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Unit : 02 - Listening Skill

Listening Skill



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Listening.....



In this high - stress, high-tech/ cutting edge era, where genuine and attentive listening has become rare, Communication has become more important than ever.

Listening is the most fundamental component of communication skills

It is not something that just happens, but it is an active process in which conscious decision is made to listen to and understand the message of the speaker

Why we need to have this skill??

- ❑ Active listening skills can help build relationships, solve problems, ensures understanding and avoids conflicts
- ❑ By becoming a better listener, you will improve your workplace productivity, as well as your ability to lead team, persuade and negotiate

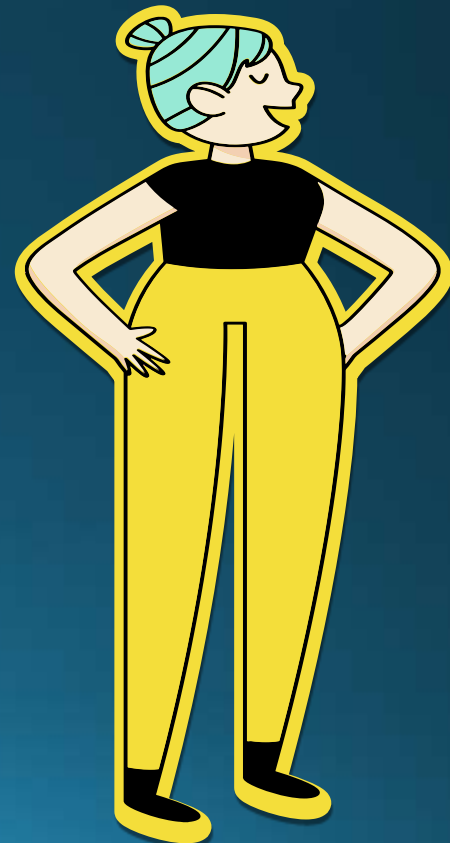


Listening Vs Hearing

Hearing : an accidental and automatic brain response to sound that requires no effort.

Hearing is:

- Accidental
- Involuntary
- Effortless



Listening : it is purposeful and focused action rather accidental.

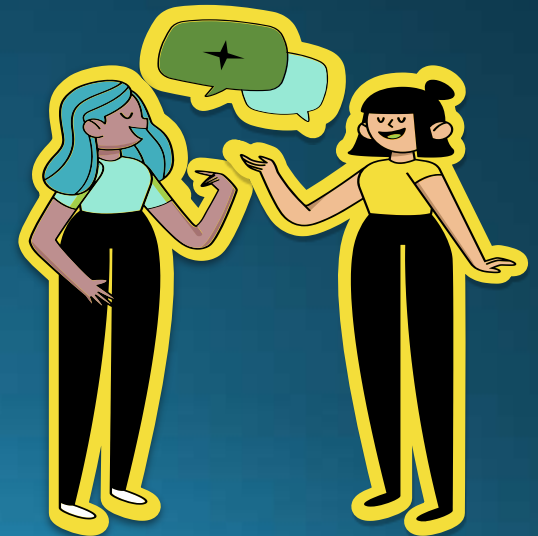
It requires paying attention not only to the story, but also how it is told, the use of language, voice and how the other person presenting themselves using their body.

Being aware of both verbal and non-verbal messages.

Listening is

Focused

Voluntary and intentional



Non - verbal signs of Active listening

- ❖ **Smile** : Small occasional smiles can be used to show that the listener is paying attention to what is being said.
 - combined with the nods of the head, smiles can be powerful to affirm that messages are being listened to and understand well.
- ❖ **Eye contact** : It is normal and encouraging for the listener to look at the speaker.
 - However, be careful.
 - Sometimes it is intimidating for shy speaker.



- ❖ **Posture** : it can tell a lot about the sender and receiver in interpersonal interaction.
 - The attentive listener tend to lean slightly forward or sideways whilst listening.
- ❖ **Distraction** : The active listener will not be distracted and therefore will refrain from fidgeting, looking at the watch or clock, doodling, playing with their hair or picking their fingernails.



Verbal signs of Active listening

- **Positive Reinforcement** : Occasional words and phrases, such as: ‘very good’, ‘yes’ or ‘indeed’ will indicate that you are paying attention.

This can be a strong signal of attentiveness; however, too much use can be annoying for the speaker.

- **Remembering** : Remembering the name of the speaker, details, ideas and concepts from previous conversations proves that attention was kept and is likely to encourage the speaker to continue.

It can help to reinforce that what is being said has been understood.

- **Questioning** : By asking relevant questions or reiterating certain statements, the listener also helps to reinforce that they have an interest in what the speaker has been saying.



- **Clarification** : Clarification usually involves the use of open questions which enables the speaker to expand on certain points as necessary.

