Audio bank: Rants, raves and situations

Rants, raves and situations is an audio bank of short monologues and mini dialogues to use in class with a range of levels. The audios expose students to a variety of different accents and contain up-to-date colloquial language and expressions. Students can listen to:

- **Rants**. Speakers give their opinions on a variety of topics that they feel strongly about, such as queuing, crowed trains, reality TV, and saying 'please' and 'thank you'.
- **Raves**. Brits talk about some of their favourite activities and possessions, for example going to the gym or electronic gadgets.
- **Situations**. These dialogues take place in typical British settings such as at the airport check in desk, at work, and in the pub.

Here are some ideas for using the audio bank in class:

Before you listen

It's important to give students some context before they listen so that they have an idea of what they can expect to hear. This is particularly important with lower levels.

- You could draw a simple picture with stick people on the board, e.g., of people standing in a queue at the bus stop (or whatever is appropriate for your chosen audio). Students describe the situation in pairs and then make a list of where and when they might see this situation. Feed in vocabulary as necessary.
- Play a game of class hangman with some key vocabulary (the main content words) from the audio. At the end of the game tell the students that the words are all from a short listening that they will hear in a moment. Students work in pairs to predict what they are about to hear.
- Draw a mind map on the board with the main theme of the audio (e.g., shopping, airport, work) written in the centre in a circle. Draw lines radiating out from this circle and encourage students to suggest words that are related to the topic. Add the words to the mind map.
- Tell the class a short personal anecdote (real or invented) about an incident related to the audio. Invite questions from the students.

While listening

Students will benefit from listening to the audio several times. Each time they listen they will understand more of its content. We need to provide different tasks to give the students a reason to listen each time.

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- Play a few seconds of the audio. Can students say how the speaker (or speakers) is feeling? Is the speaker happy, angry, impatient, nervous, relaxed? Play a little more for students to confirm or change their answer.
- If students predicted the content of the audio before listening to it (see 'Before you listen' above), they could now say whether their predictions were correct or not.
- Write up 2 or 3 true/false statements based on the audio on the board. For example, *1) The speaker likes reality TV. 2) The speaker never watches TV.* Students listen to the audio once then decide if the statements are true or false. Students can compare answers in pairs before you play the audio again for them to check their answers.
- For higher levels you could ask students to listen for language used for specific functions, such as complaining, showing enthusiasm, or explaining. In small groups they can compare what they have heard and then make a class list of expressions on the board.

After listening

You can use the audio as a springboard for other language work such as speaking practice, writing or pronunciation focus.

- Let students give a personal response to the audio. Have they ever been in a similar situation? Do they agree with the speaker? You could write a question like this on the board, students discuss it in pairs, then ask for opinions from some of the students to round up the activity.
- Student could have a debate in small groups based the main topic of the audio, e.g., reality TV is great versus reality TV is rubbish. Divide each group into halves and give each half a few minutes to prepare what they want to say and make notes if they want to. Set a time limit of two or three minutes for the debate. Ask each group to feedback to the class summarizing their debate. Change the groups around so that they are now with different classmates and repeat the debate. Move around and listen in to the groups, and make notes of common errors for class correction at the end of the debate.
- Ask students to write a dialogue based on the listening. They could write a dialogue similar to the one they heard or a conversation based on one of the monologues. Ask them to try to include vocabulary and expressions that they have just heard. With lower levels you could build up a dialogue on the board as a class, feeding in ideas and vocabulary if necessary. Also for lower levels you could drill the dialogue line by line then let students practise in pairs.
- You could focus on the intonation used in the audios. The monologues in particular provide a good model for the up and down intonation of spoken English. Play short sections for students to listen and repeat.

The rants, raves and situations can be used with students of all levels from elementary to advanced. The tasks we give our students should be appropriate for their level. For lower levels the listening tasks need to be very simple and achievable.

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We also need to make it clear to students that understanding every word isn't necessary. To exploit the audios with higher levels, students should be given more demanding and complex tasks.

Happy listening!

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