

Good News, Bad News

News Stories for Listening and Discussion

Roger Barnard



Oxford University Press

Good News Bad News is a listening and discussion text designed around an entertaining collection of true stories about interesting characters and events. Based on actual news reports, the course is intended for adults and young adults at the pre-intermediate and intermediate levels. Each three-page unit focuses on a story presented in radio news format. All units feature a series of task-based activities designed to guide students from general to detailed understanding of the news report and to provide meaningful fluency practice related to the story's theme.

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Good News, Bad News

features:

- ◆ **Short, focused units** that can be completed in one class period
- ◆ **Interesting, light-hearted listening passages** based on actual stories from the news
- ◆ **Vocabulary building exercises** that introduce and practice new language
- ◆ A variety of **communicative, task-based listening and speaking activities**
- ◆ An **optional "Extra Practice" section** to consolidate new vocabulary

Good News, Bad News is accompanied by a Teacher's Book and an audio program featuring a variety of international accents.

Good News, Bad News Student Book
Good News, Bad News Teacher's Book
Good News, Bad News Cassette
Good News, Bad News Compact Disc

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INTRODUCTION

Good News, Bad News was written out of a desire to help students take advantage of the proliferation of English-language international news broadcasts in recent years. While radio and satellite television broadcasts are available worldwide, the difficulty of understanding the language used by the media makes them inaccessible to many learners.

Good News, Bad News is a course designed to help pre-intermediate and intermediate students improve their general listening and speaking abilities while focusing on the skills needed to understand broadcast news. It features a collection of entertaining stories based on news taken from actual wire service reports. Each three-page unit focuses on a story presented in radio news format. By teaching students to recognize and exploit the organization of typical news stories, *Good News, Bad News* prepares them to understand real news broadcasts.

Each unit features a sequence of task-based activities that lead students from general to detailed understanding of the story. First, students are given a structured task that requires them to listen for the main point, or gist, of the news report. In the next two listening activities, they "zoom in" on the important or interesting details. Afterwards, they discuss the content or theme of the news story in a structured speaking activity. An optional **Extra Practice** section in the back of the book provides students an opportunity to complete a modified cloze activity by filling in missing words in the tapescript.

The listening activities in *Good News, Bad News* are primarily receptive tasks. This means students engage in activities such as matching items in columns, answering multiple choice or true/false questions, or ordering pictures in a sequence to show they have understood what they heard. A minimal amount of language production is necessary. The rationale behind this is the following: When students listen to something, they must use another skill, such as speaking or writing, to express what they have understood. If a student cannot say or write the correct answer, this does not necessarily mean the student did not understand the information. It may only mean the

student does not have strong speaking or writing skills.

Although the emphasis of *Good News, Bad News* is on developing listening skills, there are ample opportunities for speaking practice in each unit. Once students complete the structured listening tasks, they are encouraged to engage in a variety of expansion activities that promote speaking and provide opportunities to improve their conversational competency.

Course Components

A **Student Book**, comprised of 18 Units and an Extra Practice section at the back of the book.

An **Audio Program** of the news stories available on **cassette** and **compact disc**, featuring American, British, Australian, and Asian newsreaders.

A **Teacher's Book**, that contains:

- step-by-step instructions for each unit
- optional speaking activities
- photocopiable resource pages
- cultural and language notes
- photocopiable tapescripts with content notes
- answer keys

Student Book Organization

The stories in *Good News, Bad News* have been sequenced to balance serious and less serious topics. Each unit is self-contained, and the level of difficulty in terms of vocabulary and structures remains relatively constant throughout the course; this means the stories can be taught in any order.

Each unit contains the following sections:

► Tuning In

Exercise 1 is primarily a schema-building activity. In other words, students are asked to make observations about the illustration that introduces the story and predict what happens in the story. They discuss general questions that stimulate interest in the topic, as well as activate their vocabulary and background knowledge.

Exercise 2 is a vocabulary-building activity that identifies and teaches new language contained in the news story. Fill-in-the blank, matching, and sentence completion exercises are used. Students are encouraged to work together to share what they already know.

► Good News, Bad News

Exercise 1 asks students to listen for the main idea of the story. They identify the best headline, a one-line summary, or the best question or answer in a conversational exchange. The primary goal at this stage is general understanding.

