesophagus	appendix	bones	tongue
stomach	veins	blood	teeth
large intestine	pancreas		

You must have heard about most of the words before in your Biology lessons.



Activity I

1. Using your dictionary or Biology textbook, check up the meanings

and functions of the following:

Words	Meanings
kidney	
stomach	
liver	
lung	
anus	
large intestine	
arteries	
veins	
appendix	
urethra	
oesophagus	
nerves	
bones	
membrane	
pancreas	

2. Choose any 8 of the words and form correct sentences with them.

Continuous Writing: Description

Writing a descriptive essay

In this module, we shall be examining a descriptive essay. This is another kind of essay which presents the characteristics of a place, a person, an event or a process. Words are used to describe exactly what things look like: their shape, colour, smell, texture, etc. The main purpose is to allow the reader to recognise or identify what has been described. In other words, the reader has a clear mental picture of what is described.

To write a good descriptive essay, you may consider the following points:

- ◆ You should have a very high sense of graphic description. That is, you should be able to describe very clearly.

- ◆ You should understand very well what you want to describe. The thing or the person should be well known to you.
- ◆ In describing effectively, you make use of the simple present tense form of the verb. We do not use the past tense in describing a place, person or an event.
- ◆ There should be appropriate descriptive words at your disposal in order to convey your feelings and ideas effectively. For instance, if you are asked to describe an animal, you may need the following descriptive words:

Animal	Descriptive Words
Natural habitat	bush, river, sea, forest, home
Its kind	reptile, warm blooded, cold blooded, wild
Heights	tall, short, average
Face	long, wrinkled, broad, tough, wild
Tail	short, long, thick, thin
Mouth	wide, small, narrow, broad
Skin	thick, thin, wrinkled, smooth
Eyes	big, small, dark, grey