



Active Listening

*We have two ears and one mouth so we
can listen twice as much as we speak.*

—Epictetus

As human beings, we spend a great deal of our time each day communicating with others—expressing feelings, sharing thoughts and providing information; but the sending of these messages is only half of the communication equation. The other half involves the ability of the message recipient to accurately interpret and understand the information being provided. This is done through active listening.

All communication is a two-way street between a speaker and their audience. Active listening is the foundation of effective communication and a way for an audience to take in information and respond to a speaker. It can allow for and improve mutual understanding between two parties.



According to research, _____ % of our waking time is spent in communication and _____ % in listening-related activities.

Active listening is not a passive activity but an active one, requiring both energy and effort. In fact, the Chinese character for the word *listening* includes not just the symbols for ears but also the symbols for the eyes and the heart.





What is the difference between *hearing* and *listening*?

Hearing

Listening



According to research, the average person retains about _____ % of what he/she hears.



What are three common distractions that hinder effective listening?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Common bad listening habits:

1. Interrupting the speaker before he has completed his thought
2. Multi-tasking while listening
3. Communicating disinterest with your body language
4. Listening only with the intent to respond
5. Not maintaining eye contact with the speaker
6. Calling the topic dull or uninteresting
7. Faking attention



Different types of listening

- ▶ **Comprehensive Listening.** With this type of listening the focus is to hear and understand what a speaker is specifically saying. The goal with comprehensive listening is to absorb and retain as much information as possible.

Please list an example where you have utilized comprehensive listening:

- ▶ **Sympathetic Listening.** With this type of listening you are simply there to listen and take in the information from the person who is speaking, letting him speak and share his thoughts, opinions or feelings about a topic or subject. The goal with sympathetic listening is to serve as a sounding board, showing that you are sympathetic or empathetic to the words being spoken, as well as the feelings of the person doing the speaking.

Please list an example where you have utilized sympathetic listening:

- ▶ **Critical Listening.** This type of listening is used by an audience to determine if they agree with the presenter's words and if the message and information being given sound credible. The goal with critical listening is to make judgments about the content, as well as the presenter, based almost entirely on what is heard.

Please list an example where you have utilized critical listening:

- ▶ **Selective Listening.** This type of listening is used when there are numerous, simultaneous aural messages and the listener only focuses on the one most important to him at the time. The goal with selective listening is to zone out any unnecessary sounds or noise so that you can focus on the information or message that you specifically hope to hear and comprehend.

Please list an example where you have utilized selective listening:



Seven tips for active listening

1. Avoid distractions
2. Ask questions
3. Take notes
4. Maintain eye contact
5. Use non-verbal communication
6. Keep an open mind
7. Focus on speaker's main idea



The average adult attention span was _____ minutes a decade ago and is _____ minutes today.

Utilizing the Pattern Interrupt

Think about how the energy in the room drops when a group returns from lunch and proceeds to slip into a food coma. Or how the energy flags with an audience the closer you get to the end of the day. The most effective way to combat this is to create a pattern interrupt (or “change-up”)—something you do or say that is designed to break behavior patterns or habits that can lull your audience into a state of complacency.

Examples of pattern interrupts:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____