Exercise 2 gives students the opportunity to listen to the story again and asks them to identify the important points of the story. This exercise may be in the form of a true/false activity, ordering pictures, or ordering sentences based on the story. Again, listening for every word is discouraged.

Exercise 3 focuses on additional factual details of the story. Exercise types include multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blanks, and in later units, supplying short answers in an interview. Some of the items include sound discriminations, particularly with numbers.

► Signing Off

This is a communicative speaking activity that builds on the theme of the story and provides opportunities for student personalization. Students work in pairs or small groups to exchange ideas and information through a variety of tasks, such as surveys, discussions, and role plays.

► Extra Practice

This is a modified cloze activity that presents the tapescript of each story with 12 words or phrases missing. The deletions include the six items in the **Tuning In 2** section, plus six items selected to promote vocabulary development. This is an optional consolidation activity, and can be used before or after **Signing Off**. Students will benefit most by turning to the **Extra Practice** section only after completing the other listening activities in the unit.

Flexibility

The complete unit is designed to take 60–90 minutes of class time. The amount of time devoted to a particular section will depend on the main

purpose for choosing the book: listening or speaking. For a listening course, you may decide to skip the **Signing Off** activities. However, for a conversation class, less time may be spent on the listening activities, and the news story may be used as the foundation for a variety of speaking tasks. The **Teacher's Book** provides expansion activities for each unit. These activities can be adapted to multi-level classes.

Photocopiable Teacher Resource Pages

The **Teacher's Book** includes photocopiable activity and assessment pages, along with photocopiable tapescripts. The activity sheets, particularly suitable for use with expansion activities outside of class, include a weekly listening log, a vocabulary record, and a note-taking summary sheet.

It is important that students be exposed to as many examples from the broadcast media as possible. Students should be encouraged to listen to both radio and television news outside of class and use the photocopiable activity sheets to guide their listening.

Assessment

Assessing student performance and progress is an integral part of teaching. Tips on evaluating students during classroom activities are provided in the **Teacher's Book**.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I dedicate this book to my parents.

I would like to thank everyone at Oxford University Press, particularly Chris Foley, Paul Riley, Ellen Kisslinger, Steve Maginn, Eleanor Barnes, Karen Brock, Bev Curran, and Anita Raducanu for their encouragement, patience, skill, wisdom, and hard work. I would also like to thank the management, teaching staff, and students of Athénée Française, Tokyo, for their help in developing and piloting the material in this book. In addition, thanks to the reviewers for their valuable comments on early versions of the manuscript.

Roger Barnard

TO THE STUDENT

This course is designed to help you take advantage of the news reports available to you in the broadcast media. It focuses on the skills you need to understand English language broadcasts and then talk about what you hear.

SUGGESTIONS

Here are some ways you can make the most of the course:

