

B Tech I Year

SOFT SKILLS

BAS 105

UNIT II: LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS

LISTENING SKILLS

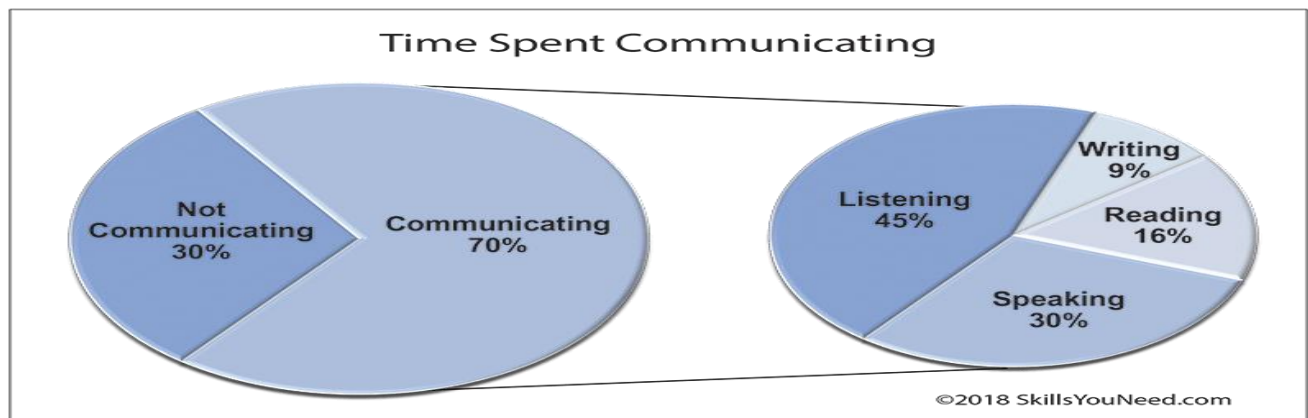
A good listener will listen not only to what is being said, but also to what is left unsaid or only partially said. Effective listening therefore involves observing body language and noticing inconsistencies between verbal and non-verbal messages, as well as just what is being said at any given moment.

For example, if someone tells you that they are happy with their life but through gritted teeth or with tears filling their eyes, you should consider that the verbal and non-verbal messages are in conflict. Maybe they don't mean what they say.

Listening is therefore not just a matter of using your ears, but also your eyes. There are ten principles behind really good listening.

MEANING AND ART OF LISTENING

The art of listening is about finding out what the speaker thinks about something. When employees listen to one another, they learn from one another. A free flow of ideas that are truly listened to can lead to a workplace where employees are constantly learning from each other.



Whatever the reasons we struggle with being good listeners, honing that skill can have a lot of benefits. Here are the top 8 reasons to create a workplace where employees both listen and are heard. Listening better to one another can:

1. **Build relationships:** Attentive listening can help your workforce come closer together. And as communications improve among employees, so will their teamwork, leading to increased productivity and business.
2. **Foster learning:** The art of listening is about finding out what the speaker thinks about something. When employees listen to one another, they learn from one another. A free flow of ideas that are truly listened to can lead to a workplace where employees are constantly learning from each other.
3. **Encourage respect:** Respect is crucial in any workplace. Fostering attentive listening can help establish respect, as managers and employers listen not only to their employees' ideas but also to their issues or concerns.
4. **Establish a culture of communication:** By fostering attentive listening, you establish a company culture in which employees know how to speak and listen to one another. This raises the communication expectations between employers and employees.

5. **Facilitate conflict resolution:** When issues or conflicts arise, listening is essential to clarifying disagreements. Attentive listening helps employees get to the root of a problem, come up with solutions, and decide the best course of action to take.
6. **Promote open-mindedness:** Employees all have different viewpoints. Encouraging them to listen to each other can help promote an environment of open-mindedness and inclusion, where everyone can feel that their opinions are heard and valued.
7. **Further progress:** Employees are more likely to be creative and share their ideas if they feel they are listened to, and their ideas are taken into account. Actively listening to employees' input can reinforce the acceptance of future contributions.
8. **Improve decisions:** Making decisions and judgments based on assumptions can cause many workplace problems. By encouraging attentive listening, you will find that employees are more likely to ask questions, clarify understanding, and make better decisions based on a more accurate understanding of a given situation.

