**Listening skills**

Listening is as important as the other three components of communication. It should be no surprise that poor listening is not entirely the fault of the speaker.

**Enlisted are some causes that lead to poor listening:-**

1. Prejudice against the speaker- position, attitude, body language, speech etc.
2. External distractions- noise in the room, noise outside, commotion in the audience, late entry
3. Thinking speed- most of us speak 80- 160 words per minute, but we think at 800 words per minute- so our thinking speed outpaces the speakers’ rate of speech.
4. Premature evaluation- interrupt often or try to finish the other person’s sentences,  jump to conclusions, lose my temper when hearing things I don’t agree with, answer with advice, to change the subject to something that relates to my own experiences
5. Semantic stereotypes- sometimes the language used by the speaker is annoying and leads to negative reactions
6. Delivery- monotone- uninteresting, boring

**Purposes for listening is:**

1. To gain new information and ideas
2. To question and test evidence and assumptions
3. To be inspired
4. To improve your own communication

**Results of good listening**- Following benefits will occur if you listen purposefully and positively because such attentive listening:-

1. Permits the speaker and listeners to improve communication because each side is more aware of and receptive to the other’s viewpoint.
2. Indicates by feedback to the speaker that listeners are interested; in turn, the speaker tries harder to give his or her best presentation.
3. Help listeners retain useful information
4. Creates better understanding of others and thus helps listeners work with others.

**How to improve your listening skills:-**

1. Be prepared
2. Accent the positive- sit with positive attitude
3. Listen to understand, not refute
4. Focus your attention
5. Concentrate on context
6. Take notes
7. Control the impulse to interrupt- to question or to add a point
8. Summarise and evaluate