Some ways to help your language comprehension (listening and reading)

Firstly, you need to decide whether you want to work on oral comprehension (understanding the spoken language) or written comprehension (understanding the language through reading).

Suitable activities should use authentic (real life) documents or situations made to communicate something in natural language, i.e. not especially made for teaching or learning, but which are used in situations you will come across in everyday life, for example:

Written: newspaper articles, school notices, driving licence material, instruction booklets, information leaflets, advertisements, etc.

Evening watching television by flash.pro  www.flickr.com/photos/flashpro/4156535452

Reading.  www.flickr.com/photos/aigle_dore/705273377

Spoken: TV and radio programmes, movies, functional and social conversation, presentations, meetings, i.e. anywhere you are listening to (receiving) information

- Decide on the main points you want to work on and leave the rest. You can’t learn everything at once. Sometimes there are other ways to check your comprehension, e.g. CD recordings may have transcripts, or movies may have subtitles.

- You need to choose an exercise which will require you to understand something. You will have an aim to guide your comprehension, e.g. you want to find a good film to go to, you want to find out more information about something, you want to be able to understand people on the phone, etc.

- A task will be easier for you if it contains points you want to work on, or choose because you are interested in the topic. This will also help you to clarify your objectives and make progress.

- You need to decide if you want to use the task to test your current knowledge or to learn something you don’t know.

- If you are using the activity to learn something rather than to do it as a test, you can choose to:
  - look at the answers before reading or listening to help you focus your study
  - decide how many times you will read it or listen to it
  - choose to do the exercise again later to test your understanding and knowledge
  - decide in which order you will work through the material, e.g.

- Will you read the introduction first or last? Will you read the first sentences of several paragraphs before going back and re-reading in more detail?
- Will you listen little-by-little and stop often, or read straight through the text? Will you pause or replay the CD at all?

Now you can start working. As you prepare for the task, remember to keep your aims in mind. Try to predict the overall content of the material or even some parts of it and try to guess some of the words that might be used. Now you can use the task material directly with a dictionary or text to help you.