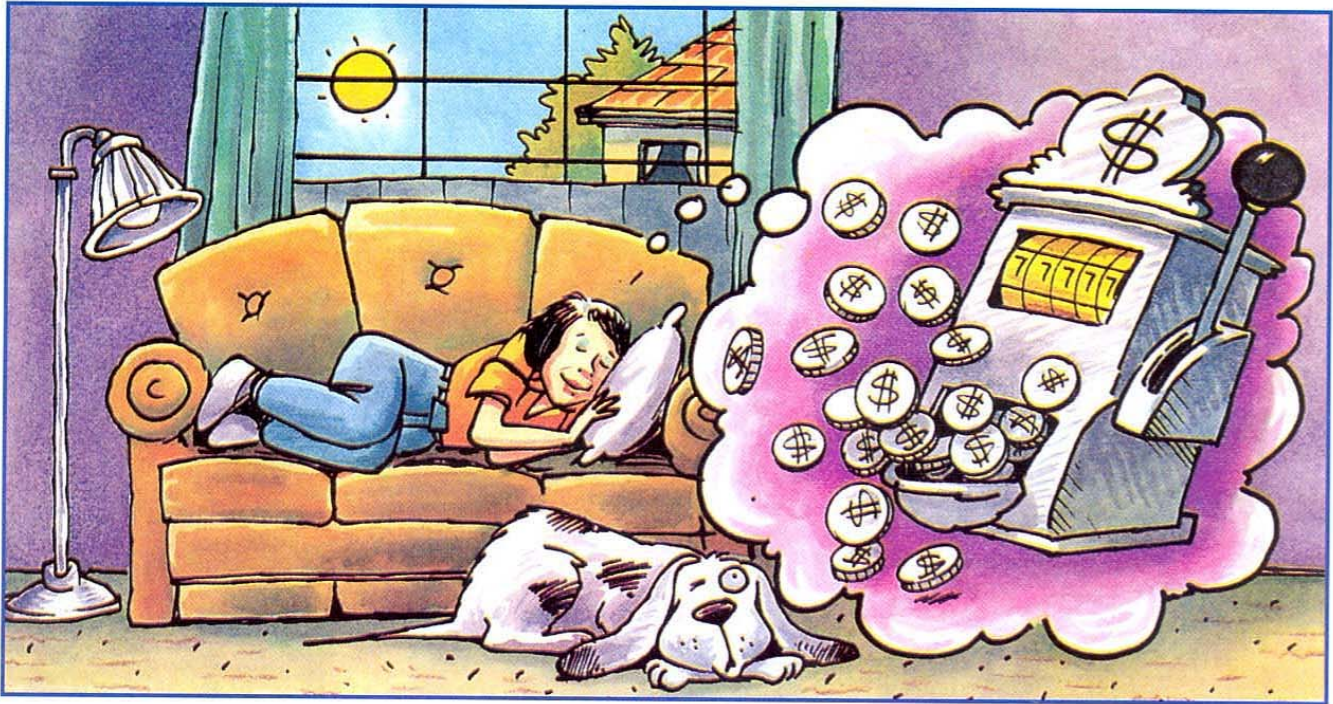
- Try to relax when you listen.
- When you are listening for the main points of a story, try to listen for the gist, not every word.
- Don't focus on a word you don't know. You may understand it later in the story if you keep on listening.
- Don't be afraid to guess if you are unsure of something; we often have to guess when listening in everyday situations.
- Don't expect to understand everything after one or two listenings. Each time you hear the story you will understand a little bit more.
- Don't confuse "listening ability" with "remembering." We often understand something in our own language that we can't remember after a short time.
- Don't look at the **Extra Practice** section before doing the listening exercises. Your listening skills will improve faster, and the lessons will be more interesting if you wait.
- After listening to the stories, talk about them and share your reactions.
- Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Participate in discussions and listen to your classmates' ideas.
- Listen to the news outside of class. Try to use the skills you learn in class.

STORY 1

Dream Jackpot

Tuning In

- 1 You are going to hear a story about a dream. Look at the picture. What do you think happened?



- 2 Use the words in the box to complete the sentences. The first one has been done for you.

1. Hit the jackpot means win a big prize.
2. If you _____ a place, you go toward it.
3. A _____ is a person who has a million dollars or more.
4. If you have _____, you have a lot of it.
5. When you _____, you sleep for a short time.
6. If something _____, a lot of it comes out quickly.

pours out
take a nap
buckets of money
millionaire
hit the jackpot
head for

► Good News, Bad News



- 1 Two people are talking about the story. Listen to the story. Then check (✓) the best question.

Did you hear about the woman who dreamed of

- ☐ finding a lot of money?
- ☐ winning a lot of money?
- ☐ losing a lot of money?



Yes, and it came true, right?

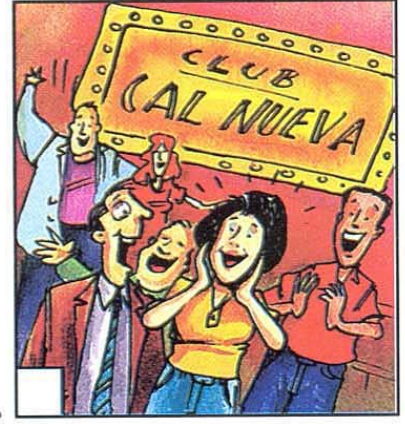
- 2 Before you listen again, try to number the pictures in the order the events happened. Then listen and check your work. The first one has been done for you.



