Background knowledge has been widely discussed in the literature particularly in the field of listening. This study focuses on which background activation strategies PBI UKSW students used and how they activated it. An open-ended questionnaire was distributed for 22 participants. The study discovered that Mobilisation and Perspective Taking strategy seemed to be used in Academic Listening despite the three variables used in this study, gender, preference towards listening and grades. In order to obtain further data for this study, a simulation observation and unstructured interview were conducted on four selected participants. The simulation observation and interview showed that low- and high-achieving students had some similarities and dissimilarities on their emotion, difficulties that they faced and the activation of both background knowledge activation strategies. The findings based on participants’ sources of knowledge showed that all participants could activate their vocabulary and pragmatic knowledge but not phonological knowledge. Thus, it is suggested that students need to prepare their emotion and expand on their knowledge in order to understand the text in the Academic Listening class. Furthermore, teachers need to prepare their students emotionally and cognitively.

*Keywords*: Background Knowledge Activation Strategy, Mobilisation, Perspective Taking, Academic Listening