



LISTENING

Reflect

- There is a difference between hearing and listening. Listening, as opposed to hearing, has been highlighted as one of the most important communication skills for employees.
- A 1999 survey found that 80 per cent of a sample of American executives rated listening as the most important skill in the workforce, far above technical skills yet 28 per cent of the same sample thought listening skills were also the most lacking in the workforce.
- Researchers at the University of Minnesota concluded that nearly 60 per cent of misunderstanding in the business world could be traced to poor listening, and only 1 per cent to written communication.
- Research conducted in the Singapore insurance industry showed that the more experienced staff members were, the more likely they were to value listening above speaking as a communication strategy; the more inexperienced staff members were, the more likely they were to interrupt and thus annoy customers.

What is the difference between listening and hearing?

The following table highlights the key differences between hearing and listening.

Hearing	Listening
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accidental• Involuntary• Effortless	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focused• Voluntary• Intentional

THE PROCESS OF LISTENING

RECEIVING/SENSING

INTERPRETING

EVALUATING

REMEMBERING

RESPONDING

RECEIVING/SENSING

- This stage involves the act of physically hearing the message, and making sense of the sounds that are entering the ear.



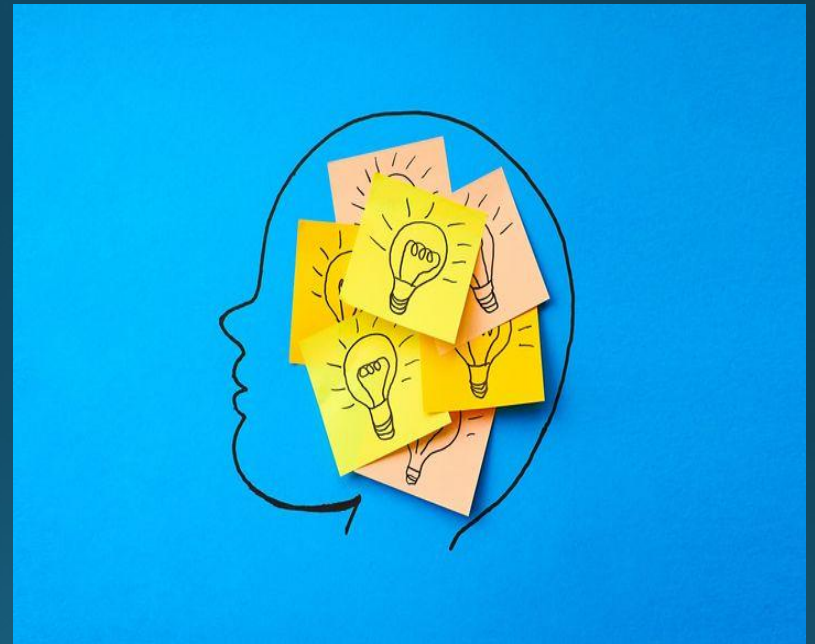
INTERPRETING

- In this step, the message is absorbed and decoded. In most of the cases, listeners may assign meanings to words according to their **own values, beliefs, ideologies, needs, expectations, and background.**
- For good interpretation, it is important to also pay attention to the speaker's **body language** and **paralanguage.**



EVALUATING

- In this stage, the information is evaluated and judged, and an opinion is formed.
- Sorting and categorizing of information takes place at this stage. This stage is like a mental filter and guard against propagandists and conspirers.
- You must think and accept information, as blind acceptance can lead to formulation of wrong ideologies.



REMEMBERING

- Next, the message is stored for future reference. We can remember only 25-50% of the message



RESPONDING

- In this stage, the listener provides feedback to the speaker, using either non-verbal or verbal communication, depending on the contextual requirement.



BARRIERS TO LISTENING

Boredom or lack of interest

Dislike of speaker's personality or physical appearance

A desire to change rather than accept the speaker

A tendency to make early conclusions or listening only for pauses to interrupt the speaker

Perception that the speaker lacks credibility

Being distracted by the environment

Rushing the speaker to complete speaking

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

- As an active listener, you **remove all judgment** about the other person's situation.
- You **do not give them any advice or your opinion** – you just simply listen.
- Do not do the talking – **allow the other person to talk.**

Active Listening

- Active listening is reacting or doing something that demonstrates you are listening and have understood what someone is saying. This can include actions such as:



Pay
undivided
attention

Do not
interrupt, be
patient

Avoid
distractions

Do not
prejudge the
speaker

Using active listening allows you to:

- **Check the accuracy** of what the speaker has said
- **Check the feelings** of the speaker
- **Summarize** what the speaker has said
- **Acknowledge** what the speaker has said, without making any kind of commitment
- Open a door, **prompting** the speaker to continue

Effective Questions

- Open questions invite the other person to talk
- Closed questions invite the other person to give a 'yes' or 'no' response
- Probing questions to gain more details
- Mirror questions to show interest in what the other person has said

Ineffective Questions

- Multiple questions that cover a number of issues
- Leading questions to get the answer you want
- Implied value questions that reflect your values
- Ambiguous or vague questions that confuse

Types of Active Listening Skills

Appreciative

Comprehensive

Empathetic

Critical

Appreciative Listening

- Your goal is to simply enjoy the thoughts and experiences of others by listening to what they are saying.
- With appreciative listening, you do not have to focus as closely or as carefully on specifics as you do in other listening situations.
- You might use appreciative listening during a casual social conversation while watching a ball game with friends or when listening to any kid describe the fish s/he caught on an outing with her/his grandpa.

Comprehensive Listening

- In a **comprehensive listening** situation, your goal is not only to understand the speaker's message but also to learn, remember, and be able to recall what has been said.
- We listen comprehensively to professors lecturing about key concepts, speakers at training seminars, and broadcast news reports that provide timely information about traffic conditions.

Empathetic Listening

- When the situation calls for us to try to understand how someone else is feeling about what they have experienced or are talking about, we use **empathic listening**.
- Therapists, counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists engage in empathic listening with their clients.

Critical Listening

- Your ultimate goal is to **evaluate** the worth of a message. Because you need to hear, understand, evaluate, and assign worth to the message, it requires more psychological processing than the other types.
- Critical listening is the most demanding of the types of listening because it requires that you understand and remember both the verbal and nonverbal message, assess the speaker's credibility, and effectively analyze the truthfulness of the message.