



Military English

Lesson: Military Drones - Listening

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Overview:

This lesson practises listening in the context of military drones in the Australian Army and introduces vocabulary related to military drones.

In this lesson, you will:

- ✓ listen for specific information
- ✓ learn the meaning of new words
- ✓ use new words in context

Prepare for Listening

- 1) Work in small groups. What do you see in each picture?

This activity may show what students know about the topic. Elicit, then check understanding of 'drone' (remote control aircraft). E.g. Does a drone have a pilot inside the plane? (No) Does it have an 'operator' ('pilot') on the ground? (Yes)



Listening

- 2) Listen to the interview. Which job does the soldier (Alice – a female) have?

Tank Driver // Education Officer // Medic // **Drone Operator**

Check understanding of these job titles **before** starting the listening. To help them hear the answer, use a strategy such as asking students to think of words associated with each job title **BEFORE** the audio starts. E.g. 'What does a tank driver do? (...) Yes, he/she drives tanks. Can you think of any words in English (in L1) that are connected to 'tanks'? (elicit answers from students) etc.

3) Listen to the interview again. Circle the correct answers.

a. Which branch does Alice serve in?

Army // Navy // Air Force

b. How many people need to control the drone and camera?

1 // 2 // 3

c. How many hours can the drone fly for?

2 hours // 6 hours // 8 hours

d. Australian Army Shadows have weapons.

True // False



The Shadow 200 is a medium size military drone. Many countries use it in their defence forces, including Australia, Italy, Sweden, and the United States.

Learning military vocabulary

4) The words in **bold** in the text are important military vocabulary that you should learn to use. Match the military words on the left to their definitions on the right. Look at the example.

I'm a drone operator (n)	f	a. a tool that can take pictures or video of things very far away	
including a radar (n)	c	b. to watch something very carefully and for a long time	
including a communication device (n)	h	c. a machine that can show planes flying in the sky	
patrolling soldiers (adj) / to go on patrol	i	d. a place where soldiers, tanks, and planes are fighting	
a view of the battlespace (n)	d	e. a tool that can find warm things, like soldiers hiding in the snow	
used for surveillance (n)	b	f. someone who flies a small plane with no pilot in it	
used for reconnaissance (n)	m	g. machines that fly = airplanes, helicopters, etc.	
they carry high-resolution cameras (n)	a	h. a tool that makes it easy to communicate, for example, radio, telephone, and television	
they carry cameras above ground troops (n)	j	i. to move around an area to protect it	
they carry night vision cameras (n)	l	j. soldiers that move on the ground	
they carry thermal imaging sensors (n)	e	k. a machine with a video screen and controls to fly a drone	
they can loiter (v) for hours	n	l. a tool that can take pictures or videos when it is very dark	
using a ground terminal (n)	k	m. to move quietly, and find the enemy	
anyone with an interest in aircraft (n) the plural is aircraft (not aircrafts)	g	n. to stay around a place for a long time	

Note: students may ask about the difference between “reconnaissance” /rɪˈkɒnzɪns/ “reconnoitre” /ˌre.kəˈnɔɪtə(r)/ and “surveillance” /sɜːˈveɪləns/.

Explain to students that “reconnaissance” is a noun. The verb form of this word is: “reconnoitre”. Other valid word forms include: “reconnoitrer” (noun) - a person who conducts “reconnaissance”. The slang/informal version of this word for the ADF is “recce” /ˈreki/ – used as both a verb or a noun. For example:

- The soldiers conducted a recce (n) of the area.
- We will recce (v) the area before we set up observation points.

Students may have also heard the slang word ‘recon’ /ˈri:kɒn/, which is more common for US forces.

In simple terms, “reconnaissance” relates to making observations by entering an area of operations. Conversely, “surveillance” relates to making observations from remote or distant locations like observation points, or through technologies like satellites, drones, cameras, aircraft, and interception of communications systems.

