

Study Skills Factsheet

LISTENING SKILLS

HINTS ON BECOMING A BETTER LISTENER

Active listening means both *hearing* what is being said and *thinking about the meaning* of what is being said.

HINT # 1 - As you listen ask yourself questions about what the speaker is saying. Now try to answer these questions. By asking and then answering these questions, you help yourself to make sense of what is being said.

*Ask yourself - What are these words saying to me?
Do I understand what is being said?
Why can't I make sense of this?*

HINT # 2 - Try to make a mind picture of what you are learning. Some people find this an excellent way of making sense of what is being said.

Try this - Visualize the events, activities, etc. that are being spoken about.

HINT # 3 - Summarize what has been said. Regularly review in your mind the information that has been discussed.

Ask yourself - Can I remember the main points of what has been said?

HINT # 4 - Concentrate on the person who is speaking. Make eye contact if you can. This will enable you to concentrate more effectively on what he or she is saying.

Ask yourself - Am I focusing on the speaker? Have I been able to establish eye contact?

HINT # 5 - Listen to all that is being said before deciding how you feel about it. If you make a decision on the entire presentation before hearing it all you will lose your ability to concentrate on the later information.

Ask yourself - Have I heard everything that I need to know?

HINT # 6 - Take notes. Do not write down every word but try to capture the main points. If you are unsure about the need to take notes, ask the teacher.

The Process of Listening

Did you know that listening is a form of communication? As a matter of fact, people spend most of their communication time listening.

ACTIVITY	% OF DAILY COMMUNICATION
writing	11%
reading	15%
speaking	32%
listening	42%

Source: Richard A Hunsaker, *Understanding and Developing the Skills of Oral Communication: Speaking and Listening*, (Englewood, CO: Morton Publishing Company, 1982).

Since you spend so much time listening, it's a good idea to understand what listening is all about. Listening is a process. Each step in the process is a little more difficult than the step before it. Good listeners understand the process of listening. The six steps of listening are listed below.

- 1. Hearing** Hearing is the first step in listening. You hear when your ears *pick up sounds*.
- 2. Paying attention** When you *concentrate* on a sound or a speaker's message, you're paying attention.
- 3. Organizing** After you hear new information, you need to organize it. You put new information with old information that's already in your brain. In other words, you *sort new information into old categories*.
- 4. Understanding** After you sort the new information, you can begin *to make sense of it*.
- 5. Remembering** Next, you *store the new, understood information* in your memory. You remember some information longer than other information.
- 6. Responding** Being able to respond to what you hear proves that you understood it.

You respond to someone when you *ask questions, give your opinions, and use the new information* in your daily life.