A. ☐



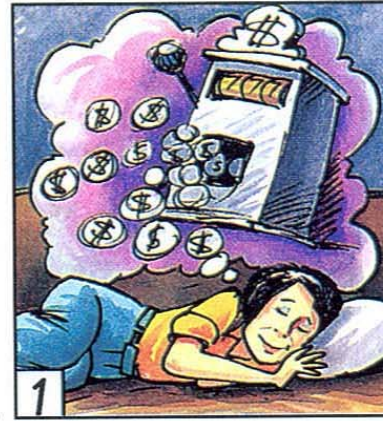
B. ☐



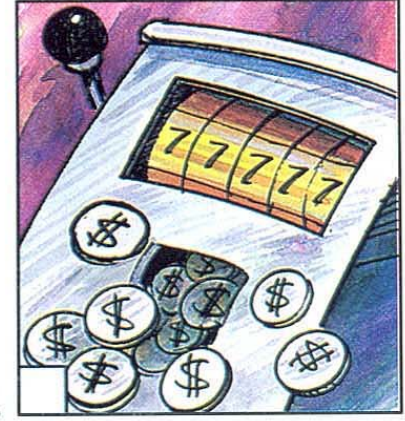
C. ☐



D. ☐



E. 1



F. ☐

3 Listen to the story again. Then circle the correct information.
The first one has been done for you.

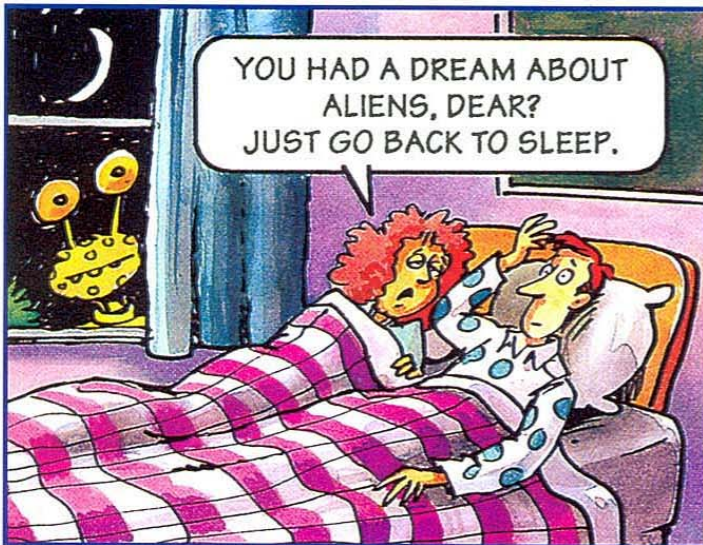
1. Mrs. Anderson lives in (Oakland) / Reno.
2. She's 44 / 54 years old.
3. She has 5 / 6 children.
4. She has 18 / 19 grandchildren.
5. She's a nurse / a nurse's assistant in a hospital.
6. She arrived in Reno at 2 A.M. / 2 P.M.
7. She paid \$5 / \$3 for each try on the slot machine.
8. She won the second / third time she played.

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► Signing Off

A Look at these types of dreams and write down some true information about yourself.



Have you ever had a dream about...?

- the future, and it came true
- flying
- a famous person
- falling
- someone chasing you
- a strange house
- being worried
- finding money
- the sea

B Now work with a partner. Take turns talking about your dreams.

A: Have you ever had a dream about...?

B: No, I haven't. How about you?

Yes, I have.	Last week/month/year,	I had a dream about...
	About a year ago,	
	When I was a child,	

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STORY 2

False Alarm

► Tuning In

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- 1 You are going to hear a story about something that happened on a plane. Look at the picture. What do you think happened?



- 2 Use the words in the box to complete the questions.

1. What's a(n) _____ ?
It's when a plane lands in a dangerous way.
2. What does _____ mean?
It's another way of saying hurry.
3. What's a(n) _____ ?
That's someone who looks after passengers on a plane.
4. What does a(n) _____ mean?
Twelve.
5. What's a(n) _____ ?
One meaning is a long narrow passage between rows of seats.
6. What does _____ mean?
It's a warning that something dangerous is going to happen, but it doesn't.

false alarm
dozen
aisle
flight attendant
crash landing
rush

Good News, Bad News



1 Listen to the story. Then check (✓) the best headline.

☐

Wrong Message
Played on Plane

☐

PASSENGERS JUMP OUT OF PLANE

☐

TAPED MESSAGE SAVES PASSENGERS

2 Before you listen again, read the sentences below. Then listen and number them in the order the events happened. The first one has been done for you.


