

at·ten·tion

S2 W1

/ə'tenʃ n/

noun

- 1 **listen/look/think carefully** [uncountable] when you carefully listen to, look at, or think about someone or something:

*My **attention** wasn't really **on** the game.*

*She tried to **pay attention to** what he was saying.*

*If you **paid** more **attention** in class, you might actually learn something!*

*Scott sat down at his desk and **turned** his **attention to** the file he had in front of him.*

*As a society we need to **give** more **attention to** the needs of older people.*

*Now he's gone, I can **give you my undivided attention**.*

*This game is fun and is sure to **keep the attention of** any young student.*

*They listened to the speech with **close attention**.*

***Attention to detail** is essential in this job.*

*During the lecture Sarah's **attention** began to **wander**.*

- 2 **INTEREST** **interest** [plural, uncountable] **ATTENTION** the interest that people show in someone or something:

*She was flattered by all the **attention** he was **giving** her.*

attract/receive/enjoy attention

a player who quickly attracted the attention of several clubs

The exhibition received little attention in the press.

public/media/press attention

Her case attracted a great deal of media attention.

hold/keep somebody's attention (= make someone stay interested and keep reading, listening, watching etc)

The book holds the reader's attention right to the very end.

*Rob loves being **the centre of attention*** (= the person who everyone is interested in, listens to etc).

She spent a lot of time trying to avoid the attentions (= romantic interest) *of her boss.*

*The man then **turned his attentions to*** (= became romantically interested in) *her sister.*

3 MAKE SOMEBODY NOTICE **notice**

a) **attract/catch/get somebody's attention** ATTENTION

to make someone notice you, especially because you want to speak to them or you need their help:

She waved to attract the attention of the waitress.

b) **get attention** ATTENTION

to make someone notice you and be interested in what you are doing:

Children often misbehave in order to get attention.

c) **draw/call attention to something** (also / **focus attention on something**) ATTENTION

to make people notice and be concerned or think about something:

The purpose of the article was to draw attention to the problems faced by single parents.

We wanted to focus public attention on this matter.

He left quietly to avoid drawing attention to himself.

d) **divert/distract/draw attention from something** ATTENTION

to make people stop being concerned about something such as a social problem:

All this talk of war is just an attempt to draw attention away from the serious economic problems that face our country.

e) bring something to somebody's attention ATTENTION

to tell someone, especially someone in authority, about something such as a problem:

The matter was first brought to my attention earlier this year.

f) come to somebody's attention FIND OUT

if something such as a problem comes to the attention of someone in authority, they find out about it:

It came to my attention that Jenny was claiming overtime pay for hours she had not worked.

g) escape your attention

if something escaped your attention, you did not notice it:

This fact had not escaped the attention of the authorities.

4 | repair/cleaning [uncountable] something you do to repair or clean something:

*The bike's in fairly good condition, but the gears **need a bit of attention**.*

5 | care CARE [uncountable] HELP things that you do to help or to take care of someone or something:

*Pets need a lot of **care and attention**.*

*Anyone who comes into contact with these chemicals should seek urgent **medical attention**.*

*Your plants look like they **could do with a bit of attention**.*

6 stand to/at attention STAND

if soldiers stand to attention, they stand up straight in neat lines

7 attention!

a)

used to ask people to listen to important information that is being announced, especially on a

LOUDSPEAKER (= piece of equipment used to make sounds louder) :

Attention, please! Could Passenger Marie Thomas please proceed to Gate 25 immediately.

b)

used when ordering a group of soldiers to stand up straight in neat lines

8 LETTER **for the attention of somebody**

used on the front of an official letter when you want a particular person to read it or deal with it:

Letters should be marked 'for the attention of Joe Benson'.

COLLOCATIONSense 1

verbs

pay attention to something/ somebody *He read the final page, paying particular attention to the last paragraph.*

turn your attention to something/ somebody *She quickly put away the shopping and then turned her attention to preparing dinner.*

give something/ somebody your attention (= think about something/ somebody so that you can deal with a problem) *She promised to give the matter her attention the next day.*

somebody's attention wanders (= somebody stops listening, watching etc carefully) *During the service, her mind began to wander.*

adjectives

somebody's full/ complete/ undivided attention *He gave the task his undivided attention.*

THESAURUS

pay attention to carefully listen to, look at, or think about something or someone: *She told the class to stop talking and pay attention. | In any relationship, it helps to pay attention to each other's needs.*

concentrate to think carefully about something that you are doing and not let other things disturb your thoughts: *I tried to*

read a few pages, but I was too upset to concentrate. | Children need their own quiet space where they can concentrate on their homework.

keep your mind on something to continue to pay attention to something, especially when you are very excited or worried about something else: *On Friday, the day of the party, I had a dreadful time keeping my mind on my work. | Good football players keep their minds on the game at all times.*

keep your eyes on something to keep watching something carefully, so that you do not make any mistakes: *The first rule of driving is to keep your eyes on the road. | Keep your eyes on the ball – now swing!*

be engrossed in something to be paying so much attention to a book, a conversation, some work etc, that you do not notice what is happening around you: *Helen was sitting up in bed, engrossed in a novel. | He was so engrossed in what he was doing he didn't even hear the doorbell ring.*

be absorbed in something to be giving all your attention to something, especially something you are reading, watching, or thinking about: *The little boy sat at the edge of the pond, totally absorbed in watching the fish. | He was a quiet man who often seemed to be absorbed in his own thoughts. | Matilda was curled up in an armchair, absorbed in a book.*

give something/ somebody your undivided attention to give all your attention to something or someone and not do anything else – used especially when this is something you want or need to do: *Come round when the kids are in bed so I can give you my undivided attention. | Once I've finished my exams, I'll be able to give my undivided attention to looking for a job.*

Word origin

Date: 1300–1400

Language: Latin

Origin: *attentio*, from *attendere*; → ATTEND

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

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