



CHARUSAT
CHAROTAR UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



Unit - 3

Basic Communication Skills – I LISTENING

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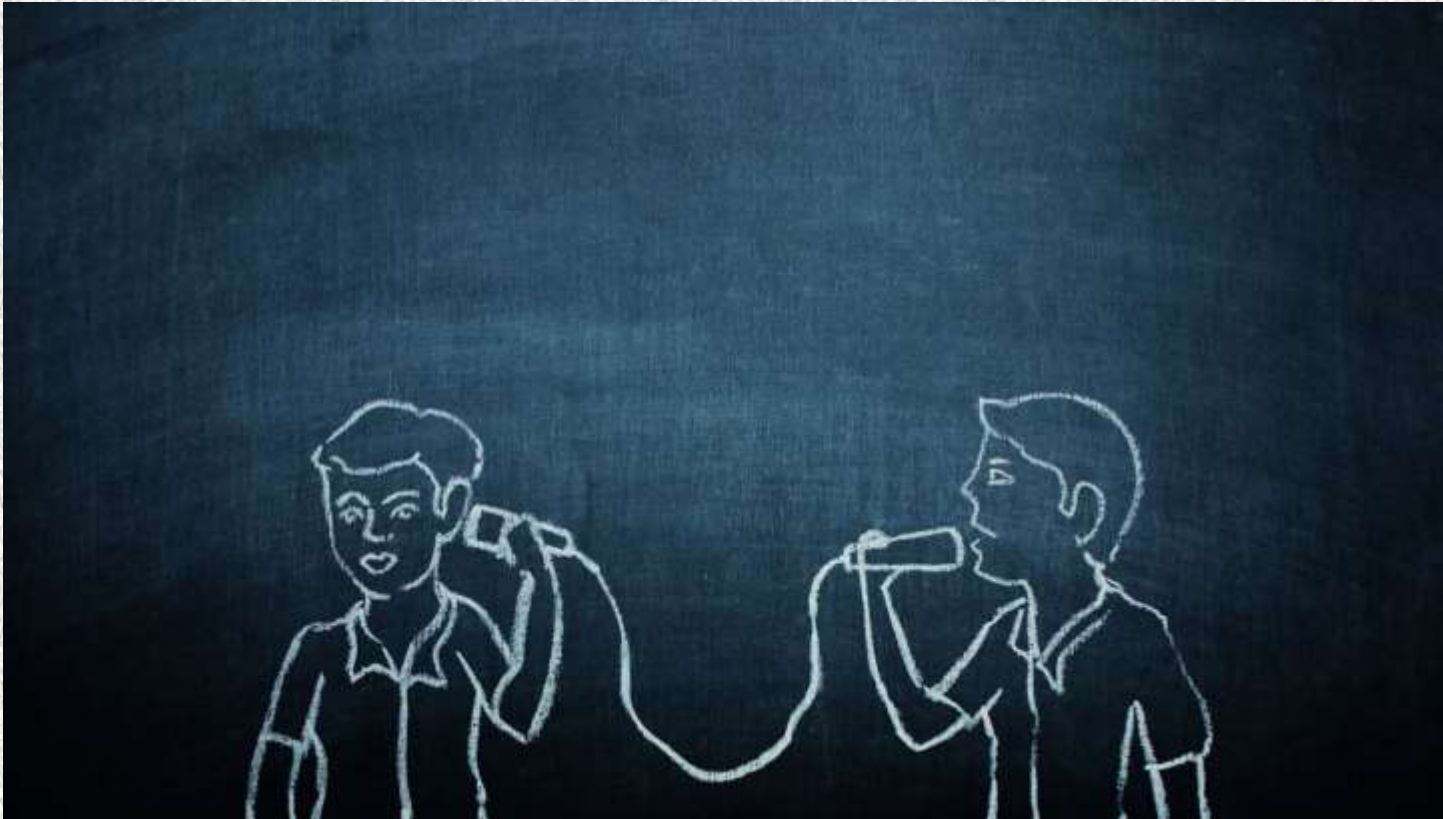
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What is Listening ?