Encouraging good listening helps employees work together better as a team and promotes innovative thinking and more effective communication. Here are some of the basics of attentive listening.

- **Make eye contact:** Looking directly at the person who's speaking is a clear way to indicate you're paying attention to him or her. Looking away, even if you're still listening, will make it seem like you're distracted or not interested.
- **Make appropriate facial expressions:** Nodding, tilting your head, smiling – all of these expressions show a response to what the speaker is saying, which indicates that you're grasping the meaning and are interested in what he or she's saying.
- **Ask question:** Critical listening involves asking questions to get all the information. When you ask the speaker a question, it also drives the conversation and shows that you're interested in clarification and understanding the issues.
- **Don't interrupt:** Although it's good to ask questions, try not to interrupt the speaker. Let the person complete his or her thoughts before responding or asking questions.
- **Paraphrase:** When you restate, in your own words, what the speaker is saying, you prove that you're listening carefully – after all, you wouldn't be able to repeat anything if you weren't paying attention.

Keeping these tips in mind will help you become a more effective listener, which is more than half of what it takes to be a good communicator

HEARING

Hearing is the first essential step in the listening process and relates to the sensory perception of sound. The listener further processes the perceived sound. For learning to be effective, hearing needs to be done with attentiveness and concentration.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HEARING AND LISTENING

HEARING	LISTENING
Hearing is only refers to your ears picking up noise.	Listening means to interpret the noise, understanding it and provide an adequate response to it.
Hearing is a passive occurrence that requires no effort.	Listening is a conscious choice that demands your attention and concentration.

Hearing is a physical ability.	Listening is a skill that can be learned.
Hearing is considered to be a Biological phenomenon.	Listening is biological as well as Psychological process.
In hearing, after the brain receives the nerve impulses it may or may not send feedback.	In listening, after the brain receives the nerve impulses and deciphers it, it then sends feedback.

LISTENING TECHNIQUES

1. Stop Talking

Don't talk, listen.

If we were supposed to talk more than we listen, we would have two tongues and one ear. When somebody else is talking listen to what they are saying, do not interrupt, talk over them or finish their sentences for them. Stop, just listen. When the other person has finished talking you may need to clarify to ensure you have received their message accurately.

2. Prepare Yourself to Listen

Relax.

Focus on the speaker. Put other things out of mind. The human mind is easily distracted by other thoughts – what's for lunch, what time do I need to leave to catch my train, is it going to rain – try to put other thoughts out of mind and concentrate on the messages that are being communicated.

3. Put the Speaker at Ease

Help the speaker to feel free to speak.

Remember their needs and concerns. Nod or use other gestures or words to encourage them to continue. Maintain eye contact but don't stare – show you are listening and understanding what is being said.

4. Remove Distractions

Focus on what is being said.

Don't doodle, shuffle papers, look out the window, pick your fingernails or similar. Avoid unnecessary interruptions. These behaviors disrupt the listening process and send messages to the speaker that you are bored or distracted.

5. Empathize

Try to understand the other person's point of view.

Look at issues from their perspective. Let go of preconceived ideas. By having an open mind we can more fully empathize with the speaker. If the speaker says something that you disagree with then wait and construct an argument to counter what is said but keep an open mind to the views and opinions of others.

6. Be Patient

A pause, even a long pause, does not necessarily mean that the speaker has finished. Be patient and let the speaker continue in their own time, sometimes it takes time to formulate what to say and how to say it. Never interrupt or finish a sentence for someone.

7. Avoid Personal Prejudice

Try to be impartial.

Don't become irritated and don't let the person's habits or mannerisms distract you from what the speaker is really saying. Everybody has a different way of speaking - some people are for example more nervous or shy than others, some have regional accents or make excessive arm movements, some people like to pace whilst talking - others like to sit still. Focus on what is being said and try to ignore styles of delivery.

8. Listen to the Tone

Volume and tone both add to what someone is saying.

