Listening and Speaking:  
**Tips on Studying & Test-Taking**

**Practice listening and speaking** outside the classroom as much as possible.
- **Listen** to the **radio**, especially the news as they often repeat stories. This review can improve your comprehension and increase your vocabulary.
- **Watch TV** or a **DVD** with friends, family & classmates and talk about it.
- **Speak** with your classmates in **English only**, both in and out of class. Find a conversation partner from your class with a different first language and practice. It’s important to be able to understand foreign accents, especially in Canada – not just the “perfect” English of your instructors.
- **Go to the Learning Centres** and use listening materials to improve & test your understanding.
- **Sign up** at the Learning Centre tutor’s desk and practice your speaking. Bring a topic or picture to discuss.
- **Join a class, group or club** to meet new people and practise your speaking.

**Practice pronunciation:**
Pronunciation is important. English is a **stress-based language**. Important information is stressed by the speaker. Practice **stress** and **linking** to help you with your speaking and listening skills.
- Go to the Learning Centre and use listening kits on pronunciation.
- Listen to books on tape or CD as models for pronunciation.
- Sign up at the Learning Centre tutor’s desk for pronunciation practice.
- Ask the tutor about computer programs on pronunciation for self-study.
- Learn songs in English.

**Before the test:**
- Find out about the test format (length, kind of questions, passing mark) from your instructor **before** the final exam.
- Practice listening and speaking **under test conditions**. For example, if you have 15 seconds to answer a listening question, practice this. If you need to talk about a picture, practice that. If you need to have a conversation, practice with a classmate or a tutor.
During the test:

- Take a deep breath. **Calm yourself** before the test begins.
- **Don’t try to understand every word.** You need to listen for **key words.**
  For example nouns, main verbs & adjectives usually give more important information than articles & prepositions.
- **Focus** on the **words** you **do understand** and **guess** at the **other words.**
  For example, easier words like “have eye problems” and “visit the doctor” can help you understand more difficult words like “see the ophthalmologist” (see the eye doctor).
- Understand the **context** (situation) and **make good guesses.** Use the location, people, and topic to help you guess the correct answers.
  For example, a conversation in a doctor’s office between a doctor and a patient will likely be about a health problem.
- **Anticipate** the information. What kind of topic will you hear? Your ideas will help you understand the information.
  For example, if two friends are shopping in a clothing store, what could they be talking about?
- **Keep track** of the listening items.
  For example, if (a) is a possible answer, make a light pencil mark beside it. If (b) is definitely wrong, make a different mark beside it. If you get to (d) and you have forgotten (a), look at your marks to help you choose the right answer.
- **Wait** until you have heard all the items before you answer the question.
- **On a listening test,** **take a guess** if you don’t know the answer and get ready for the next item. Don’t get stuck on one question or you will fall behind.

**After the test:**

Remember, you don’t have to get 100% on the test. Most tests require about **60%** to pass.