☐

a. The message told the passengers they were going to land on water.

☐

b. The passengers heard a taped message.

☒

c. A plane took off in Portugal.

☐

d. A flight attendant then explained that it was a false alarm.

☐

e. The cabin crew rushed into the aisles.

☐

f. It told them to get their lifejackets.

☐

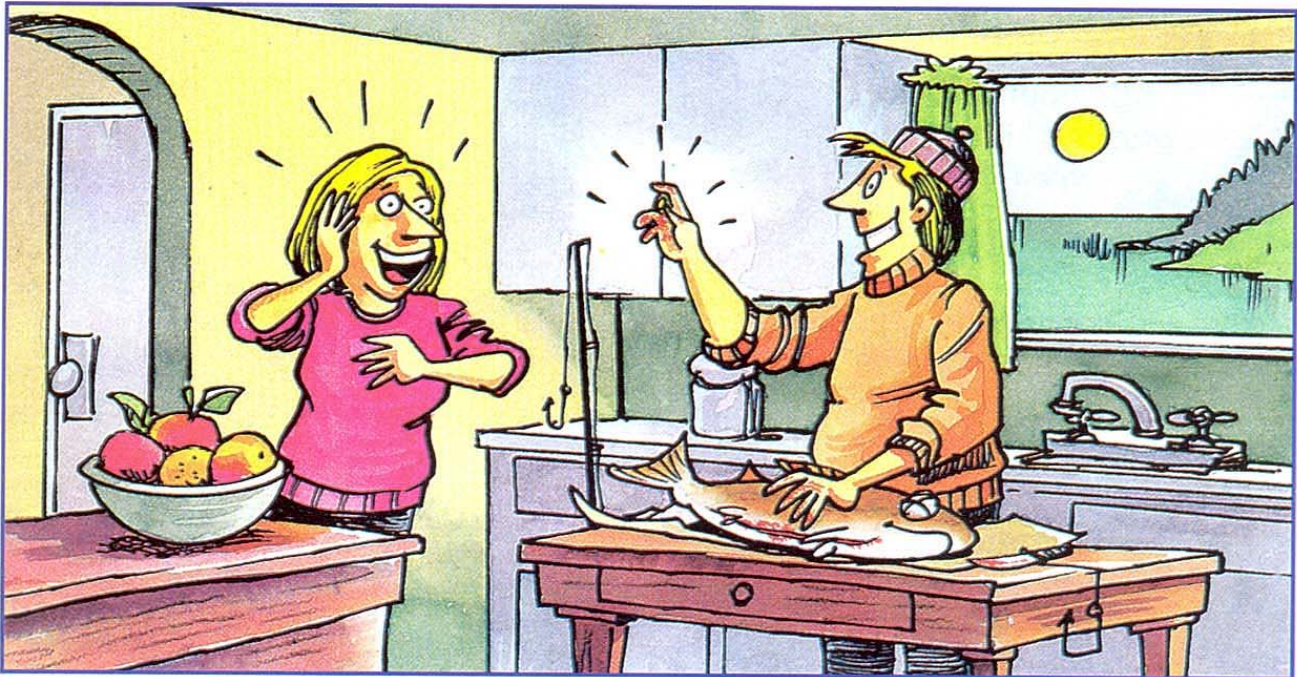
g. The plane started to cross the English Channel.

STORY 3

A Fishy Story

Tuning In

- 1 You are going to hear a story about fishing. Look at the picture. What do you think happened?



- 2 Match the beginning of each sentence with its ending. The first one has been done for you.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <u>e</u> 1. Discover means the same as | a. it goes from your mouth to your stomach. |
| ___ 2. If you swallow something, | b. difficult to believe. |
| ___ 3. One meaning of incredible is | c. sometimes made of gold or precious stones. |
| ___ 4. If you bite something, | d. a place. |
| ___ 5. One meaning of a spot is | e. find. |
| ___ 6. Jewelry is | f. you take hold of it with your teeth. |