

Level: first year

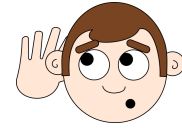
Module: TTU

Lecturer: Ms Tiaiba Imane

Effective Listening Skills

Goal: To learn how to listen effectively in class and in life

- Develop students listening abilities,
- Teach basic listening strategies,
- Address difficulties faced in effective listening, and
- Expose students to different listening situations through activities.



The following saying summarizes the importance of listening:

"We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak."

What communication skill can be more basic than listening?

- We spend more time listening than any other activity except breathing, yet we listen at only a fraction of our potential. Because we believe ourselves to be good listeners we seldom make an effort to improve.

What is Effective Listening?

- **Effective listening skills** are the ability to actively understand information provided by the speaker, and display interest in the topic discussed. It can also include providing the speaker with feedback, by asking pertinent questions so the speaker knows the message is received.
- **Effective Listening** is a skill using multiple senses to comprehend the message being sent by the speaker.

Importance of Listening

- The importance of listening extends far beyond academic and professional settings. Understanding how to practice good communication even in your day to day life, among friends, family, and significant others, is important for a number of reasons: fostering good self-esteem, maximizing productivity, improving relationships, and even becoming a better speaker.

Listening: as a communication skill

- Listening is one of the most important communication skills
- We probably spend more time using our Listening Skills than any other kind of skill
- Like other skills, Listening takes practice
- Real Listening is an active process
- Listening requires attention



Characteristics of Listening

L = Look interested

I = Involve yourself by responding

S = Stay on target

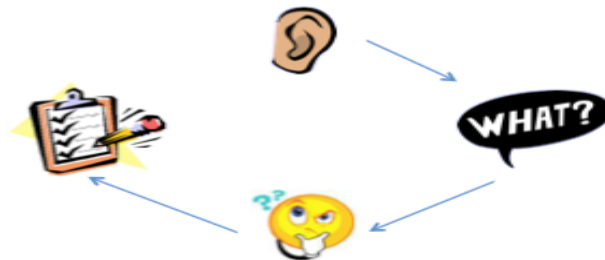
T = Test your understanding
E = Evaluate the message
N = Neutralize your feelings

10 Steps to Effective Listening

- Step 1:** Face the speaker and maintain eye contact.
- Step 2:** Be attentive, but relaxed.
- Step 3:** Keep an open mind.
- Step 4:** Listen to the words and try to picture what the speaker is saying.
- Step 5:** Don't interrupt and don't impose your "solutions."
- Step 6:** Wait for the speaker to pause to ask clarifying questions.
- Step 7:** Ask questions only to ensure understanding.
- Step 8:** Try to feel what the speaker is feeling.
- Step 9:** Give the speaker regular feedback.
- Step 10:** Pay attention to what *isn't* said—to nonverbal cues.

The Process of Listening can be categorized into 4 main areas

- **Hear**
- **Clarify**
- **Interpret**
- **Respond**



Hear

To listen actively and effectively, one must be a good hearer. Hearing involves picking up the sounds of the speaker by performing these actions:

- Allow the other person to talk.
- Avoid interruptions.
- Clear one's mind of distractions.
- Encourage the speaker to elaborate on what is being said through verbal and nonverbal cues.
- Focus on the speaker; e.g., maintain eye contact.
- Listen to what is said and not how it is said.
- Model the speaker's physical behavior to encourage further talking.
- Observe nonverbal behavior as well as what is said.
- Recognize that hearing is a psychological and physiological process.
- Use open-ended questions to encourage the speaker to continue talking.

Clarify

Often, what is said is not completely or accurately heard. Although the speaker has the responsibility to ensure that what he or she said is understood, the reality is that the listener must make some effort, too. Here are some steps to help clarify what was said:

- Ask open-end questions to probe for further detail.
- Avoid asking leading questions to get the desired comment or response.
- Avoid coming to conclusions before the speaker finishes.
- Be cognizant of the speaker's choice and application of words.

- Encourage feedback through questioning.
- Keep all of your questions pertinent to the topic.
- Look for synchronicity between what was said and body language.
- Maintain two-way communication.
- Paraphrase what was said and verify for accuracy.
- Try to separate assumptions from facts and data.

Interpret

After clarifying what the speaker said, be ready to interpret the message. Interpretation requires ascertaining not only the credibility behind what the speaker said but also an understanding of what was said. Here are some steps for interpreting a speaker's remarks:

- Avoid taking what the speaker says at face value by looking at feelings as well as body language.
- Communicate your interpretation and verify its accuracy.
- Concentrate on facts and data, not perceptions.
- Distinguish between assumptions, and facts and data.
- Identify the main ideas.
- Pay attention to nonverbal communications to determine sincerity about what is said.

Respond

Sometimes we have to respond to what the speaker says. Of the four steps, this one is optional. Any response will have a physiological, emotional, and psychological aspect to it. Here are some steps to respond effectively:

- Be sincere.
- Conduct follow-up, if necessary, on any resulting request by the instructor or the speaker.
- Demonstrate a physiological (e.g., body language) and psychological response.
- Exhibit empathy rather than sympathy.
- Exhibit verbal and nonverbal cues that build bridges rather than walls between the project manager and the speaker.
- Seek feedback on your response.

Why Few People Listen Effectively

- Listening sometimes does not come easy.
- Often, the difficulty is not because people are not willing to listen but because they are unable to do so.
- Their mind does not allow them to see the total picture because they are only able to see the world in one dimension.
- This inability to listen using both sides of the brain can cause miscommunication, misinterpretation, and miscalculation.
- The result can be a listener who is unable to deal with not only the logic of a relationship but with the emotional component either.
- Hence, this asymmetrical use of the brain often results in the inability of the listener to absorb all the necessary cues from the person speaking.
- Effective and active listening requires, using both sides of the brain. Unfortunately, few people understand this fact.
- Instead, they see this skill as one reflecting the use of the right or left side of the brain.

Benefits of Effective Listening

- Enhances productivity
- Improves relations
- Avoids conflict
- Improves understanding
- Improves negotiation skills
- Helps you stand out
- People will appreciate it



Listening Sub-Skills for EFL Learners

<i>Skill</i>	<i>Description</i>
1-Listening for gist:	It is extensive listening for skimming. This happens when we listen to get a general idea about a topic. Example: listening to a summary of the day's news on the radio.
2-listening for specific information:	This is when we listen to something because we want to discover one particular piece of information. Example: Listening to weather report to discover the weather in your city.
3-Listening in detail :	It is the intensive listening for scanning. This is when we listen we listen very closely, paying attention to all the words and trying to understand as much information as possible. Example: A member of a jury listening to a statement from a witness.
4-Listening for attitude.	Understanding attitudinal meaning in spoken text and utterances [especially ability to recognize the speaker's attitude towards the listener].
5-Extensive listening	Extensive listening is a way to practice your English listening skills. It means listening to many different recordings, videos and interviews about the same topic. This will help you get context for what you're listening to, and will help you learn more vocabulary.
6-Listening for individual sounds	Recognizing phonological features of speech.