Unit 1 An electronic world

Unit overview

Part	This part will help you to …	By improving your ability to …
A	**Listen more effectively in lectures**	• identify features of fluent speech • understand how pauses, intonation and stress influence listeners.
B	**Become familiar with different types of written text**	• identify appropriate academic style • refer to different authors' ideas • identify persuasive language.
C	**Develop critical-thinking skills**	• identify the grammatical structure of reporting verbs • identify reporting verb collocations.
D	**Prepare effective oral presentations**	• identify rise and fall tones for checking and adding new information • identify and use tones for authority and finishing a topic.
E	**Develop essay-writing skills**	• identify general–specific structure in introductions • identify linking words used in introductions • write and paraphrase definitions using academic nouns.

CAMBRIDGE

Unit 1
Part A

Understanding spoken information

By the end of Part A you will be able to:
- identify features of fluent speech
- understand how pauses, intonation and stress influence listeners.

1   Identifying features of fluent speech

1a   Work in pairs. What is the difference between academic disciplines which are:

1   so-called 'hard' (paradigmatic) or 'soft' (non-paradigmatic)?

2   pure or applied?

3   life or non-life?

1b   Complete the sentences below with the phrases in the box. Then check your answers with a partner.

> economics or sociology   physics or chemistry

1   If you are listening to a lecture in _____ , you will be expected to think critically about what you hear.

2   If you are listening to a lecture in _____ , you will be expected to know and understand all the basic concepts and agreed facts of the subject before you hear the lecture.

> When listening to a lecture, you need to be aware that fluent speech is characterized by certain key features which can affect the way a word is pronounced in context.
>
> In fluent speech:
>
> **1**   the final consonant of a word which ends with two (or more) consonant sounds (e.g. /s/ and /t/ in *most*) is not pronounced when it comes before a word which begins with a consonant (e.g. ***p****robable*)
>
> **2**   unstressed vowels (/ə/) in words of more than one syllable are often not pronounced, especially when they come before a /r/, /l/ or /n/ sound (e.g. *charact/ə/ristic*)
>
> **3**   an extra consonant sound – /w/, /j/ or /r/ – is pronounced when a word that ends in a vowel sound (e.g. *to*) comes before a word starting with a vowel (***a****n*)
>
> **4**   the final consonant sound at the end of a word (e.g. *loo****k***) links to the following word if it begins with a vowel sound (e.g. ***a****t*). Note that it is the sound at the end of the word that is important, so beware of silent vowels (e.g. *excessive electricity*).

1c   Work in pairs. Read the introduction to a lecture on p.8, looking carefully at the bold words and phrases. Then identify at least one example of each of the four features of fluent speech described above. Some highlighted parts may demonstrate more than one feature.

> Today we're going to **take a look at** the characteristic **differences** between **various academic** disciplines. **The most familiar** distinction, perhaps, **for a lot of** people, is the **division of academic** subjects into so-called 'hard' and 'soft' categories, with the 'hard' subjects being the physical sciences, mainly, and the '**soft' subjects** the humanities and social sciences. But what **does it** really mean when we say **that a subject is** hard or soft? **Does it have any implications** for the ways that students learn? The hard–**soft distinction** comes from research done in the 1970s by the psychologist Anthony Biglan. He **studied a number of different academic disciplines** and proposed that they could be **divided along three axes**: firstly, 'hard' or 'soft'; secondly, 'pure' or 'applied'. There's **also a** third and final distinction into 'life' or 'non-life'.

1d Listen and check your answers.

1.1

1e Work in pairs. Decide how these short phrases would be pronounced in fluent speech.

   1 It's a simple enough distinction …

   2 This is hopefully …

   3 But let's look more closely at …

   4 To an extent, …

   5 … in the course of …

   6 This explains to some extent why …

   7 … on the other hand …

   8 There's a strong consensus about the way …

   9 It's particularly important …

   10 So we can see that there are clear differences between …

1f Listen and check your answers. Then practise saying the phrases, using the features of fluent speech you have identified.

