

## Teaching IELTS: Vocabulary for the Listening Module

<http://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/seminars/teaching-ielts-vocabulary-listening-module>



Sam McCarter

1. Collocations, colligations, chunks, word depth and word families
2. Activating students' schemata and navigating listening: Signals and lexical cohesion
3. The vocabulary used in IELTS exams: Noun versus verb frequency
4. The vocabulary used in IELTS exams: Using listening scripts + What is listening and hearing?
5. Teaching exam techniques: Focus on questions in isolation + What would students choose to test?
6. Teaching exam techniques: Making students aware of phrase structure and paraphrasing
7. Teaching exam techniques: Forming nouns from verbs (nominalisation) and summarising
8. Teaching exam techniques: Breaking barriers to learning vocabulary
9. Teaching exam techniques: Brainstorming, word association and functional words

### 1. Introduction

Sam McCarter's seminar looks at ways to effectively learn vocabulary for the listening module in the IELTS examination. The talk will appeal to all English language teachers who teach IELTS preparation courses.

Did you know students are quite good at answering questions on a text they have never seen? That seems impossible, doesn't it? Watch the video to find out how.

### 2. Session summary and objectives

The talk raises your awareness of different aspects of the grammar of vocabulary and the considerations to be borne in mind when teaching lexis, particularly for the IELTS exam. The talk covers themes such as collocations and colligations, chunking, word families, schemata and lexical cohesion, amongst other things.

Watch this seminar for ideas on how to teach your learners to:

- Use 'carrier' nouns to produce better English discourse in speaking and listening.
- Become aware of nouns and noun phrases, to build learners' vocabulary in interesting and meaningful ways.

### 3. Who is this session for?

- All teachers who teach IELTS.

### 4. About the speaker

Sam McCarter is a full time ELT writer and teacher; 11 of his 19 published books are on IELTS. Check out Sam McCarter's other seminars recorded for the British Council Seminar Series.

### 5. Before you watch

How much do you know about teaching vocabulary? Make a list of things you expect Sam McCarter to talk about in this seminar and then check your answers after watching.

## 6. Real life practice

### Task: Questions first

Before giving the students a reading text, give them only the questions. From the questions, ask them to predict and create the text themselves. You may be surprised at how close to the actual text their predicted versions are. The reason for this is that the questions in an exam focus on a chronological summary of the text content. In an examination like IELTS the questions are there in order to help you focus on the main points that are being made in the text.

Try it out. Ask fellow IELTS teachers to try out this exercise as well. Then compare what you found out with what the other teachers found out.

You could even publish your findings into an interesting article or blog and share online!

## 7. Top tips

1. Teach the grammar of vocabulary, not just new words. By this we mean it is helpful for students to learn new vocabulary along with the words that typically go together, e.g. fish and chips, get on with a task, etc.
2. Pay attention to word depth – so, not only learning the meaning of the word, but also the spelling, pronunciation, register, word association, collocations, and examples of the word in use.
3. To practise language, encourage the learners to create stories, through which they will integrate new vocabulary alongside learned vocabulary in interesting, personalised ways.
4. When teaching lexical cohesion, draw students' attention to linking words and expressions that refer backwards as well as forwards when gluing extended text together.
5. Where appropriate, check students can utilise word forms – i.e. turn verbs into their related nouns; adjective and adverbial forms, e.g. photograph (V), photograph (N), photographic (Adj). Ensure pronunciation of words is learned as well.

## 8. Staffroom discussion

What motivational strategies do you use in your IELTS course to keep students enthusiastic, focused and improving? Share your ideas with other teachers. Make a list of new ideas for yourself to try out in your lessons.

## 9. Downloadable resources and further reading

General information about the IELTS exam:

British Council Take IELTS - <http://takeielts.britishcouncil.org/teachielts>