

Unit 2

Communication Skills: II

(Listening and Reading)

INTRODUCTION

Communication is not just about speaking and writing; it also includes the receptive skills of listening and reading. These skills help us understand, analyse, and interpret the information we receive from others—whether in conversation, lectures, interviews, newspapers, books, or emails.

Effective listening and reading are essential for:

- Academic learning
- Workplace success
- Personal relationships
- Self-improvement and lifelong learning

LISTENING SKILLS

DEFINITION OF LISTENING

Listening is an active process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken or non-verbal messages.

It requires attention, comprehension, and mental engagement.

Listening ≠ Hearing

Hearing is a passive and physiological process of perceiving sound waves through the ears, while listening is an active, voluntary, and cognitive process of paying focused attention to those sounds, interpreting their meaning, and often involving an emotional response or effort to understand the message being conveyed.

IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE LISTENING

◇ Domain	◇ Role of Listening
Academic	Helps students understand lectures, follow instructions, and participate in discussions.
Professional	Crucial for understanding tasks, participating in meetings, handling clients, and team collaboration.
Personal	Strengthens relationships, reduces misunderstandings, and shows empathy.
Leadership	Leaders listen to feedback, delegate effectively, and resolve conflicts with active listening.

Key Benefits

- Enhances understanding and retention
- Builds better relationships
- Facilitates empathy
- Enables quicker and more accurate responses
- Minimizes conflict

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING

A. Physical Barriers

- Noise (external sounds)
- Hearing impairment
- Poor seating arrangement
- Unclear audio (especially online)

B. Psychological Barriers

- Stress, anxiety, anger, or emotional tension
- Preoccupation with personal thoughts
- Disinterest or lack of motivation

C. Semantic Barriers

- Use of unfamiliar language or jargon
- Differences in accent or pronunciation
- Misinterpretation of vocabulary

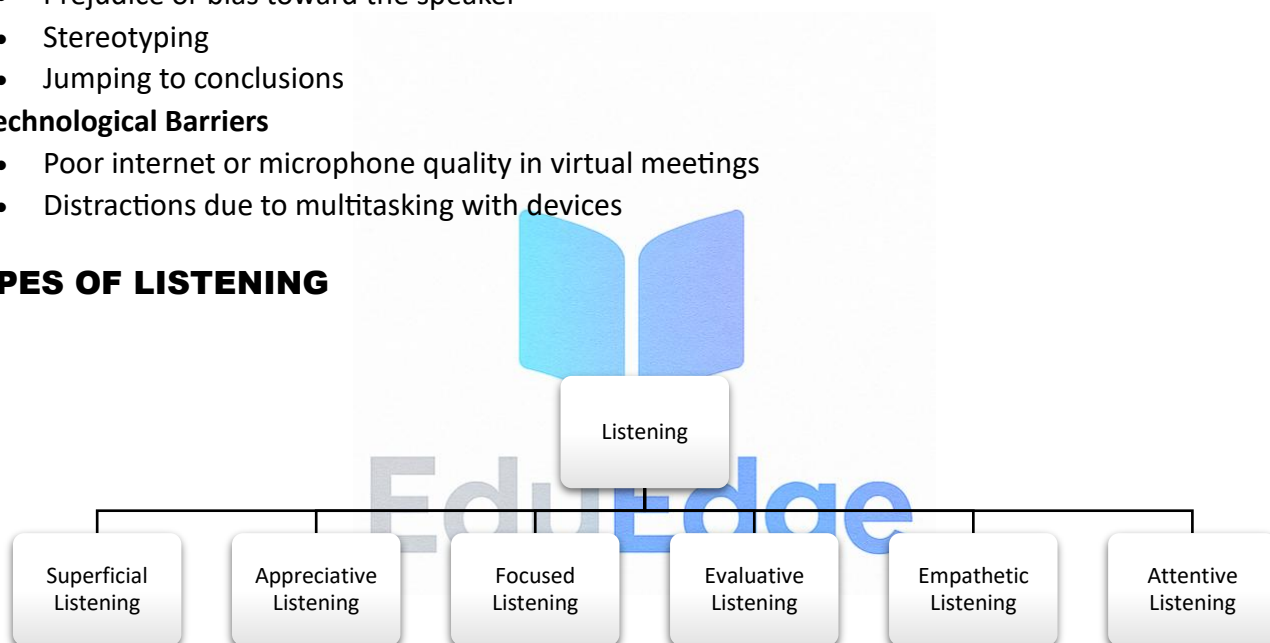
D. Perceptual Barriers

- Prejudice or bias toward the speaker
- Stereotyping
- Jumping to conclusions

E. Technological Barriers

- Poor internet or microphone quality in virtual meetings
- Distractions due to multitasking with devices