The Power of Listening



William Ury

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saXfavo10Qo&t=118s>

Let's Understand Listening

**"Listen to counsel and receive instruction,
That you may be wise in your latter days."**

**"Cease listening to instructions, my son,
And you will stray from the words of knowledge."**

- Proverbs, 19:20-27, *Holy Bible*

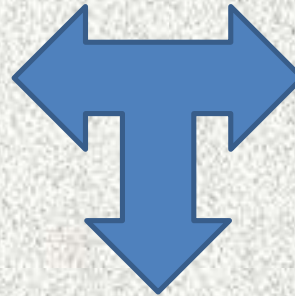


Listening...

- Listening is a process of receiving, interpreting and reacting to the messages received from the communication sender.
- Effective listening is an art of communication which is often taken for granted and ignored.
- Like any other art, listening is to be cultivated consciously, carefully and systematically.
- Unfortunately, our education systems beginning from kindergarten up to college level do not pay proper attention to the teaching of effective listening.
- As listening is fundamental to all communication, poor listening can be considered as a mighty barrier to communication.
- It often results in losing messages due to improper functioning of communication. We often mistake hearing for listening.

Hearing Vs. Listening

In fact, hearing, which depends upon the ears, is just a physical act, and except for the physically impaired person, everyone can hear without conscious efforts.



On the other hand, listening requires conscious efforts of interpreting the sounds, grasping the meanings of the words and reacting to the message.

Interpreting the sound signals is a cognitive act which depends on the listener's knowledge of the code signals and on his attitude towards the communication sender.

Importance of 'Listening'



What do you think ?

Importance of 'Listening'

- Listening plays an important role in our social as well as professional life.
- If you ponder for a while, you would realise that sometimes we act or react wrongly, simply because our listening was not effective.

A teacher will whisper into the ears of a student a phrase and will ask him to pass it on orally to his neighbour in a similar manner till it reached the last student.

The last student will be asked what the phrase was ??

- For full understanding many a time we seek clarification, further explanations or ask even a good speaker to repeat the message.

Importance of 'Listening'

- In certain professions the role of listening is crucial.
- For example,

•If a judge is not an effective listener, he may arrive at a wrong conclusion.

•Similarly, if a psychiatrist is not a good listener, he would not be able to provide proper advice to his patients.

Who are a successful Listeners ??



1. Successful businessmen and the apex management of reputed companies consider listening as important as other communication skills.
2. All successful Engineers, industrialists, advocates, teachers, doctors, etc., are good listeners. It would not be an exaggeration to say that effective listening is the hallmark of a successful professional.

Types of Listening

- Depending upon the extent to which listening becomes effective, it can be classified into three types.

1. **Passive Listening:**

- Passive listening refers to inert or indifferent listening.
- There is no conscious effort to receive and absorb the message.
- Quite often, passive listening stops at hearing and there is no effort to further process the message.
- The listener is physically present but is not participating actively in the process of communication.
- Listening in this instance is insufficient.
- The message is not absorbed and the passive listener will not be in a position to remember and recall the message at a future date.



Types of Listening

When will 'Passive Listening' take place ??



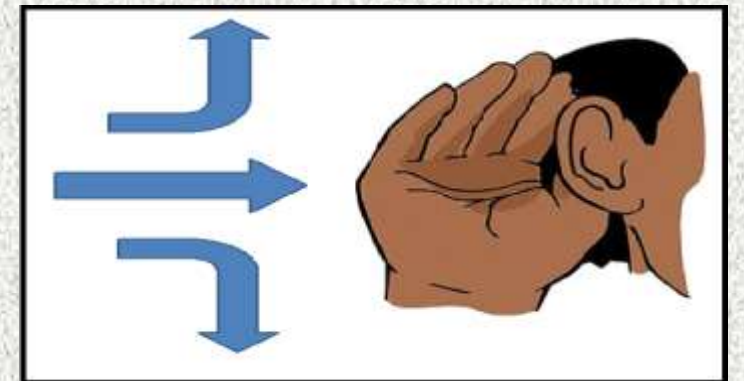
Passive listening takes place when the listener or receiver is constrained by various physiological and psychological factors. It may be fatigue, ill health, disregard for the speaker or lack of interest in the subject.