A good speaker will use both volume and tone to their advantage to keep an audience attentive; everybody will use pitch, tone and volume of voice in certain situations – let these help you to understand the emphasis of what is being said.

9. Listen for Ideas – Not Just Words

You need to get the whole picture, not just isolated bits and pieces.

Maybe one of the most difficult aspects of listening is the ability to link together pieces of information to reveal the ideas of others. With proper concentration, letting go of distractions, and focus this becomes easier.

10. Wait and Watch for Non-Verbal Communication

Gestures, facial expressions, and eye-movements can all be important.

We don't just listen with our ears but also with our eyes – watch and pick up the additional information being transmitted via non-verbal communication.

HFCRR Model of Listening (STEPS OF LISTENING)

The acronym HFCRR is sometimes used in academic texts to summarize a model of effective listening skills.

H--HEARING: 'Hearing' is used here in a very broad sense. Not only does it refer to the physical act of hearing, but also to picking up on non-verbal and other signals; tone of voice, body language and facial expressions, for example.

F—FILTERING: The next step involves sensing and filtering of heard sounds. The heard message is categorized as wanted or unwanted. The unwanted message is discarded. The sense of judgement of the individual comes into play, that is, the filtering process is subjective and a person chooses to retain what makes sense to him.

C—COMPREHENDING: The listener understands what the speaker has tried to convey. This activity can be described as absorbing, grasping or assimilating. The listener uses his knowledge, experience, perception and cognitive power.

R – REMEMBERING

Remembering requires focus. An effective listener needs to be able to remember the message they are receiving in its entirety.

R – RESPONDING

Finally, your response should be well-measured and demonstrate that you have understood what was communicated. It may be necessary to use techniques such as clarification and reflection as part of the response.

Definition	Active listening means mindful and actively hearing and attempting to comprehend the meaning of the speakers.	Passive listening means showing like listening to the speaker but not making an attempt to comprehend the meanings.
Connectivity Level	Listener connects with the world and actively participates with the goal of problem-solving.	Listener disconnects himself from the outsiders and has minimal interaction with others.
Self-Responsibility	Takes responsibility for their own learning and growth.	Avoids responsibility for learning and problem-solving.
Mental Approach	Sharp mind, alert to explore, reflect on the information.	Accepts and retains information as-is with no intention to question or challenge the idea for improvement.
Self-Motivation Level	Strong	Weak
Engagement Level	High	Low
Will-Power	Strong-willed, interested in new ideas, open-minded	Narrow-minded, low or no will power, unreceptive to new ideas.

TYPES OF LISTENING

Appreciative Listening- this for deriving aesthetic pleasure, Listening for fun—to laugh, cry, use your imagination, or extend your creativity as we do when we listen to a comedian, musician or entertainer.

Empathetic Listening- we provide emotional and moral support in the form of it. You try to put yourself in another person's place or see the world through his or her eyes e.g psychiatrists listening to their patients.

Comprehensive Listening to comprehend ideas and information in order to achieve a specific purpose or goal e.g. listen to lecture and Listening to announcements

Critical Listening-- Listening to understand, analyze, and evaluate messages so you can accept or reject a point of view, make a decision, or take action when the purpose is to accept or reject the message or evaluate it critically. e.g., listening to salesperson before making purchase or listening to politicians.

TRAITS OF A GOOD LISTENER

Being a good listener can help make you a better leader and professional in the workplace regardless of your position. Whether you're a manager in charge of a team or looking to provide support to co-workers, improving your listening skills can help you succeed in your professional career.

1. Give the speaker your undivided attention

Distractions can make it difficult to focus on the things a speaker is telling you. To become a good listener, limit as many distractions as possible and give the speaker your undivided attention. This includes silencing your phone, turning off your computer and avoiding the urge to multitask by checking emails or giving attention to other tasks. This can help you focus on the speaker, ensuring that you're taking in everything that they are saying.

It is also important to be aware you take the time to give the speaker your undivided attention. Managing your time correctly can help you ensure you can limit distractions while you are listening.