TYPES OF LISTENING



Type of Listening	Meaning	Example
<i>Superficial Listening</i>	Listening at a surface level, without giving full attention or interest.	Pretending to listen during a boring lecture.
<i>Appreciative Listening</i>	Listening for enjoyment or pleasure, without expecting information.	Enjoying music, a podcast, or a story.
<i>Focused Listening</i>	Paying close attention to the speaker's words and intentions.	Listening carefully during a job interview.
<i>Evaluative Listening</i>	Analysing and judging the truth, logic, or importance of a message.	Evaluating a product advertisement or political speech.
<i>Empathetic Listening</i>	Listening to understand the speaker's emotions and feelings.	Listening to a friend talk about a personal problem.
<i>Attentive Listening</i>	Giving full attention and actively trying to understand the message.	Concentrating in a classroom lecture.

GUIDELINES & TECHNIQUES FOR EFFECTIVE LISTENING

Before Listening:

- Clear your mind of distractions
- Adjust your seating or device (if online)
- Stay open and willing to understand

While Listening:

- *Focus fully* – Give undivided attention
- *Avoid interrupting* – Let the speaker finish
- *Take notes* – Especially in academic/professional settings
- *Ask clarifying questions* – If unclear, politely ask
- *Use non-verbal feedback* – Nod, smile, maintain eye contact

After Listening:

- Summarize the main points
- Give appropriate verbal feedback
- Respond clearly and respectfully

HOW TO IMPROVE LISTENING SKILLS

- Practice mindfulness (be present)
- Listen to audiobooks, news, TED Talks, podcasts
- Join group discussions or debate clubs
- Watch English films/shows with subtitles
- Record lectures and replay
- Avoid distractions (mobile, multitasking)
- Engage in listening games/exercises

READING SKILLS

DEFINITION OF READING

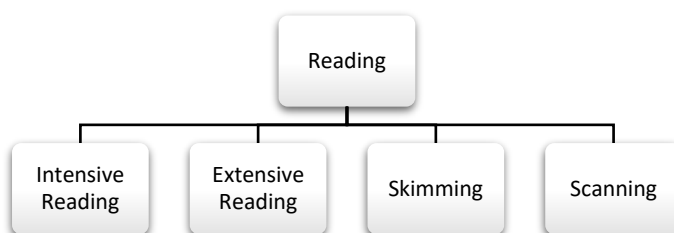
Reading is the process of looking at written symbols and deriving meaning from them. It is not just recognizing words, but understanding, interpreting, and reacting to what is read.

Good readers do not read faster; they read smarter, focusing on purpose, comprehension, and retention.

IMPORTANCE OF READING SKILLS

Academic	Professional	Personal
<i>Understand syllabus & concepts</i>	Read and analyse reports, emails	Increases knowledge
<i>Write better answers</i>	Stay updated with trends	Improves vocabulary
<i>Prepare for exams</i>	Follow instructions	Enhances critical thinking
<i>Research papers & journals</i>	Documentation	Boosts creativity

TYPES OF READING



A. Intensive Reading

- In-depth reading of short passages
- Focuses on details, grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary
- Usually guided (e.g., class reading, passage analysis)
Example: Reading a paragraph in an exam, poem analysis, legal document.

B. Extensive Reading

- Reading for general understanding and pleasure
- Covers long texts like novels, articles, newspapers
- Encourages fluent reading
Example: Reading a novel like *The Alchemist*, newspaper editorials.

C. Skimming

- Reading quickly to get the main idea
- Ideal for previewing content or getting the gist
- Useful for time-saving
How to skim:
- Read titles, subheadings
- Focus on bold/italic text
- Read topic sentences
Example: Skimming a news article to decide if it's worth reading fully.

D. Scanning

- Looking for specific information
- Focus on keywords, numbers, or dates
- Ignore irrelevant data
How to scan:
- Know what you're looking for
- Move your eyes quickly over the text
- Stop only when the specific information is found
Example: Finding exam date on a university notice, email ID on a brochure.

OBSTACLES IN READING AND HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

Common Challenges

Problem	Cause
<i>Poor concentration</i>	Distraction, fatigue
<i>Slow reading speed</i>	Regression, poor eye movement
<i>Weak vocabulary</i>	Lack of word exposure
<i>Lack of interest</i>	Boring or difficult content
<i>Poor comprehension</i>	Unfamiliar topic or unclear writing

Solutions

- Create a distraction-free environment
- Set reading goals (e.g., 5 pages/day)
- Use a dictionary or reading app
- Join a reading group or club
- Practice speed reading techniques
- Use highlighters and notes to track ideas

TIPS TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION

- Preview the text before reading
- Identify the purpose of reading
- Summarize each paragraph mentally
- Ask yourself questions like:
 - What is the main idea?
 - Who is the speaker/author?
 - What are the supporting details?
- Practice reading aloud to develop clarity