- It also occurs when the speaker fails to meet the receiver's wavelength.
- Passive listening leads to misunderstanding on the part of the communicator who would be under the impression that the receiver has grasped the message as intended.

Types of Listening

2. Selective Listening:

- Listening is done partially or selectively.
- People listen to only that which they want to listen to.
- Under this type of listening, the receiver keeps turning in and out.
- Attention is not focused.
- The listener lets the mind wander and the message is not thoroughly processed.



Types of Listening

When will 'Selective Listening' take place ??



Selective listening takes place when the receiver is not in a position to concentrate, or considers the speaker to be not so well informed on certain matters, or the receiver considers himself to be better informed than the communicator or such other reason which hinders active listening.

Types of Listening

3. Active Listening:

- Active listening is the most desirable type of listening.
- In this case, the listener makes conscious efforts to listen attentively, decode the message and absorb it through a participative process.
- The receiver of the messages shows regard for the speaker, concentrates on what is being conveyed, motivates and prompts the speaker, shows empathy and makes it easy for the speaker to meaningfully deliver the message.
- When we talk of listening skills, what is meant is the ability to listen effectively.
- When one listens actively, one not only comprehends the message, but is also in a position to remember and recall the same as and when required.



Types of Listening

4. Content Listening:

- The primary goal of **content listening** is to understand and retain the speaker's message.
- When you're listening for content, the emphasis is on information and understanding.
- Ask questions to clarify the material and probe for details.
- Since you're not evaluating at this point, it doesn't matter whether you agree or disagree, prove or disprove – only that you understand.
- Try to overlook the speaker's style and any limitations in the presentation; just focus on the information.



Types of Listening

4. Critical Listening:

The goal of **critical listening** is to understand and evaluate the meaning of the speaker's message on several levels:

The logic of the argument and the strength of the evidence

The validity of the conclusions

The implications of the message for you and your organization

The speaker's intentions and motives

The omission of any important or relevant points

Types of Listening

4. Critical Listening:

- If you're skeptical, ask questions to explore the speaker's point of view and credibility.
- Be on the lookout for bias that might color the way the information is presented, and be careful to separate opinions from facts.



Types of Listening

4. Empathic Listening:

- The goal of **empathic listening** is to understand the speaker's feelings, needs, and wants so that you can appreciate his or her point of view, regardless of whether you share that perspective.
- By listening in an empathic way, you help the individual vent the emotions that prevent a calm, clear-headed approach to the subject.
- Sometimes the only thing an upset colleague is looking for is somebody to listen, so avoid the temptation to jump in with advice unless the person specifically asks for it.
- Also, don't jump the speaker's feelings and don't try to tell people they shouldn't feel this or that emotion.
- Instead, let the speaker know that you appreciate his or her feelings and understand the situation.

