

Improve your listening skills & be a great conversation partner!

Believe it or not, one of the most important communication skills is silence! You may be the finest speaker around, but if you don't listen carefully when others speak, you're losing out in a big way. Good communication requires not only speaking your piece, but the exchange of ideas is an essential component. Do you sometimes find conversations lagging because you weren't really listening? Do you space out in a class because you're bored? Read on for some surefire tips to improve listening skills. You'll soon gain a reputation as a great conversationalist!

Dale Carnegie, in his famous book, 'How to Win Friends and Influence People', emphasized the importance of improving listening skills in making friends. Most people love to talk about themselves. It's only natural - we all have a lot to say about ourselves and our interests, right? Asking questions of another person is a good way to break the ice and get that person talking. Conversely, it's an excellent way for you to learn something new and interesting.

Let's say you're invited to a party where you don't know many of the guests. Make a point to go talk to the wallflower wearing a Save the Whales T-shirt. Although this person may be shy, be proactive - try to draw her out of her shell. Ask her a question about the whale's plight. It's likely you'll get an earful and learn several new facts, as well as making a new friend.

In the class that you're sure will put you to sleep, try listening closely to what the speaker is saying. Chances are good that you only find it dull because the speaker doesn't communicate well or you are simply not interested. Ask a question that makes the speaker want to clarify his point. You'll not only find your listening skills improving, you'll benefit the speaker and probably receive a better grade!

Talking with kids is another excellent way to improve listening skills. Kids absolutely love to talk and explain things to grown-ups. They may use many words when talking about simple ideas, while using few to make a really profound statement. You'll find you must listen carefully, as the discussion may go all over the map before getting to the point. Again, ask questions and learn!

In short, the best way to improve listening skills is to really engage yourself in conversation. Immerse your thinking in learning what others think. You'll not only make some new acquaintances, you'll be truly amazed at what you learn!