



Effective Listening

Listening is one of the most important skills you can have. How well you listen has a major impact on your job effectiveness, and on the quality of your relationships with others.

We listen to obtain information.
We listen to understand.
We listen for enjoyment.
We listen to learn.

Effective Listening

- Focusing on content, not style of delivery
- Listening for main ideas and their organization
- Varying note-taking tools
- Maintaining active body posture



Ineffective Listening

- Tuning out mentally
- Judging the delivery of the content
- Listening for facts rather than main ideas and organization



Obstacles to Listening

- Negative Mental Dialogue
 - “I’m never going to remember all of this.”
 - “I shouldn’t have taken this class.”
- Internal Distractions
 - Speaker’s delivery, speaking rate, .
- External Distractions
 - Windows, temperature, classmates



Preparing to Listen

- There are two ways in which students can prepare themselves for listening to class lectures
 1. Pre-class preparation
 2. In-class preparation



Pre-Class Preparation

- Complete homework assignments
- Preview that day's content by
 - Reading or surveying the chapter
 - Creating a chapter map
- Review the last day's content



In Class Preparation

- Take course materials to class
- Arrive to class on time
- Sit near front of the class to minimize distractions
- Create a purpose for listening



5 Easy Steps to Effective Listening

- 1. Pay Attention**
- 2. Show you are paying attention**
- 3. Provide Feedback**
- 4. Defer Judgment**
- 5. Respond Appropriately**



Step 1: Pay Attention

- Give the speaker your undivided attention and acknowledge the message. Recognize that what is not said also speaks loudly.
 - Look at the speaker directly.
 - Put aside distracting thoughts. Don't mentally prepare a rebuttal!
 - Avoid being distracted by environmental factors.
 - "Listen" to the speaker's body language.
 - Refrain from side conversations when listening in a group setting.



Step 2: Show you are listening

- Use your own body language and gestures to convey your attention.
 - Nod occasionally.
 - Smile and use other facial expressions.
 - Note your posture and make sure it is open and inviting.
 - Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments like yes, and uh huh.



Step 3: Provide feedback.

- Our personal filters, assumptions, judgments, and beliefs can distort what we hear. As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. This may require you to reflect what is being said and ask questions.
 - Reflect what has been said by paraphrasing. “What I’m hearing is...” and “Sounds like you are saying...” are great ways to reflect back.
 - Ask questions to clarify certain points. “What do you mean when you say...” “Is this what you mean?”
 - Summarize the speaker’s comments periodically.



Step 4: Defer Judgment

- Interrupting is a waste of time. It frustrates the speaker and limits full understanding of the message.
 - Allow the speaker to finish.
 - Don't interrupt with counter-arguments.

Tip:

If you find yourself responding emotionally to what someone said, say so, and ask for more information: "I may not be understanding you correctly, and I find myself taking what you said personally. What I thought you just said is XXX; is that what you meant?"



Step 5: Respond Appropriately

- Active listening is a model for respect and understanding. You are gaining information and perspective. You add nothing by attacking the speaker or otherwise putting him or her down.
 - Be candid, open, and honest in your response.
 - Assert your opinions respectfully.
 - Treat the other person as he or she would want to be treated.





Start using active listening today to become a better communicator and improve your educational productivity and relationships.