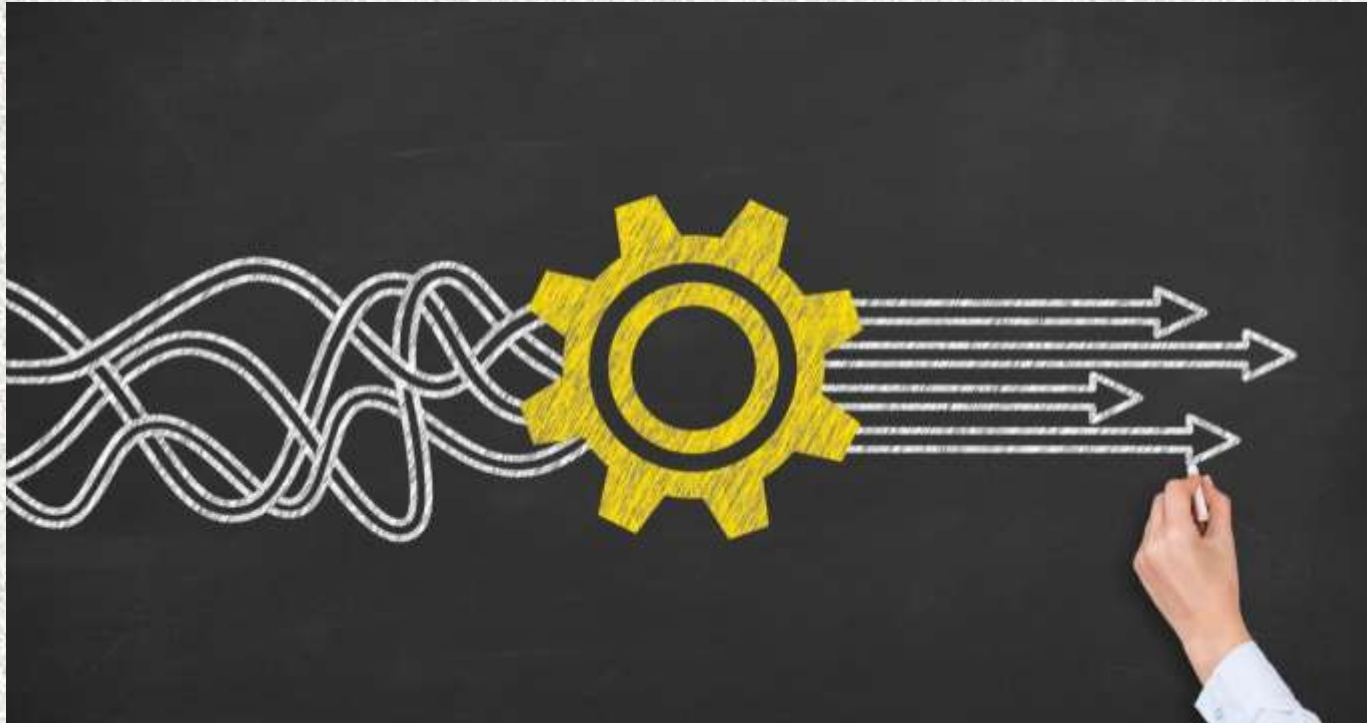
Types of Listening

4. Empathic Listening:

- Once you establish that connection, you can then help the speaker move on to search for a solution.
- In short, I would say that when you engage in empathic listening, you pay attention to feelings, needs, and wants – not just the spoken words.



'Listening Process'



Any Idea ??

'Listening Process'

Do keep in mind:

- No matter which mode of listening you use in a given conversation, it's important to recognize that listening is a far more complex process than most people think.
- As a consequence, most of us aren't very good at it.
- Given such complexity, it's no wonder most of us listen at or below a 25 percent efficiency rate, remember only about half of what's said during a 10-minute conversation, and forget half of that within 48 hours.
- Furthermore, when questioned about material we've just heard, we are likely to get the facts mixed up.
- Why is such a seemingly simple activity so difficult?
- The answer lies in the complexity of the process.
- To listen effectively, you need to successfully complete five separate steps as:

'Listening Process'

