

TRIO

Listening is a major source of learning information, especially in college, but most people do not instinctively listen well.

Becoming a good listener is a skill that must be developed. It is the practice of getting rid of bad listening habits and replacing them with good listening habits.

EXERCISE ONE: Which of these habits do you think are good listening habits and which are bad?

LISTENING HABIT	GOOD HABIT	BAD HABIT
The listener makes the excuse that the subject is too boring to give it their full attention, which allows their mind to wander.		
The listener always hunts for something practical and worthwhile on what is being said.		
The listener can ignore the speaker's mannerisms or faults in delivery. She pays attention to what is being said, not how it is said.		
The listener finds fault with the way a speaker looks, acts, and talks.		
When she hears something she disagrees with, she stops listening altogether and misses what follows. Emotions blur her ability to listen.		
When he hears something he disagrees with, he continues to listen so he fully understands it before accepting or rejecting it.		
The listener listens for main ideas and uses them as connecting threads to make sense of the whole concept and put it in context.		
The listener listens for facts, but often ends up with too many to keep track of.		
The listener is not passive and has body language and eye contact that shows genuine interest.		
The listener blankly stares at the speaker with body language that shows disinterest.		
The listener tries to adjust to distractions and learns to ignore them.		
The listener is easily distracted and may even create disturbances that interfere with listening.		

Put stars by the bad habits you'd like to work on.

EXERCISE TWO: Train for the speech-thought differential. A speaker before an audience will say, on average, about 100 words a minute. What about thought speed? People think 400-500 words per minute on average. The difference between speech and thought speed can be a problem because it leads the listener's mind to wander. With training, the difference between speech and thought speed can be a source of power. A trained listener can listen between the lines and do some evaluating. To do this, good listeners must practice three skills in concentration.

1. Anticipating the Next Point. Trying to anticipate the development of a subject will nearly double the listeners chances of understanding and remembering what was said.
2. Identifying Supportive Material. Looking for evidence about the points being made by the speaker helps the listener better understand the argument and conclusions.
3. Recapping. With the rapid thought speed that everyone has, it is easy to summarize in about five seconds the highlights covered by a speaker in about five minutes. When the speaker stops to take a deep breath, or a swallow of water, or walks to the whiteboard to write something down, the experienced listener makes a mental summary of the points that have been said so far. If this is done every time the speaker pauses, the listener will double their understanding.

EXERCISE THREE: Listen to this short TED talk about listening in general. <http://bit.ly/2H8cX6G>
What are the key points of this talk?

EXERCISE FOUR: Watch this video designed to help students be good listeners in class.
https://youtu.be/4_MLEPKj-tA
What are the key points of this video?

EXERCISE FIVE: Listen to this brief NPR story on volcanoes and take the quiz at the end to evaluate your listening skills. https://listenwise.com/listening_test
What was your score on the quiz?

EXERCISE SIX: Take this assessment on listening.
<http://bit.ly/2DT0sLn>
What are your results of the assessment?

MORE TIPS

- *If you can't hear, arrange things so you can. Sit where you can see the speaker easily and move away from sources of noise.*
- *Take notes when listening. Even if you recognize everything that is being said, jot it down or you are likely to forget it later.*
- *Adapt your note-taking to the speaker's pattern of organization. Sometimes it will be more appropriate to make an outline, or write a summary, or list the facts and principles.*
- *If you have trouble distinguishing between the important and the trivial, ask a friend, tutor, or professor during their office ours.*
- *Take responsibility for what is being said. Learning is up to the learner. Be motivated and determine why what the speaker is saying is important to you.*

Now think of two times you felt you were not being listened to. Describe them below.

1.

2.

Why did you feel that way?

How did it make you feel?