5) Now let’s practise saying the words from exercise 4. Listen and repeat.

Play each word once or twice. Get all students to repeat, then select individual students. Correct inaccurate pronunciation. The main stressed syllable is underlined in the words on the vocabulary chart for pronunciation. Ensure that this syllable is pronounced a little more loudly than other syllables in the word. You can help students with their pronunciation by clapping your hands for the main stressed syllable.

6) Circle the correct answer to complete sentences. During feedback, you could use the concept checking questions below to help you check that all students have chosen answers with the correct meaning.

- I can see enemy planes on my radar // communication device. (They use radars a lot at airports – why? to see the airplanes in the sky; Is a communication device usually used for talking or looking at something? - talking)
- The loitering // patrolling soldiers found the enemy hiding in the forest. (If soldiers are loitering, are they looking for something? – not usually. If soldiers are patrolling, are they active? - yes)
- The aircraft // ground terminal can fly very high and take clear photos using its high-resolution camera // ground troops. (If a camera is ‘high-resolution’ can it take clear or very clear pictures? – very clear)
- In the early morning, before the sun came up, I could see the tanks moving with my night vision camera // reconnaissance. (Can you see easily when it is dark? – no. If you have a night-vision camera, can you see easily in the dark? - yes)

Extension activity: If there is enough time, you can ask students to form sentences using the words that were the incorrect option in Exercise 6 (for example, “Can you make a sentence with the word *communication device*?” --- “There was a lot of noise from the battle, so we needed a *communication device* to talk to our commander”).

Practice

7) In the pictures, you see two drones. Using some of the words from Exercise 4, and the information in the boxes, can you make some sentences? Discuss with your partner.



Black Hornet

Flying time: 25 minutes

Range: 2 km

Missions: Reconnaissance

Camera: Low-resolution and night vision

- Used by Australian Army



Triton /'traɪtən/

Flying time: 24 hours

Range: 3,700 km

Missions: Reconnaissance, Surveillance

Camera: high-resolution, thermal imaging, and night vision

- Used by Royal Australian Air Force

Look at the information in the boxes again. Which drone is better for soldiers on patrol? Which drone can loiter for a very long time? Discuss with a partner.

(example sentences) **The Black Hornet is easy to carry, so it is better for soldiers on patrol.**

The Triton can fly for 24 hours, so it can loiter for a very long time. Encourage students to use the language taught in the lesson.

- This lesson links with → Vocabulary Builder – Parts of an Aircraft; Lesson – On Patrol
- Watch this video about being a drone operator in the Australian Defence Force.
Type on YouTube [Army: Women and Girls in Science](#) or scan the QR code.



Exercises 2, 3 Transcript:

John: Hi, my name is John and I'm a reporter for an Army magazine, and I would like to ask you a few questions. Is that alright?

Alice: Yes, what would you like to know?

John: Can you tell me who you are and what you do?

Alice: Yes, I'm Lieutenant Alice Smith and I'm a **drone operator** in the Australian Army.

John: Do you need to have a lot of training to be a drone operator?

Alice: Well, you need to learn about drones and their equipment, which include **radars** and **communication devices**. When we fly, we have someone controlling the drone and we have someone use/operate the camera. And the drone sends video to our **patrolling** soldiers to get a better view of the **battlespace**. If our soldiers can get information that they don't know, we've done our job.

John: Can you tell us a little more about the drones you use/operate?

Alice: The drones are called the Shadow 200. They are used for **surveillance** and **reconnaissance**. They carry **high-resolution cameras** above **ground troops** to give information about what is happening on the ground. They also carry **night vision cameras** and **thermal imaging sensors**. The Shadow 200 can **loiter** for about 8 hours, and our troops are able to see video from the drone using **ground terminals**. Our Shadows don't carry weapons.

John: Do you think it's an interesting job?

Alice: Being a drone operator is great for anyone who has an interest in **aircraft** or who just wants a special job in the army.

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