

**Listen to / hear**

by Karen Richardson

**Level:** Any**Target age:** Any**Time needed:** 60–90 minutes**Objective:** Students are often unsure when to use *look at*, *see* or *watch*, and when to use *listen to* or *hear*. These exercises aim to practice this vocabulary in context.**Materials:** One copy of Worksheet 1 and Worksheet 2 per student

Students are often unsure when to use *look at*, *see* or *watch*, and when to use *listen to* or *hear*. These exercises aim to practice this vocabulary in context.

An additional side-effect of some of these exercises is that students are required to slow down and use their senses more consciously to become aware of their surroundings.

If there's no park or garden nearby, there are plenty of things to watch in a more urban or industrial setting.

The final task brings together all that has been practised. Your students will probably be surprised at how creative they can be with the English language.

If the students are pre-intermediate or below you may want to provide help with the last task by offering them sentence beginnings. They could also be allowed to do the first *listen to / hear* tasks in their L1 to encourage spontaneity and an honest use of the senses, and then translate them afterwards.

**Answer key:***Worksheet 2:*

1. a. Suddenly I **saw** a motorbike driving towards me.
- b. I can **see** him; he's over there.
- c. Did you **watch / see** the football match on TV yesterday evening?
- d. **Watch** this very carefully. What can you **see**?
- e. He **looked at / watched** her with tears in his eyes.
- f. **Watch** that man. I want to know what he's doing.
- g. **See** is not deliberate. It may be accidental. We use this when visual impressions just come to our eyes.
- h. **See** is not usually used in the progressive (*-ing*) form.
- i. **Look at** suggests concentration or intention.
- j. **Watch** is like *look at* but suggests something is happening or going to happen. We **watch** things change, move or develop.

*Source: Michael Swan, Practical English Usage, Oxford University Press*

**An example of a Now poem:**

Look at Cindy standing at the window.  
 I wonder what she can see.  
 She's watching the people waiting at the bus stop.  
 She can hear the cars driving past.  
 But, if she listens carefully, she'll be able to hear the wind too.

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**Note:** When we want to say that sounds come to our ears, we use *hear*. *Listen to* suggests that we are concentrating, paying attention, trying to hear as well as possible.

Source: Michael Swan, *Practical English Usage*, Oxford University Press

**listen (to) / hear****1. Close your eyes and listen to the noises around you. What can you hear:**

- a. outside \_\_\_\_\_
- b. in the room \_\_\_\_\_
- c. in the distance \_\_\_\_\_
- d. close by \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Do any of the sounds release any emotions in you? How do the sounds make you feel?**

**Which sound or noise is:**

- a. the most pleasant \_\_\_\_\_
- b. the most annoying \_\_\_\_\_
- c. the loudest \_\_\_\_\_
- d. the quietest \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Compare your answers in class. Are they the same? If not, how do they differ?****4. Discussion: What can you do to:**

- a. block out or cope better with the annoying sounds?
- b. enhance or appreciate the pleasant sounds?

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**look at / watch / see**

1. Fill the gaps with **look at / watch / see**. (You may need to change their form / tense. There may also be more than one possible answer.)

**In context:**

- Suddenly I \_\_\_\_\_ a motorbike driving towards me.
- I can \_\_\_\_\_ him; he's over there.
- Did you \_\_\_\_\_ the football match on TV yesterday evening?
- \_\_\_\_\_ this very carefully. What can you \_\_\_\_\_?
- He \_\_\_\_\_ her with tears in his eyes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ that man. I want to know what he's doing.

**Uses:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ is not deliberate. It may be accidental. We use this when visual impressions just come to our eyes.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ is not usually used in the progressive (-ing) form.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ suggests concentration or intention.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ is like *look at* but suggests something is happening or going to happen. We \_\_\_\_\_ things change, move or develop.
2. Go outside and watch something carefully for at least five minutes. A park or garden is a good place to do this task. Look around for something you don't normally take the time to watch, such as a tree, the clouds or insects, and watch this carefully, giving it your full attention.

Report back to the class.

\_\_\_\_\_

**look at / watch / see / listen to / hear**

Write one sentence for each word. Make them true for you right now, at the moment of writing. Use a variety of structures: statements, questions, imperatives, conditionals ...

The result will be a short poem titled *Now*.