2. Provide appropriate nonverbal communication

Providing a speaker with the appropriate nonverbal cues can help them feel more at ease and comfortable as you listen to them. Nonverbal communication helps you listen and provide your support without having to interrupt your speaker. This can include maintaining sufficient eye contact, sitting up straight and smiling when appropriate. Proper nonverbal communication while listening can also help the speaker feel more at ease and more likely to openly communicate their ideas.

3. Pace the conversation

Being a good listener often includes opening a dialogue and allowing for a conversation to start between you and the speaker. Pace the conversation by determining the goal of the speaker's message and evaluating their nonverbal cues to decide when it's appropriate to respond. Instead of rushing to fill silences, let the speaker finish their thoughts and acknowledge their message accordingly. This will also give you time to absorb their message and process what they are saying before it's time to respond.

4. Ask meaningful questions

Once it is time to open up a dialogue, the questions you ask should be meaningful and establish your investment in the speaker's message. Ask questions that can help both you and the speaker reflect on what they said as well as elaborate on any points that may need extra clarification. The questions might help the speaker remember other things they wanted to say or open up a new line of dialogue that will be worth exploring.

5. Recall previous information

Recalling information that the speaker has already discussed, as well as summarizing the points they made in your responses, can help you become a more effective listener. Doing this not only shows the speaker you understand what they said, but it also ensures they can clarify any misunderstandings and confirm their key points.

6. Provide your input

Being a good listener encompasses both processing a speaker's message and providing valuable input from your point of view. It is best to do this once the speaker has contributed everything they needed to say and you have properly interpreted all the information they have presented.

7. Manage your time appropriately

When preparing to listen effectively, it is important to ensure you've scheduled a time when you can provide the speaker with your undivided attention. It is best to avoid creating too many meetings or cluttering your schedule so that each time you are listening to a speaker, you can do so while focusing clearly on what they are saying.

8. Be mindful of your perspective

It is natural to approach any subject with a different point of view than the speakers. Regardless of the message, be mindful of different perspectives when you're interpreting the other person's message. Even if you disagree, recognizing the difference in your point of view and using it to understand the speaker's message can help you listen more effectively.

9. Take notes

It's useful to take notes when listening to a speaker. Jotting down key ideas, questions and any points that may need further clarification will allow you to understand their message more effectively.

10. Display empathy

Listening to someone with an emphasis on empathy can help prevent any misunderstandings from occurring. The more you work to connect with what others are thinking and feeling, the less likely you are to misunderstand them.

11. Avoid interruptions

The more interruptions you experience while a person is speaking, the less likely they are to fully communicate what they intended to say. Avoiding interruptions and creating an environment where they can speak without distraction or interruption will make it easier for them to share their message.

12. Stay curious and open-minded

While you should give the speaker a chance to share their message without interruption, effective listening includes maintaining your curiosity and staying open-minded. The more you can ask questions and think creatively about what the speaker is sharing, the more likely you will be to properly interpret their message.

MODES OF LISTENING

The best communicators listen with the right frame of mind to ensure that they maximize their communication effectiveness. We call these listening modes.

Examples of listening modes:

1. **Disengaged** – your body is present, but your mind is not. You hear the words that the person is saying and can even repeat them, but you are not really listening because your mind is on something else.
2. **Competitive** – you are listening with the intention of “topping” what the other person is saying. Whether its accomplishments, possessions or relationships, the underlying goal is to prove that you are better than the other person.
3. **Combative** – this is an argumentative mode. You listen for flaws or weaknesses in what is being said and wait for an opening to point them out. You are constantly formulating your point of view and creating comebacks that attack the speaker or their message.
4. **Passive** – you listen carefully and seek to understand. You don't ask questions or validate your understanding.
5. **Active** – you demonstrate your interest in what the speaker thinks, feels or means in their message. You restate what you hear to reflect the message back to the speaker for validation. The validation is what makes this the most effective listening mode and distinguishes it from all the other modes.

