How We Listen: Listening practices, purposes and strategies

NBE3U, Unit 4: Living Words, Lesson 2. 75 minutes. Teacher lesson plan.

Lesson at a glance

Listening is not one skill. Listening to a podcast, to a friend and to an Elder's teaching ask different things of us. Many First Nations, Métis and Inuit teaching traditions expect listeners to hold questions, to remember rather than record, and to find the lesson for themselves.

What students do: Students compare everyday listening habits with culturally appropriate listening practices named in the curriculum (not interrupting, mental notes, personal connections, no notes or recordings without permission), set listening goals, practise before-during-after strategies on a short teacher-chosen recording, and reflect on their strengths as listeners.

Curriculum expectations

Code	Students will…
B1.4	select and use culturally appropriate listening practices during oral teachings by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit speakers
B2.3	select and use the most appropriate listening comprehension strategies before, during, and after listening to understand oral texts from and/or related to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, including increasingly complex or difficult texts
B4.1	explain which of a variety of strategies they found most helpful before, during, and after listening to and speaking about texts from and/or related to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, then evaluate their areas of greater and lesser strength in oral communication and identify the steps they can take to improve their skills

From The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Studies (2019), English: Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices, Grade 11, University Preparation (NBE3U). A = First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Perspectives and Text Forms in Canada, B = Oral Communication, C = Reading and Literature Studies, D = Writing, E = Media Studies.

Learning goals and success criteria

Learning goals	Success criteria
• We are learning culturally appropriate listening practices for oral teachings. • We are learning listening strategies for before, during and after.	• I can describe and explain listening practices for an oral teaching. • I can set a purpose and a goal before I listen. • I can use a strategy during and after listening. • I can name my strengths and one goal as a listener.

Materials and preparation

- **Slides:** How We Listen deck.

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- **Handouts:** Listening Practices (page 1), Before, During, After (page 2).
- **Media:** A short teacher-chosen recording (5 to 8 minutes) of a First Nations, Métis or Inuit speaker sharing knowledge publicly, from a trusted source. Preview fully.

Lesson sequence

Time (min)	Part	Teacher	Students	Look for
0–10	**Hook**	How do you listen?	Self-check.	
10–25	**Practices**	Oral teachings.	Note.	Practices explained.
25–35	**Goals**	Before.	Set goals.	
35–60	**Practise**	Recording.	Listen.	Strategies used.
60–75	**Reflect**	Strengths and goals.	Write.	

Differentiation

- **Support:** A listening frame with three prompts.
- **ELL:** Captions on; a second listen allowed.
- **Challenge:** Compare the practices with the expectations of a courtroom or a university lecture.

Assessment

Type	Tool	Purpose
Assessment for learning	Before, During, After	Listening practices (B1.4), comprehension strategies (B2.3) and reflection (B4.1)

Listening: key points

- **Hold questions:** Don't interrupt to clarify unless the speaker invites questions.
- **Remember:** Make mental notes of key points; work out the lesson yourself.
- **Connect:** Link the teaching to your own life to build meaning.
- **Ask first:** No notes, recordings or retelling without explicit permission from the knowledge holder or community.
- **Why:** Teachings belong to people and communities; how they are passed on is part of their meaning.
- **Strategies:** Before: purpose and prediction. During: listen for repetition and story turns. After: summarize, connect, question.

Teacher notes

- The listening practices on the slides are the curriculum's own examples for B1.4: refraining from interrupting unless invited, making mental notes, making personal connections, and not taking notes, recording or reproducing a teaching without permission from the knowledge holder or community.

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- Never record, photograph or take notes during a guest's teaching unless the guest has said yes first. The curriculum's own example for B1.4 names this practice.
- Practices differ among Nations and speakers. Present these as common expectations to ask about, not universal rules; a guest will tell you what they prefer.
- Recorded oral texts are teacher-chosen from trusted sources (for example, a Nation's or organization's own channel, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, APTN, the NFB or CBC Unreserved). Preview fully, confirm the speaker made the recording public, and don't reproduce transcripts.
- Do not ask Indigenous students to speak for their communities, to share personal or family histories, or to act as experts. Every student's participation in sharing is optional.
- We strongly recommend reviewing this unit with your board's Indigenous education lead and, where possible, inviting a First Nations, Métis or Inuit Elder, Knowledge Keeper or guest speaker following your board's protocols (including offerings and honoraria). Local Nations' own sources come first.

Coming up

Lesson 3, Belts That Speak.

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