



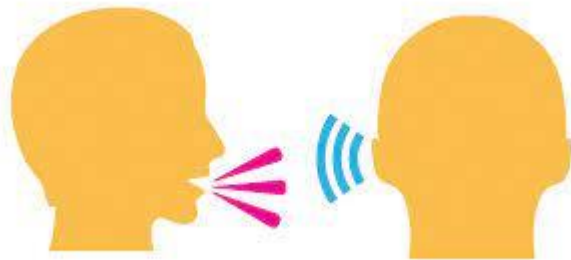
Listening Skills

Sasanjalie Jayasinghe

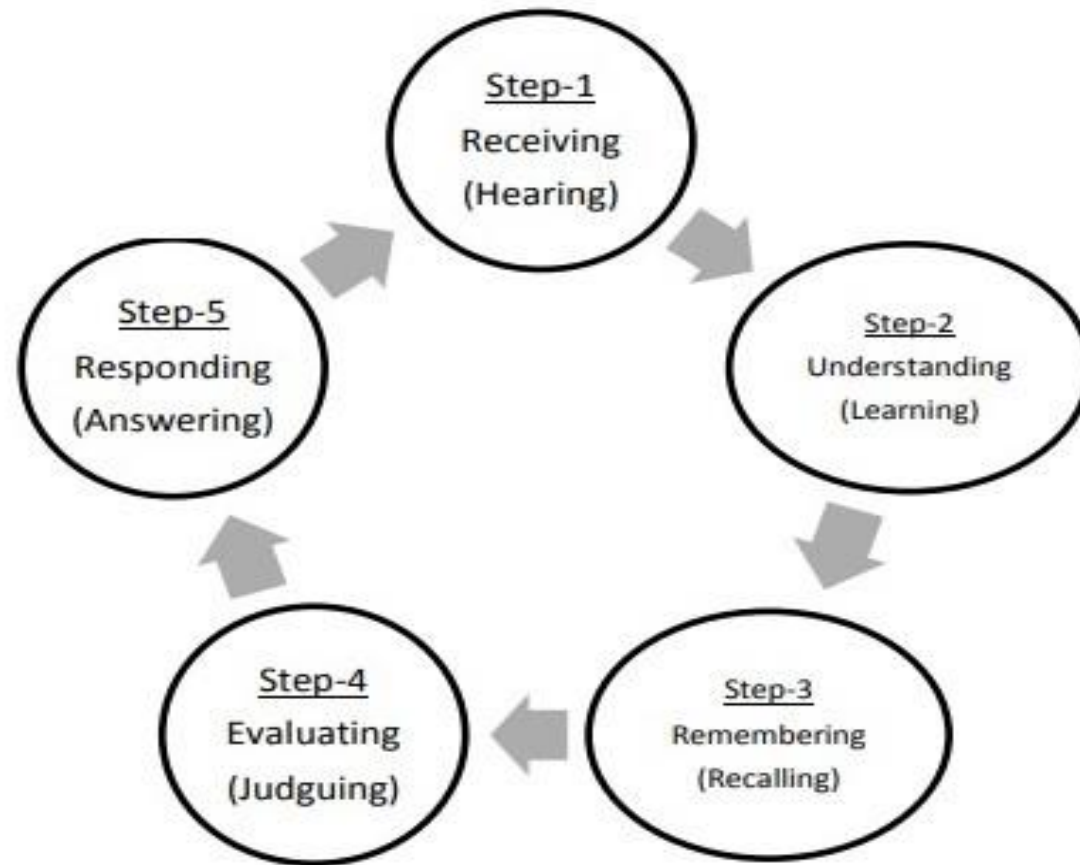
What is Listening?

- Listening skill is a key to receiving messages effectively.
- “It is a combination of hearing what another person says and psychological involvement with the person who is talking.”

Babita Tyagi (2013)



Process of Listening



Strategies of Listening

1. Top-down strategies
2. Bottom-up strategies



Top-down vs. bottom-up listening

Imagine the following situations:

Over lunch, your friend tells you a story about a recent holiday, which was a disaster. You listen with interest and speak at appropriate moments, maybe to express surprise or sympathy.