Benefits of Active listening

There are many important benefits of active listening, these include:

- ❖ **Builds deep trust** - While building trust takes time, it leads to great benefits such as lifelong friendships and a promise of help in difficult times. As you cultivate the habit of listening sincerely, you invite people to open up and share their feelings and thoughts.
- ❖ **Broadens your perspective** - Listening to other people's perspectives allows you to look at life from different perspectives, some of which you may not have thought of before.
- ❖ **Strengthens your patience** - As you gradually get better and better at listening, an automatic benefit is that you develop patience. Patience to let the other person express his or her feelings and thoughts honestly while you don't judge.



- ❖ **Increases competence and knowledge** - Great listening skills make an employee more competent and capable, regardless of their position. The more an individual can get information out of the meetings, the instructions, and reports provided to him, the more efficient and successful they will be at completing the task.
- ❖ **Makes you approachable** - As you present yourself as a patient listener, people feel more naturally inclined to communicate with you.
- ❖ **Saves time and money** - Effective listening not only reduces risks of misunderstanding but it saves time and money by avoiding starting a task or a project over again, just because the directives given were misunderstood.
- ❖ **Helps detect and solve problems** - As a leader, they should always be attentive to what employees have to say. Listening to colleagues will help you understand what needs to be changed and worked on to retain talent and make improvements.



Examples of active listening

Here are few Statements and questions used to indicate Active listening skills:

- ☐ **Paraphrasing** - "So, you want us to build the new school in the style of the old one?"
- ☐ **Brief verbal affirmation** - "I appreciate the time you've taken to speak to me"
- ☐ **Asking open-ended questions** - "I understand you aren't happy with your new car. What changes can we make to it?"
- ☐ **Asking specific questions** - "How many employees did you take on last year?"
- ☐ **Mentioning similar situations** - "I was in a similar situation after my previous company made me redundant."
- ☐ **Summarize questions** - A job candidate who summarizes their understanding of an unclear question during an interview.
- ☐ **Notice people speaking** - A meeting facilitator encouraging a quiet team member to share their views about a project.
- ☐ **Summarize group conversations** - A manager summarizing what has been said at a meeting and checking with the others that it is correct.

What makes a Good listener ???

- ✓ Actively endeavor to understand what others are really trying to say - even if the message is unclear or not easy to understand.
- ✓ Involves in making efforts to not only decode verbal messages but also non- verbal cues : Facial expressions and physical postures.
- ✓ Effective listener make the person feel that he or she has been heard, they understood the message or even trying to comprehend the message and encourage them to share their thoughts and feelings fully.
- ✓ The behavior of a listener should convey the impression that you accept the person without making judgment of right or wrong, good or bad, suitable or unsuitable.
- ✓ Reflecting implications (suggestions) – In order to pursue the speaker, to extend his ideas, the listener has to reflect eagerness and willingness to learn more by using expressions like nodding or through verbal means, providing positive feedbacks.

Types of Listening

“The most basic of all human needs is to understand and to be understood...The best way to understand people is to listen to them”. - Ralph G. Nichols (Regarded as Father of Listening)

- **Active listening** : Complete involvement of the listener in speaker. He/ She make the conscious efforts to listen attentively, decode the message and use it through properly participating.
- **Selective listening** : This is the way where the listening is done partially. People listen to that part of communication which they really want to listen. Primarily for those things with which they agree or feel which are important while filtering out those points which they do not agree with.
- **Empathic listening** : Empathy means to ‘Put your foot in another’s shoe’, i.e. to keep yourself at other person's place to understand and realize the feeling of the speaker.
Empathic listener is able to go into the world of another- to see as others sees, hear as other hear, and feel as the other feels”.

- **Ignoring listening** : Not Listening at all and deliberately avoiding speaker. It is very insulting and rude and it can strain relations.
- **Passive listening** : Silent and patient listening without interfering or participating in a talk is known as passive listening. The listener is physically present but not participating in the communication process. So, the message is not absorbed and the passive listener will not be able to recall the message in future.

This type of listening takes place due to many constraints like tiredness, ill health, lack of interest etc.

- **People orientated** : The people-oriented listener is interested in the speaker. They listen to the message in order to learn how the speaker thinks and how they feel about their message.

For instance, when people-oriented listeners listen to an interview with a famous musician, they are likely to be more curious about the musician as an individual than about music.

- **Action-oriented** : in this, listeners are primarily interested in finding out what the speaker wants. Does the speaker want votes, donations, volunteers, or something else.

