

## REVIEW

Chaniga Silpa-Anan. *Listening Comprehension & Note-Taking*.  
Chulalongkorn University Press : Bangkok, Thailand, 1982

There has always been great demand for materials suitable for teaching English to Thai students particularly those concerned with the skills of listening comprehension and note-taking. Therefore the Chulalongkorn University Language Institute published the following series of listening comprehension materials.

The series is comprised of 3 books and 3 cassette tapes under the following titles :

1. *Listening Comprehension and Note-Taking : Tapescripts*
2. *Listening Comprehension and Note-Taking : Workbook*
3. *Listening Comprehension and Note-Taking : Key to the Exercises*

The first book is a re-issue from the former CIEL Listening Library, The Experiments, which is still in great demand after so many years. It was edited by Colin Mortimer and Adelbert Smith, CIEL's consultants and it has recently been revised by Ajarn Chaniga Silpa-Anan. This series consists of twenty short talks on 3 cassette tapes, (with the voices of 10 British speakers, 8 Americans, 2 Canadians), in which an experiment, survey or process is described in language that an educated non-specialist should be able to understand. The 'experiments' are drawn from a variety of disciplines—e.g. Physics, Biochemistry, and the Social Sciences. There are 20 topics altogether. The speakers used notes but did not read from a set script. The talks range from 2–12 minutes in length.

The tapescripts are included as a part of the series in order to enable students to compare notes or to seek clarification on certain points or to help solve any problems that may arise.

In her introduction to the workbook, Ajarn Chaniga aims at enabling those non-native English speakers who wish to use English as a medium of communication at higher levels to :

1. listen and understand academic lectures given by native English speakers ;
2. take notes on what has been said ;
3. comprehend and answer questions concerning the lectures.

For the first 20 pages of the workbook, Ajarn Chaniga describes in Thai the important features of the materials; how to use the books and how to take notes. The writer explains in detail step by step how to take notes, showing format, techniques and also giving some samples with completed exercises. She then expands by giving various suggestions on how to tackle note-taking in such disciplines. The writer

quickly points out that note-taking is a complex skill, consisting of 3 important components, namely *decoding, comprehending and writing down what is important*. Note-taking helps improve students' listening skills. In this way Ajarn Chaniga starts the exercise with note-taking and follows it by listening comprehension and interpretation of key vocabulary items.

Realizing the importance and complexity of note-taking skills, Ajarn Chaniga describes how to take notes step by step. This includes note format, note-taking techniques, examples and special exercises on note-taking techniques.

The workbook comprises of 20 units, each one following a talk. Each unit includes 3 sets of exercises and deals with specific logical methods of organization. It starts with an exercise on note-taking followed by a listening comprehension and interpretation of key vocabulary items. When the students work on the note-taking exercises, they are advised to use the format of their own choice. But, since the talks are about experiments the author thinks it would be helpful for the students to use the following headings as a guideline: *introduction, problem or question or hypothesis being studied or tested, method, or equipment being used, findings or results and conclusion*. The students are advised to compare their notes with the 'Model Notes' in the Key to the Exercises. In doing so, the students should pay attention to what they overlook, what mistakes they make and what the differences are. Then they may discuss with their instructor about possible variations.

The author provides 1 to 3 exercises for each of the listening comprehension part. This depends on the talk's contents, nature and details. The exercises are combinations of the following types: *question-answer, multiple-choice, blank-filling, true-false and rearrangement*.

The third part of each unit is exercises on the interpretation of key vocabulary items. These exercises are meant to familiarise students with information-words or key-words in a meaningful context.

The third book in the series is the "*Key to the Exercises*." In her instructions for the use of this *Key*, Ajarn Chaniga recommends that students should not look at the answer key until they have finished each part or each unit. Should they find any deviation in their answers from those in the key, they should consult their instructor or native speakers since there may be more than one possible answer.

This series of *Listening Comprehension and Note-Taking* could be most valuable for advanced level students as well as those who wish to practice their listening comprehension for further studies abroad or for their job.