

Warm up

Ask students to think about something they listened to recently. For example, it could be a podcast or a conversation they overheard. Ask them what it was about, writing *It was about ...* on the board. They should give you a brief overall description of it, ideally contained in one sentence. (You could give them an example yourself.) Elicit one or two accounts from students and ask them to tell a partner.

Explain that this kind of brief description is often called gist, and that listening for gist, to get the main idea, is important for improving their listening skills.

Using the Factsheet

There are three possible ways to use the Factsheet:

- 1 Give students the Factsheet before the lesson, so they can read it at home and come to the lesson prepared to do the Worksheet. If you use this approach, start the lesson by checking that all students have read and understood the Factsheet, and answer any questions.
- 2 Give students the Factsheet at the beginning of the lesson and start by working through it with the students.
- 3 Focus on the Worksheet in the lesson, then give students the Factsheet at the end of the lesson, so they can take it home and keep it as a reference or revision tool.

Theory to practice

- Make sure students have the correct answers to Exercises 1 and 2 before they write the gist sentence in Exercise 3.
- Answers to Exercise 3 will vary.
- Ask students if they agree with the characteristics mentioned. See if they believe they have them. Ask if they would like to add any other characteristics to the list.

Answers

- 1 b
(Some students might have answered c. Explain that critical thinking is mentioned, but it doesn't represent the gist of the whole transcript.)
- 2 is realistic
takes risks
balances fluency and accuracy
thinks critically about their learning
is independent
- 3 **Suggested answer**
It is about the main characteristics of a good language learner: they take risks, are realistic and independent, balance fluency and accuracy, and think critically about their learning.

Using the Worksheet

Practice

1 Which of the sentences below refers to listening for gist?

- Ask students which option best defines listening for gist.
- Tell them these are all valid listening types and strategies. Ask them in which situations they would do each of these.

Answer

b

2 ▶ 01 Listen to a lecture about urbanization. Order the main ideas (1–4) as the lecturer mentions them.

- Elicit what urbanization is and any ideas on the effects it has on cities and urban areas.
- Play ▶ 01 once. The students order the main ideas. Check they have the right order.

Answers

- 2 Urban benefits
- 1 Urban drawbacks
- 4 Rural benefits
- 3 Rural drawbacks

Transcript**▶ 01**

There are, of course, multiple problems in cities caused by the migration of people from rural areas, perhaps the most obvious being unemployment. Some people are offered manual jobs, for example, in the building trade. However, some people are not given work because they do not have the right skills or are too old.

And then there is the problem of housing the ever-increasing population. About 40% of urban expansion is estimated to be taking place in slums. And the unsanitary conditions in these slums mean that diseases spread easily. All of these issues are especially problematic when the process of urbanization happens quickly. Cities can grow so fast that the infrastructure cannot cope with the increasing population. Therefore, there isn't enough quality housing, and there aren't enough schools or hospitals.

However, cities can really benefit from this influx of people. People bring with them new ideas, and the exchange of ideas in cities helps development. On a practical level, there is more business, and consequently more jobs are created. Studies show that the bigger the city, the higher the average wage of its citizens.

But how are rural areas affected by urbanization? Clearly there are challenges. With so many people leaving the countryside, the workforce can be severely reduced. This is particularly difficult when young men are migrating, because traditionally, in rural areas, the more physical jobs were carried out by these young men. A subsequent problem is that often these jobs will have to be done by the children in the families, who would otherwise be going to school.

However, the benefits that urbanization brings to rural areas should not be ignored. The migrant workers in the cities earn significantly more than they were making at home, and they send a lot of this money back to their families. This money will be spent in the rural communities. Animals are bought and school fees are paid. In addition to helping their families financially, when these workers return to their villages they often bring with them new knowledge and skills that can be used to benefit the local area.

3 Write a sentence in your own words with the gist of the recording.

- Ask students to write down the gist, encouraging them to keep their answers short (preferably one sentence).
- Elicit some examples, pointing out that the gist can be phrased in different ways as long as the main ideas are present (advantages and disadvantages of urbanization).

TIP

Get students to look at the Tip. Elicit some examples from recent class listening activities or their own examples from the Warm up.

Suggested answer

The lecturer talks about urbanization and its positive and negative effects on cities and rural areas.

4 ▶ 02 Now listen to a programme about mindfulness. Write down the gist of the five main points the speaker mentions. The first one has been done for you.

- Ask students if they know what mindfulness is, and elicit definitions.

- Play ▶ 02 up to the part when the origins of mindfulness are mentioned (... *hundreds of years old*). Elicit or explain that this is the first point, which is given as an example. Then start the recording again for students to write down the other points.

Transcript

▶ 02

Recently, some education experts have become concerned by the concentration levels of students. In an effort to confront this problem, several schools and universities have started regular sessions in an exercise called 'mindfulness'.

The idea of mindfulness is nothing new. In fact, it's originally from Buddhist philosophies hundreds of years old. However, it has become popular in Western societies, not with religious connections, but as a way of improving health, both mentally and physically. Today, there are mindfulness sessions in many workplaces, and it's even practised in some schools with children as young as five.

But what does it involve? It can be summarized in three main ideas. Firstly, being mindful means living in the present moment, not regretting the past or worrying about the future. In other words, being aware of now. Secondly, with mindfulness you notice the thoughts going through your mind. You don't judge these thoughts as bad or wrong; you simply notice them. Thirdly, you pay attention to everything you are experiencing. You actually taste the food you eat; you feel how your body moves as you walk, run or swim.

So, what are the benefits of mindfulness? Well, there are many. It improves concentration and it reduces stress and depression. It has even been shown to boost the immune system. In other words, mindfulness can help us fight diseases and infections.

Admittedly, there have been some criticisms of mindfulness. Nothing is perfect. Some people have found that concentrating on their thoughts has not always been positive. After all, not all thoughts are nice, and sometimes they can be painful; they can make people uncomfortable. Then there are the people who find mindfulness too difficult. As with any skill, learning can be frustrating, especially at the beginning of the process.

Suggested answers

- 1 Its origins
- 2 Popularity in the West
- 3 What it is
- 4 Benefits
- 5 Criticism

5 Compare with a partner. Do you have the same points?

- Students compare their answers. Make sure they understand there are many different possible answers. There is no single correct answer here.
- Elicit answers, explaining a few different possibilities as necessary. There are always different possible ways of interpreting what the 'main points' of a text are. For example, students might include the three definitions of mindfulness in their answers. In the suggested answers, these are contained within the third point (*What it is*).


6 Use the information to write a sentence with the gist of the programme.

- Elicit possible answers, and write the below suggested answer on the board.
- You can explain how using a colon can also keep the gist sentence short and simple.

Suggested answer

The programme is about mindfulness: where it came from, its increasing popularity, what it is, its benefits and the criticism it has received.

Reflect

7  **Think about why listening for gist is important and how you can use it in your studies. Compare your ideas with a partner.**

- Ask students to make some notes on how listening for gist can be helpful in their studies and share them with their partner.
- Elicit answers, emphasizing the idea of seeing the bigger picture, which helps them to see the relevance of the details.