Barriers of Effective Listening

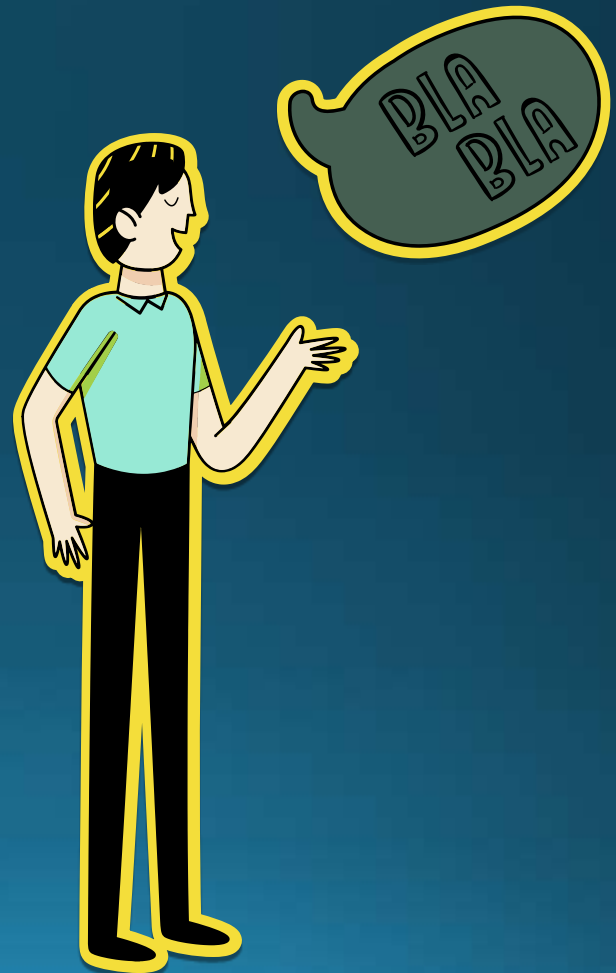
Some of the factors that interfere with good listening might exist beyond our control, but others are manageable. It's helpful to be aware of these factors so that they interfere as little as possible with understanding the message.

- **External Distractions :** Trying to listen to a lecture while construction work is ongoing outside the classroom can make it difficult to focus on the instructor's words.
- **Internal Distractions:** While attending a meeting, a listener might be preoccupied with personal problems, making it hard to fully concentrate on what's being discussed.
- **Noise Pollution:** Attempting to have a conversation in a busy restaurant can be challenging due to the competing sounds.
- **Information Overload:** Attending a conference with multiple speakers presenting back-to-back sessions might overwhelm attendees, causing them to miss important details.

- **Language Barriers:** A student from a non-English-speaking background might struggle to understand complex academic lectures due to unfamiliar vocabulary.
- **Lack of Interest:** A student in a mandatory lecture on a subject they find uninteresting might tune out and miss important information.
- **Prejudice and Bias:** If a listener has a negative bias towards a certain speaker; they might misinterpret the speaker's intentions or disregard their message.
- **Physical Barriers:** Sitting at the back of a large lecture hall might make it difficult to hear the speaker's voice clearly.
- **Emotional Disturbances:** A person who has received distressing news just before a meeting might find it challenging to concentrate on what's being discussed.
- **Lack of Active Listening Skills:** Not asking for clarification when a speaker uses technical jargon might result in misunderstanding the overall message.
- **Speaker's Delivery:** A fast-talking presenter delivering a sales pitch might make it hard for the audience to catch all the details of the offer.

Problems Students Face in Listening

- ▶ Lack of Active Engagement
- ▶ Language Barriers
- ▶ Rapid Pace of Speech
- ▶ Lack of Context
- ▶ Nonverbal Cues
- ▶ Lack of Note-Taking Skills
- ▶ Diverse Communication Styles



Strategies of Listening Effectively

- **Active Engagement – Be attentive and relaxed**
- **Face the speaker and maintain Eye Contact**
- **Minimize Distractions**
- **Use Effective Note-Taking**
- **Ask Questions**
- **Paraphrase and Summarize**
- **Focus on Main Ideas**
- **Interpret Nonverbal Cues**
- **Practice Empathetic Listening**
- **Control Your Internal Dialogue**
- **Avoid Prejudice and Bias – Keep an open mind**
- **Adapt to the Speaker's Style**
- **Take Breaks as Needed**
- **Reflect on the Message**
- **Don't interrupt or cut them off**



Activities to enhance your Listening skills

- ☐ Mindful Listening
- ☐ Active Note-Taking:
- ☐ Reflective Journaling
- ☐ Partner Listening Exercise
- ☐ Active Podcast Listening
- ☐ Group Discussion Practice
- ☐ Empathetic Listening Simulation
- ☐ Storytelling and Story listening
- ☐ TED Talk Analysis
- ☐ Listening Book Club
- ☐ Cross-Cultural Listening
- ☐ Reflective Feedback