1.2

2 Understanding how pauses, intonation and stress influence listeners

> In lectures, especially in 'soft' (non-paradigmatic) subjects, the speaker is often trying to persuade the audience to accept the argument that they are presenting. The speaker can strengthen their argument through their choice of:
>
> **1** the language used
>
> **2** references to supporting information or material
>
> **3** pauses, intonation and stress used.
>
> In this section, the focus will be on understanding the third feature only.

2a Work in pairs. Read the extract below from a lecture on the 'digital divide' and identify the lecturer's main argument.

Now, several studies, such as work by Chris Kelvin in 2003 and Paul De Soto's 2007 article *The Divided World*, have identified the digital divide as being, basically, a problem of technology. In essence, they claim that the internet digital divide is similar to what was seen with TV and other emergent, or new, technologies. Such technologies are first of all adopted in certain leading-edge centres and then, slowly, they spread themselves over time until they become nearly universal.

I take an opposite view to Kelvin and De Soto. I would claim that there is a more fundamental problem with the digital divide. That the digital divide is a deeper social and economic issue, which means that some societies – such as those in the developing world – or communities within a society – such as poorer and more marginal groups in industrialized nations – are incapable of getting access to the Internet. And that this lack of internet access exacerbates existing economic and educational problems.

2b Think about how a lecturer can use pauses, intonation and stress to help persuade a listener to accept the argument. First, make notes on how each feature might be used to persuade. Then compare your ideas with a partner.

Notes		
Feature	**How each feature might be used to support an argument**	**How the features are used by this lecturer**
Pauses		
Intonation		
Stress		

2c Now read and listen to the first paragraph of the lecture extract in 2a. While you listen, mark:

- pauses with a slash (/) between words

- intonation with a rise (↗) or fall (↘) arrow above phrases

- words with very prominent stress with a circle (○) over the word.

2d Use your annotated script in 2a to make notes in the right-hand column of the table in 2b.

2e Work in pairs. Use your notes to say how the choice of pauses, intonation and stress can influence a listener. Then discuss where you think the speaker might use pauses and stress in the second paragraph in 2a, and where you might expect the intonation to rise and fall. Remember, there is no 'correct' answer to this question.

2f Listen to the second part of the lecture extract. Then discuss whether or not the lecturer used the pauses, intonation and stress in the way you expected.

1.4

> Intonation is also important because it tells us what kind of message we are receiving. Intonation can be used by a speaker to show that they are:
> - giving new information
> - asking a question
> - checking
> - expressing authority
> - signalling the end of an idea.

2g Look at these sentences and identify which of the functions in the box above match each one.
1 'There are two very important factors: technology and cost.'
2 'Finally, we can conclude that the divide is permanent.'
3 'Sorry, professor. Did you say "technology" and "cost"?'
4 'However, the Internet is clearly very useful.'
5 'Could you explain the difference again, please?'

> Short sentences may rise or fall, but longer sentences are very likely to have several changes in intonation. This, combined with stress, gives spoken English its characteristic sound.

2h Listen to a sentence from the first paragraph of the extract in 2a, which has been divided into small sections. In each section, decide whether the word in bold has a rise (↗) or fall (↘) tone.

1.5

1 _____ In **essence**,
2 _____ they **claim** that
3 _____ the internet **digital** divide
4 _____ is **similar** to what was seen
5 _____ with **TV**
6 _____ and **other** emergent,
7 _____ or **new**,
8 _____ **technologies**.

> **LESSON TASK**   **3   Preparing and presenting a short, persuasive talk**

3a You are going to listen to an extract from a lecture about the Internet and the use of energy. Before you listen, discuss whether you think these statements are true (T) or false (F). Give reasons for your answers.

	True (T)	False (F)
1 Increasing numbers of people watch TV or listen to the radio online.		
2 It is more energy efficient to watch TV on the Internet than on a normal, dedicated TV set.		
3 It is more energy efficient to listen to radio on the Internet than on a normal, dedicated radio.		
4 Internet-associated energy use has decreased over the past few years.		

