Using Dictation in ELT - Participants Handout

BEREKET ELT Archive | Revised classroom handout

Key idea

Dictation is not only a traditional writing test. It can be a purposeful listening, noticing, memory, speaking and self-correction activity.

Halis Bereket's 3-listening model

- First listening: 6-10 short sentences are heard at normal speed and without interruption. Listen for general meaning; do not write.
- Second listening: listen again and write. In the original classroom preparation, approximately 12-second writing breaks were inserted between target sentences.
- Third listening: listen again and check/correct. The final pass may also be paused when careful self-correction is needed.

Historical preparation note: an earlier Cool Edit version used about 10 seconds of silence and a brief warning music cue before the writing stage.

Classroom variations

Activity	What learners do
Listening Dictation	Short sentences or a short text are played three times using the listen-write-check model.
Rolling Dictation	Learners hear a gap text twice without stopping and fill the missing words.
False Reading Dictation	The teacher retells a familiar story with deliberate wrong words; learners interrupt and correct.
Fast Flash Pictures	Pictures flash quickly; groups remember, list and discuss what they saw.
Fast Flash Vocabulary	Recently studied words flash quickly; learners recall and organise them.
Fast Flash Stories	Connected pictures are flashed; learners reconstruct and tell/write a narrative.
Fast Flash Text	Short text chunks flash too quickly to copy; learners catch meaning and structure.
Colour Dictation	Learners colour pictures according to spoken instructions.
Shouting Dictation	Pairs have complementary gaps and dictate missing parts to each other across a distance.
Picasso Dictation	Learners draw or place objects according to spoken instructions.
Dictogloss	Learners listen for meaning, take notes, reconstruct and compare with the original.
Mistakes Dictation	Learners identify and correct deliberate grammar or meaning errors.
Bad Cold Dictation	A word is hidden by a cough/sneeze; learners supply a sensible word that fits the context.
Running / Wall Dictation	Runners read a text on the wall, remember it and dictate it to the team writer/secretary.

Design your own dictation activity

Level / age group: _____

Text or topic: _____

Dictation type: _____

How many listenings?: _____

How will students check?: _____

How will this lead to speaking or writing?: _____

Keep in mind

A lively classroom is not a noisy classroom. The activity needs a clear purpose, clear rules and a short time limit.