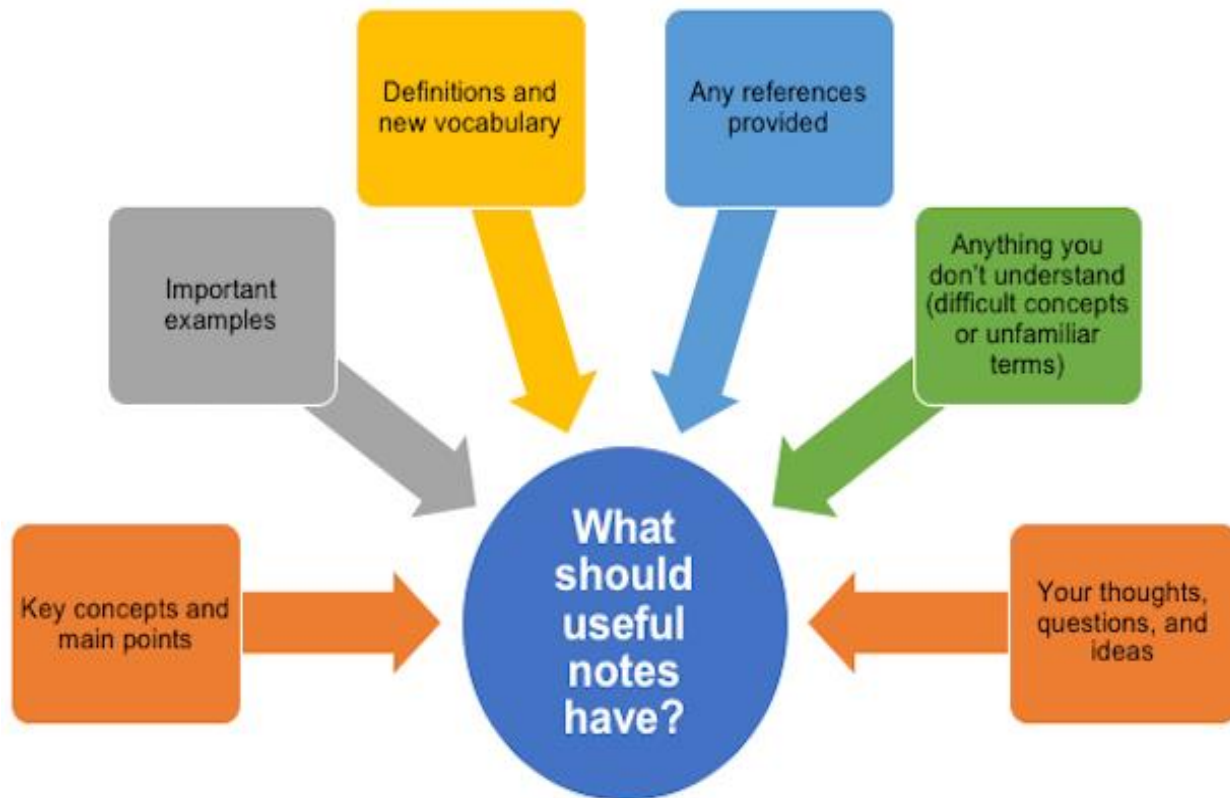
Pay attention to your listening mode. Ensure that you are in the proper frame of mind to achieve results. Is your goal to be right, or is your goal to maintain and build a relationship? Too often people enter conversations without examining their listening mode and how that mode will impact the outcome of the conversation.

Listening well will transform your conversations, your relationships and your life.

LISTENING AND NOTE TAKING

Listening Note Taking Strategies

Effective listening note-taking involves **recognising key concepts and identifying and selecting what is relevant**. Listen for the overall argument and note the main points and key information. Good note-taking allows a permanent record of key information that you can integrate with your own writing, and use for exam revision. Taking reliable, accurate notes also reduces the risk of plagiarising. It helps you distinguish where your ideas came from and how and what you think about those ideas.



Six good reasons to take notes

- Notes are a useful record of key information, and the sources of that information.
- Writing notes helps you remember what you heard.
- Taking notes helps you to concentrate and listen effectively.
- Selecting what to note down increases your understanding.
- Notes create a resource for exam preparation.
- Notes taken in classes often contain information that can't be found elsewhere.

Before: Be prepared

Preparation before the lecture provides the background knowledge you need to be an effective listener and an effective student.