3b Listen and check your ideas against the speaker's position.

1.6

3c Read the lecture extract below and identify:

    1   the speaker's main argument

    2   any words and phrases used to persuade the listener

    3   references to supporting information or material to support the argument.

> Now some of these things, like TV and radio, were previously delivered to the home using other devices, but since 2007 there has been an enormous rise in the number of people using the Internet to watch TV shows that they could have watched on their home TV set, or likewise listening to radio shows online rather than switching on a dedicated home radio. The evidence is clear that using the Internet for this kind of content actually requires more power consumption than if the user were to use a regular TV or radio. Looking at the figures for TV, we see here that average power consumption for a desktop computer is between 100 and 150 watts, with a laptop being rather less than half of that. By contrast, TVs stand at 74 watts.

3d Imagine you are preparing to give this lecture. Think about where you could use pauses, which words you might stress and how you could use intonation to influence the listeners. Read the extract again and mark:

- pauses you want to make with a slash (/) between words
- your choice of intonation with a rise (↗) or fall (↘) tone appropriate to the type of message you want to express
- words you want to stress most prominently with a circle (○) over the word.

3e Work in pairs. Take turns to listen to each other reading the text in 3c. When it is your turn to listen, mark the pauses, intonation and prominent stress that your partner uses on the extract in **Appendix 1**.

3f Take turns to compare the annotations you made on the lecture extract in 3d with the notes your partner made in **Appendix 1**. How similar or different are the two sets of notes? Discuss why you think this might be.

3g Choose *one* of the topics below (1–4), then prepare and deliver a one- or two-minute talk. Write out your script first, using words / phrases and references to material which you think will help you to influence your listeners. Then annotate your script, thinking about how you can use pauses, intonation and stress most effectively to persuade your audience to support your position.

    1 Listening to the radio is more interesting than watching television.

    2 Texting is better than phoning.

    3 Mobile phones are bad for your health.

    4 Shopping online is more fun than going to the shops.

3h Work in pairs to practise your presentation. When it is your turn to listen, make notes on your partner's performance using this table. Then use your notes to give feedback.

Was your partner …	Yes	No	Example phrase
speaking too fast?			
speaking too slowly?			
pausing?			
stressing words?			
using rise tones?			
using fall tones?			

3i Work in groups of four or five. Present the talk you prepared in 3g and practised in 3h to the group, thinking about the feedback you received to improve your delivery.

4   Review and extension

4a   Listen to a lecturer trying to persuade his students to use the university Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). What reasons does the lecturer give?

> In this task, the focus is on the speaker's use of language rather than the stress and intonation of their speech. The lecturer is not presenting an argument, but is making a strong recommendation. However, he still uses similar persuasive techniques to the ones that you have studied in *Skills for Study Level 3* and also in Part A of this unit.

4b   Listen again and complete the extract. Each gap contains two or three words only. Then check your answers with a partner.

> You **1)** _____ the VLE, you know. There are lots of activities on it which will
> supplement your time in class. You only **2)** _____ hour's seminar
> a week, and I can't possibly answer all your emails at once. On the VLE, there
> are materials, exercises and so on, and you can chat with your classmates if you have
> any questions. If you **3)** _____ , you'll miss out. It's probably fair
> to say that those students who use it the most do tend to produce better work.
> I **4)** _____ time-consuming, and there are not enough computers, but it's
> **5)** _____ you do have all day at your disposal.

4c   Identify examples of the four features of fluent speech you studied in this unit in each of these sentences.

   1   The past couple of years or so have seen increasing claims that the kind of content that people view on the Internet can cause excessive electricity consumption.

   2   Clearly, with an increase in the number of users, there is also an increase in the energy which they consume while using the Net.

   3   It is, in fact, almost certain that using the Internet to view this kind of content is more energy efficient than using a separate, dedicated machine, and that this efficiency will continue to improve.

4d   Now listen to the sentences and check your ideas.