**Listening v/s hearing:**

**Listening:**

* Active process
* Voluntary process
* Emotional and intellectual involvement and investment
* Active listening requires one to understand completely:
* Listening not only to the message but also to the way it has been delivered
* They focus on the content as well the manner in which it is delivered
* This means that they will take note of the verbal content along with its nonverbal subtexts
* They will not hesitate to seek clarifications, ask leading questions, show their approval by nodding head, and summarize
* Active listeners are sensitive towards the feelings of others, they understand the mood of the audience
* Understand the intent purpose and significance of the message
* They minimise distractions

**BARRIERS TO ACTIVE LISTENING**

* Inadequate language base
* Partial Listening
* Disinterestedness
* Pre-judging the Speaker/the Speech
* Negativity towards the Speaker
* Diffidence
* Over-enthusiasm/Intolerance
* Deep-rooted beliefs

**Hearing:**

* Physical process
* Involuntary process
* Passive activity
* Don’t have to actively engage our brain

**TYPES OF LISTENING:**

1. **Discriminative listening**, is a focused and usually instrumental type of listening that is primarily physiological and occurs mostly at the receiving stage of the listening process. It is sometimes referred to as listening for judgement because it involves listening for specific sounds. This basic type of listening precedes the understanding of words and relies on tone of voice and other subtleties of sound to understand meaning and intention.

Here we engage in listening to scan and monitor our surroundings in order to isolate particular stimuli. For example, we may focus our listening on a dark part of the yard while walking the dog at night to determine if the noise we just heard presents us with any danger. In the absence of a hearing impairment, we have an innate and physiological ability to engage in discriminative listening. Although this is the most basic form of listening, it provides the foundation on which more intentional listening skills are built. This type of listening can be refined and honed.

You rely on discriminative listening when people around you are speaking a foreign language that you don’t understand. Though you may lack the language skills to understand the words being spoken, you can rely on the tone of voice and inflection to derive a vague meaning. When you can only rely on discriminative listening, you may turn to visual stimuli. The mannerisms, facial expressions, and body language of a speaker help clue you in to the speaker’s message.

1. **Informational listening** entails listening with the goal of comprehending and retaining information. This type of listening is not evaluative and is common in teaching and learning contexts ranging from a student listening to an informative speech to an out-of-towner listening to directions to the nearest gas station. We also use informational listening when we listen to news reports, voice mail, and briefings at work. Since retention and recall are important components of informational listening, good concentration and memory skills are the key.

These also happen to be skills that many college students struggle with, at least in the first years of college, but will be expected to have mastered once they get into professional contexts. In many professional contexts, informational listening is important, especially when receiving instructions.

Professionals will be expected to process verbal instructions more frequently in their profession than they are in college. Most college professors provide detailed instructions and handouts with assignments so students can review them as needed, but many supervisors and managers will expect you to take the initiative to remember or record vital information. Additionally, many bosses are not as open to questions or requests to repeat themselves as professors are.

Informational listening builds upon basic comprehensive listening and requires a high level of concentration and engagement to understand new concepts and comprehend technical jargon. Informational listening has less to do with the emotional content of what is being communicated and more to do with critical thinking and following a logical sequence as it is communicated.

1. **Critical listening** involves listening with the goal to analyse or evaluate a message based on information presented verbally and information that can be inferred from context. A critical listener evaluates a message and accepts it, rejects it, or decides to withhold judgment and seek more information. As constant consumers of messages, we need to be able to assess the credibility of speakers and their messages and identify various persuasive appeals and faulty logic. Critical listening is important during persuasive exchanges and some degree of critical listening is recommended at all times as you may find yourself in a persuasive interaction that you thought was informative.

For example, critical listening skills are useful when listening to a political speech, when processing any of the persuasive media messages we receive daily etc. Critical listening is the style of listening people use when they are trying to analyze and judge complex information that is being communicated to them. You might use critical listening when you are trying to solve problems (personal / professional) and trying to decide if you agree or disagree with a proposal being floated. The word “critical” has multiple meanings, but in this case it simply means that you are evaluating information—not necessarily passing judgment. Critical listening is also important when listening to other speakers that have stated or implied objectivity, such as parents, teachers, doctors, and religious leaders. Given the number of instances in which you listen critically, it is clear that there is often a high level of analysis in your listening so that you can make informed decisions.

1. **Empathetic listening** is the most challenging form of listening and occurs when we try to understand or experience what a speaker is thinking or feeling. Empathetic listening is distinct from sympathetic listening. While the word *empathy*means to “feel into” or “feel with” another person, *sympathy*means to “feel for” someone. Sympathy is generally more self-oriented and distant than empathy. Empathetic listening is other oriented and should be genuine. Because of our own centrality in our perceptual world, empathetic listening can be difficult. It’s often much easier for us to tell our own story or to give advice than it is to really listen to and empathize with someone else. We should keep in mind that sometimes others just need to be heard and our feedback isn’t actually desired.

Empathetic listening is key for dialogue and helps maintain interpersonal relationships. In order to reach dialogue, people must have a degree of open-mindedness and a commitment to civility that allows them to be empathetic while still allowing them to believe iAn and advocate for their own position. Empathetic listening focuses on offering support to another individual *without judgment*, therefore it is not only one of the most important listening skills you can have, but one of the most difficult to achieve.

1. **Sympathetic listening:** Sympathetic listening is driven by emotion. Sympathetic listening is an emotionally-driven type of relationship listening, wherein a listener processes the feelings and emotions of a speaker and tries to provide support and understanding in return.

Instead of focusing on the message spoken through words, the listener focuses on the feelings and emotions of the speaker. This is done to process these feelings and emotions. By using sympathetic listening, you can provide the support the speaker needs. You can understand how they’re really feeling, not what they say they are feeling.

The speaker will feel heard and validated when you take the time to pay attention in this way. Sympathetic listening is crucial if you want to build a deeper relationship with someone in your life. For example, let’s say you run into a work colleague at the grocery store. They seem upset, so you decide to listen to what they have to say.

You also use sympathetic listening to feel how they are feeling. In doing this, you notice how frustrated they are about the lack of recognition they are getting at work.

As a result, you can offer your support and sympathize with their situation.

1. **Selective listening** is a type of listening demonstrated when someone is just listening for information that they want to hear. Biased listening is different from critical listening because the listener is not honestly evaluating the validity of the speaker’s opinions, but rather is looking to confirm previously-held biases. People are often unaware that they are using a biased listening process. Biased listening can lead to a distortion of facts in the mind of a listener who is not tuned in to what a speaker intends to communicate.

Bias = preconceived notions

1. **Appreciative Listening:** Finally, as communicators we often engage in appreciative listening.  It is easy to understand that listening to music, watching a movie, or going to a theatre would allow us to simply listen for enjoyment.  We can also engage in conversations with friends or others that have no purpose other than enjoyment.  Think about a time when a friend told you a funny story, or you just got together to talk about what is happening in each other’s lives.  You may even have a college professor that you find entertaining!  Appreciative listening is the easiest type of listening because you do not have to necessarily engage in analysis.

Although we can engage in each of these listening types independently, you will find that you can will use more than one type at the same time.  If you are in a college class, you will most definitely need to focus on informational listening, but if your instructor is telling a story, you may also be listening appreciatively.