That evening, another friend calls to invite you to a party at her house the following Saturday. As you've never been to her house before, she gives you directions. You listen carefully and make notes.

How do you listen in each case?

Are there any differences?

With the holiday story, your main concern was probably **understanding the general idea** and knowing when some response was expected.

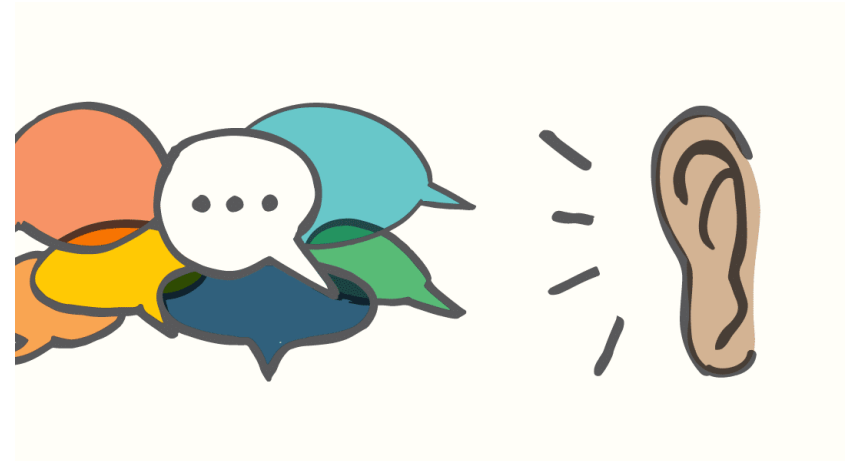
When listening to the directions to a party, **understanding the exact words** is likely to be more important – if you want to get there without incident, that is!

Three Basic Modes of Listening

Active or Reflective Listening

Passive or Attentive Listening

Competitive or Combative Listening



Types of Listening

- **Active Listening**

Listening in a way that demonstrates interest and encourages continued speaking.

- **Appreciative Listening**

Looking for ways to accept and appreciate the other person through what they say. Seeking opportunity to praise. Alternatively listening to something for pleasure, such as to music.

- **Biased Listening**

Listening through the filter of personal bias i.e the person hears only what they want to listen.

- **Critical listening**

Listening in order to evaluate, criticize or otherwise pass judgment on what someone else says.

Importance of Listening Skill

- Good listening skills make workers more productive.
- The ability to listen carefully will allow a person to,
 - understand assignments in better way and find out what is expected
 - build rapport with co-workers, bosses, and clients
 - show support
 - work better in a team-based environment
 - resolve problems with customers, co-workers, and bosses
 - answer questions
 - find underlying meanings in what others say

Ways to Improve Listening Skill

- Face the speaker
- Maintain eye contact
- Minimize external distractions
- Respond appropriately
- Focus solely on what the speaker is saying
- Minimize internal distractions
- Keep an open mind
- Even if the speaker is launching a complaint against you, wait until they finish to defend yourself
- Engage yourself

Barriers to Listening

- Physiological Barriers
- Physical Barriers
- Attitudinal Barriers
- Wrong Assumptions
- Cultural Barriers
- Gender Barriers
- Lack of Training
- Bad Listening Habits



Benefits of Effective Listening Skills

- Effective communication
- Fewer misunderstandings
- Improve relationships
- Personal growth

Common Listening Mistakes

1. Interrupting the speaker.
2. Completing the speakers sentences in advance.
3. Habit of topping another person's story with your own is demeaning and relegates the speaker's story to something less important.
4. Dominating Conversations – A person who dominates conversations probably commits all of the above mistakes and is not listening at all.



One of the most sincere
forms of respect is
actually listening to
what another has to
say.

Bryant H. McGill

References

- <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/knowning-subject/articles/listening-top-down-and-bottom>
- Brooks, N. (1960). Language and language learning: Theory and practice. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.
- Omaggio Hadley, A. (1993). Teaching language in context (2nd ed.). Boston: Heinle & Heinle
- Rost M. (1990). Listening in language learning. London: Longman.
- Underwood M. (1989). Teaching listening. London: Longman.