- Know what the lecture will be about. Check the course outline for weekly topics.
- Do any required pre-reading.
- If lecture slides are available before class, download them.

- Review notes from previous lectures.
- Set up notebooks/ documents for notetaking.
- Arrive on time and sit near the front - in order to take good notes, you need to hear and see clearly.

During: Strategies for effective notetaking

Concentrate and pay attention

Arrive prepared to actively listen and learn, and to think critically. Analysing and questioning the information helps you to focus and understand what you hear.

Don't try to write down everything being said (PARAPHRASE)

Be selective—you don't have to transcribe the entire lecture. Effective listening note-taking involves recognising key concepts and identifying and selecting what is relevant. Listen for the overall argument and note the main points and key information.

How can I recognise what is important?

Distinguish between main points, elaboration, examples, 'waffle' and new points by **listening for**:

- introductory remarks. Lectures often begin with a useful overview of the key ideas or themes of a topic. This helps you grasp the 'big picture'.
- verbal 'signposts' that indicate something important is about to be said. Lecturers often signal key information with phrases like: "There are four main aspects", "This is important..." or "To sum up".
- repetition. Important points will often be repeated, especially in introductions and conclusions.
- phonological cues (voice emphasis, change in volume, speed, emotion and emphasis) often indicate important information.
- final remarks. Most lectures conclude with a summary, a restatement of the main ideas and an indication of how the topic connects with upcoming material.

Look for:

- non-verbal cues (facial expressions, hand and body signals) that indicate something important is being said.
- visual cues (note what is on the visuals, note references to names and sources)

After:

To get the most out of your notes it's important to review and re-engage actively with them several times.

Review your notes while the lecture is fresh in your mind. Reviewing helps you remember what was said, builds up your understanding, and helps identify gaps in your knowledge.

To review:

- Read through your notes. Make sure they are clear and legible. Clean them up - fix spelling errors, expand on abbreviations, tidy up handwriting (if necessary).
- Fill in missing words or information and add anything extra that you may have thought of since the lecture.
- Code your notes - use colour and symbols to mark structure and emphasis, highlight major sections, main points and diagrams. Use different colours to emphasise main points, classify different topics and link concepts or information.
- Explain and clarify diagrams by writing a simple version of their meaning.
- Identify anything that needs further clarification.

Label and file your notes along with any lecture handouts.

Tips for re-engaging with notes

- Try “chunking” similar pieces of information into categories that you can remember more easily.
- Transcribe key concepts in your own words.
- Add your own questions to the notes to help you recall the key ideas.
- Write a brief overall summary of the notes.
- Reflect on the learning process itself—what do you find confusing? How did you solve problems or clarify your understanding?

Ten BAD Listening Habits

1. Finding the subject uninteresting
2. Judging delivery, not content.
3. Allowing excessive emotional involvement
4. Listening for details, not central ideas
5. Using non-flexible notetaking
6. Paying poor attention to the speaker
7. Being easily distracted
8. Avoiding difficult material
9. Refusing to accept new ideas
10. Thinking about irrelevant topics

PRONUNCIATION

If articulation means speaking out all the sounds distinctly, then pronunciation requires us to speak out sounds in way that is generally accepted. One should be careful enough to pronounce individual sounds along with word stress according to the set norms. Wherever there is confusion, always consult a good dictionary and try to pronounce it correctly.

Difficulties in Learning Pronunciation

- **First** related to hearing. People have different hearing sensitivities, and it may possibly cause errors.
- **Second** difficulties are concerned with learning how to make foreign sounds with our own speech organs.
- **Third** difficulties related to the problem of knowing and remembering, the sound distribution of which sounds are right to speak on a word or sentence, and in what context the sound is spoken.
- **Fourth** related to certain aspects that sound is related to each other.
- **Fifth** is related to fluency, the ability to pronounce a whole series of sounds (groups of sounds) easily and quickly.
- **Sixth** is related to the relationship between pronunciation and conventional spelling. The above errors are the most common problems faced by the learner.

Therefore, it is very important for someone who is learning English to understand more about the difficult sounds in English so that he can correct those mistakes.