1. Receiving:

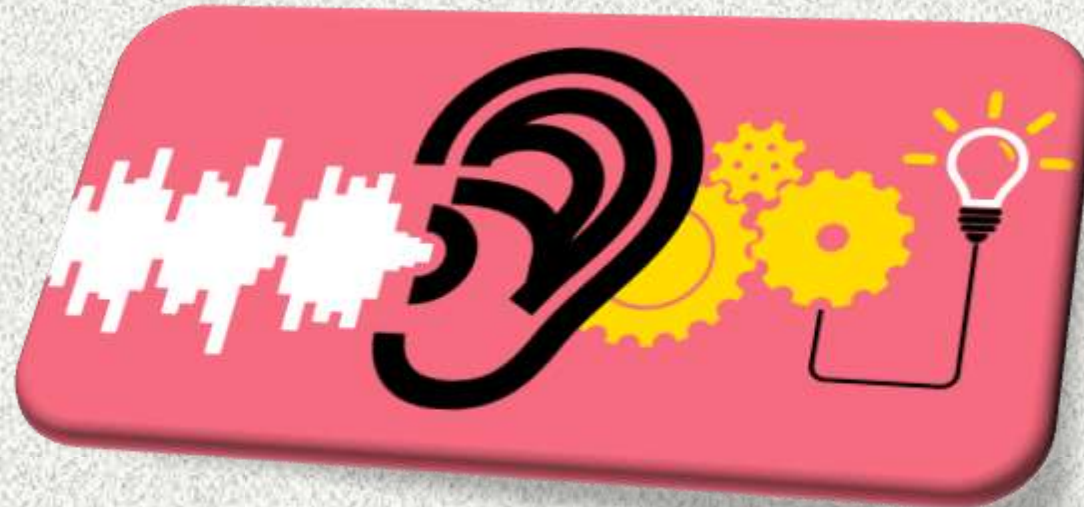
- You start by physically hearing the message and acknowledging it. Physical reception can be blocked by noise, impaired hearing, or inattention. Some experts also include non-verbal messages as part of this stage, since these factors influence the listening process as well.



'Listening Process'

2. Interpreting:

- Your next step is to assign meaning to sound, which you do according to your own values, beliefs, ideas, expectations, roles, needs, and personal history.



'Listening Process'

3. Remembering:

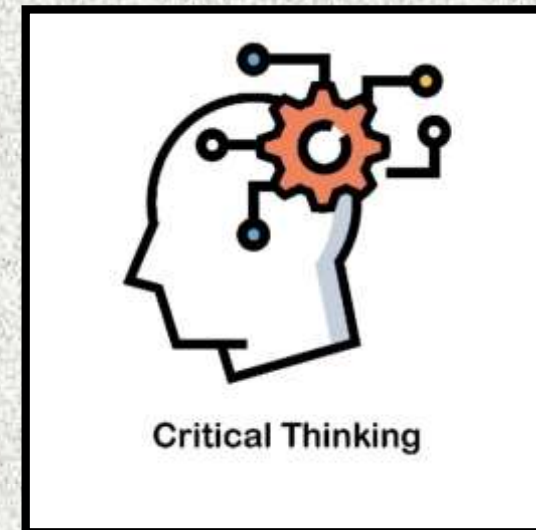
- Before you can act on the information, you need to store it for future processing. First you need to capture it in ***short-term memory***, which is your brain's temporary note pad. Information disappears from short-term memory quickly, though, so you need to transfer it to ***long-term memory*** for safekeeping.



‘Listening Process’

4. Evaluating:

- With the speaker’s message captured, your next step is to evaluate it by applying critical thinking skills. A separate fact from opinion and evaluate the quality of the evidence.



'Listening Process'

5. Responding:

- After you've evaluated the speaker's message, you now react. If you're communicating one-on-one or in a small group, the initial response generally takes the form of verbal feedback. If you're one of many in an audience, your initial response may take the form of applause, laughter, or silence. Later on, you may act on what you have heard.



'Listening Process'

I can say...

- If any one of these steps breaks down, the listening process becomes less effective or even fails entirely. For example, if you work in a noisy environment, you may never hear a message intended for you.
- If you do receive the message, a lack of shared meaning or shared language between you and the speaker might lead to a different interpretation than the speaker intended.
- On you might've looked away when the person was speaking and thereby missed an important non-verbal clue that would've helped you decipher the intended meaning.
- And even if you did interpret the meaning as the speaker hoped, you might forget it before you get around to acting on the information.
- A both a sender and receiver, you can reduce the failure rate by recognizing and overcoming a variety of physical and mental barriers to effective listening.

Barriers of Listening

There are certain factors which impede effective listening. Be aware of them. The important ones are briefly discussed below.

