**Define Listening Skills**  
            Listening is the act of hearing attentively. Research shows that 45% of our time is spent on listening. We listen more than speak.If this listening skill is used in a proper way we can master the tools of communicative skills. Listening is difficult, as human mind tends to distract easily. A person who controls his mind and listens attentively acquires various other skills and is benefited.  
  
         Listening skill can be defined as, “Listening is the act of hearing attentively”. It is also a process similar to reading which should possess knowledge of phonology, syntax, semantics and text understanding. Thomlison (1984) defines listening as, “Active listening, which is very important for effective communication”. Listening can be also defined as, “More than just hearing and to understand and interpret the meaning of a conversation”.  
  
         Listening skill makes you successful in workplace, family and in the society. Good listening skill is mandatory to get into a profession in communications, management, planning, sales, etc. Listening skills involve a different set of etiquettes, questioning for explanation, showing empathy and providing a suitable response. Good listening skills include the understanding ability. Body language is also a part of listening skill. Eye contact with the speaker, sitting straight and alert are the good gestures of a good listener.

| **Basis for Comparison** | **Hearing** | **Listening** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Meaning | Hearing refers to one's ability to perceive sounds, by receiving vibrations through ears. | Listening is something done consciously, that involve the analysis and understanding of the sounds you hear. |
| What is it? | An ability | A skill |
| Nature | Primary and continuous | Secondary and temporary |
| Act | Physiological | Psychological |
| Involves | Receipt of message through ears. | Interpretation of the message received by ears. |
| Process | Passive bodily process | Active mental process |
| Occurs at | Subconscious level | Conscious level |
| Use of senses | Only one | More than one |
| Reason | We are neither aware nor we have any control over the sounds we hear. | We listen to acquire knowledge and receive information. |
| Concentration | Not required | Required |

**Process of Listening**

1. Receiving sounds
2. Interpretation
3. Analyzing
4. Feedback

**Types of Listening**

## Attentive listening

In attentive listening you pay obvious attention to the other person so they can see that you are interested in what they have to say.

**Appreciative listening**

In appreciative listening, we seek certain information which will appreciate, for example that which helps meet our [needs](http://changingminds.org/explanations/needs/needs.htm) and [goals](http://changingminds.org/explanations/motivation/goals.htm). We use appreciative listening when we are listening to good music, poetry .

**Sympathetic listening**

In sympathetic listening we care about the other person and show this concern in the way we pay close attention and express our sorrow for their ills and happiness at their joys.

## Critical listening

Critical listening is listening in order to evaluate and judge, forming opinion about what is being said .In *critical listening*, we make judgments about what the other person is saying. We also judge what they say against our [values](http://changingminds.org/explanations/values/values.htm), assessing them as good or bad, worthy or unworthy.

## Projective Listening

It is very common to us. Wthe listeners absorb the information according to his/ her own view or perspective. In other words, broader view of the listener is either ignored or given less attention.

**Common Barriers to Listening**  
  
 **You are not interested** in the topic/issue being discussed and become bored.

 **Not focusing** and being easily distracted, fiddling with your hair, fingers, a pen etc. or gazing out of the window or focusing on objects other than the speaker.

 **Feeling unwell or tired**

 **You are prejudiced or biased** by race, gender, age, religion, accent, and/or past experiences.

 **You have preconceived ideas or bias** -  effective listening includes being open-minded to the ideas and opinions of others, this does not mean you have to agree but should listen and attempt to understand.

 **You make judgments**, thinking, for example that  a person is not very bright or is under-qualified so there is no point listening to what they have to say.

 Previous **experiences** – we are all influenced by previous experiences in life.  We respond to people based on personal appearances, how initial introductions or welcomes were received and/or previous interpersonal encounters.  If we stereotype a person we become less objective and therefore less likely to listen effectively.

 Preoccupation- when we have a lot on our minds we can fail to listen to what is being said as we're too busy concentrating on what we're thinking about. This is particularly true when we feel stressed or worried about issues.

 Having **a Closed Mind** - we all have ideals and values that we believe to be correct and it can be difficult to listen to the views of others that contradict our own opinions. The key to effective listening and interpersonal skills more generally is the ability to have a truly open mind - to understand why others think about things differently to you and use this information to gain a better understanding of the speaker.