1. Adverse Physical Atmosphere

- Proper physical environment induces good listening.
- For example, if you have a comfortable seat in a quiet, well-ventilated room, you are likely to be a better listener than you would be in a room full of noisy children running about all around you or in a room where loud music is being played.



Barriers of Listening

2. Lack of motivation

- The lack of a strong desire to understand, to learn, to acquire skills, or to gain knowledge hinders effective listening.
- It has been found that the expectation of a tangible or an intangible benefit promotes proper listening.
- In formal teaching, listening, comprehension and dictocomposition exercises are designed to achieve this purpose.

Barriers of Listening

3. Improper Perception

- A distorted or truncated perception of the relevance and usefulness of the topic affects listening adversely.
- It creates a mental block and reception dips to a low level.
- Often the initial inertia to understand the scope of the topic affects the grasp of even a significant piece of information or an important message that follows the introduction.

Barriers of Listening

4. Negative Personality Traits

- Studies on the relationship between listening and personality traits show that, in general, those persons who are self-centered, boastful and domineering are poor listeners as compared to those persons who are methodical, analytical and thoughtful by nature.
- In course of time, the former category of persons develops within themselves a negative attitude towards the speaker.
- If he is smart, lively and effective, their ego is hurt and a feeling of resentment is generated, preventing them from making a sincere effort to understand what is being said.

Developing Listening Skills (Strategies)

1. Familiarise Yourself with the Sound System of English

- The sound system of every language is unique.
- So listening sometimes suffers because the sound system of one's mother tongue interferes with the sound system of English.
- When a medical officer on a routine visit to a school for check-up asked a student with rural background to show his teeth, he promptly turned round and raised his shirt to show his peeth (back).
- There are certain sounds in English which we Indians find difficult to speak and to understand when spoken to.
- For example, some of us fail to distinguish **'last'** from **'lost'**, **'zest'** from **'jest'**, **'same'** from **'shame'**, **'voice'** from **'vice'**, **'vent'** from **'went'**, **'worthy'** from **'wordy'**, etc.

Developing Listening Skills (Strategies)

1. Familiarise Yourself with the Sound System of English

- Apart from individual sounds, there are other important features which play a significant role in conveying meaning.
- To comprehend fully, it is essential to recognise the difference between a stressed word and an unstressed word, falling intonation and rising intonation, short pause and long pause.

Let's Practice...

Developing Listening Skills (Strategies)

2. Focus on Your Purpose

- Listening serves a number of purposes.
- As a student, when you attend lectures and seminars, your purpose is to gather information, to gain information, to understand concepts, and to learn the procedure or process of doing things.
- Same at the workplace too.
- These situations require full attention and complete understanding.
- Sometimes your listening has to be critical as well.
- Yet another purpose of listening is to **relax** and to derive aesthetic pleasure. You do this when you listen to your favourite music or watch a TV serial or a movie.

Developing Listening Skills (Strategies)

3. Have a Positive Attitude Towards the Speaker and the Topic

- Prevent yourself from paying attention to the dress and physical features of the speaker and musing over the phraseology of the topic.
- Instead, concentrate on what the speaker says on the topic, its thought-content.
- Keep your mind open and ready to receive.
- **Try to understand the matter being presented with all the sincerity at your command.**

Developing Listening Skills (Strategies)

4. Listen with Your Eyes as well as Ears

- You must carefully pay attention not only to the spoken words but also on how they are being uttered and the accompanying body language.
- The non-verbal clues such as the **twinkle in the eyes, the flourish of hands, shrugging of shoulders, the movement of podium, the facial expression**, etc. also convey meaning besides reflecting the speaker's attitude towards the topic and the audience.

Developing Listening Skills (Strategies)

5. Avoid Premature Evaluation

- Some listeners start evaluating just after one or two points have been made by the speaker.
- To sat the least, it is unfair to do so.
- sometimes the points discussed at the initial stage appear to be irrelevant but later they are connected with the theme or the central thought.

Developing Listening Skills (Strategies)

6. Resist Distractions

- One of the reasons for distractions for distraction is the time gap between the capacity to speak and the capacity to listen.
- The average speed of **speaking is about 150 words per minute** and that of **listening about 650 words per minute**.
- There are two main sources of distraction: One, **the speaker himself may distract the listeners by his odd body movements, peculiar speech mannerisms, unpleasant facial expressions or improper physical appearance**. Two, **distraction may be caused by an external source**.

Developing Listening Skills (Strategies)

7. Take Notes

- Good listeners generally take notes in all speech situations related to their work.
- But, if the purpose of listening is to gather specific information or to acquire knowledge for future use, you must take notes.
- In a lecture, seminars, presentation or a briefing session, a speaker usually makes a few (say five to six) basic points.
- While listening to him, identify these points and note them down systematically, along with a gist of supporting ideas, evidence or illustrative material.

Some DO's for Listeners

What you should do...

- ✓ **Keep quiet while listening.**
- ✓ **Focus on what the speaker says rather than on his looks.**
- ✓ **Control and screen out distractions.**
- ✓ **Show interest in the speaker.**
- ✓ **Be friendly and patient towards the speaker.**
- ✓ **Listen first and take notes afterwards.**
- ✓ **Look for the main theme and main ideas.**
- ✓ **Let the speaker finish whatever he has to say without interrupting him.**
- ✓ **Communicate feedback to the speaker. Ask questions which may encourage the speaker.**
- ✓ **Remember that god had given you two ears and one tongue.**

Some DO's for Listeners

What you should do...

- ✓ (A) Find an area of interest in the speech.
- (B) Look interested in the speech.
- (C) Act interested in listening.
- ✓ Try to repeat the key-ideas during slow and long speeches.
- ✓ Avoid pondering a single point.
- ✓ Keep your mind open to every subject and speaker.
- ✓ Choose a quiet place to listen, if possible.
- ✓ Arrive early at the place of a seminar, lecture, talk or meeting.
- ✓ Empathise with the speaker and try to understand his opinions, views and values.

Some DO's for Listeners

What you should do...

- ✓ **Try to probe the emotions and feelings of the speaker.**
- ✓ **Seek out difficult speech presentations to challenge your listening skills.**
- ✓ **Observe non-verbal signals, body movements, facial expressions and gestures.**
- ✓ **Try to look into the eyes of the speaker.**
- ✓ **Try to relate the speaker's message with your personal experience.**
- ✓ **Try to evaluate the speaker's message objectively.**
- ✓ **Try to enrich your vocabulary so that you may understand the exact shade of meaning conveyed by the words of the speaker.**
- ✓ **Accept criticism without losing your temper.**



Some DON'Ts for Listeners

What you should not do...

- ✓ **Don't interrupt the speaker.**
- ✓ **Don't be impatient towards the criticism in the speech.**
- ✓ **Don't be distracted by audio-visual noise.**
- ✓ **Don't be involved in daydreaming during listening.**
- ✓ **Don't lose interest in the speaker and his speech.**
- ✓ **Don't just pretend to pay attention.**
- ✓ **Don't focus on the dress and appearance of the speaker.**
- ✓ **Don't be late at the place of meeting or lecture.**
- ✓ **Don't think too much about a single point.**
- ✓ **Don't be closed-minded.**



Some DON'Ts for Listeners

What you should not do...

- ✓ **Don't hesitate to give oral or non-verbal feedback.**
- ✓ **Don't listen to several people at a time.**
- ✓ **Don't read your mail and don't entertain telephone calls while you listen to someone's speech.**
- ✓ **Don't discourage the speaker by openly contradicting his statements or by pointing out his pretty grammatical mistakes.**
- ✓ **Don't be in a state of emotional excitement.**
- ✓ **Don't listen with negative attitude.**
- ✓ **Don't show your lack of interest in the speech.**
- ✓ **Don't try to outline every factual detail.**



Thank You !

Assessment

All the Best !