



Developing your skills



How to improve your Listening Skills

REASONS TO IMPROVE LISTENING SKILLS

- To avoid saying the wrong thing and being tactless
- To dissipate strong feelings
- To learn to accept feelings (yours and others)
- To generate a feeling of caring
- To help potential students start listening to you
- To increase the student's confidence in you
- To make the student feel important and recognised
- To be sure you both are on the same wavelength
- To be sure you both are focused on the same topic
- To check that you are both on target with one another

TIPS FOR BEING A GOOD LISTENER

- Give your full attention on the person who is speaking. Don't look out the window or at what else is going on in the room, but look directly at the person speaking. Your eyes pick up the non-verbal signals that all people send out when they are speaking. By looking at the speaker, your eyes will also complete the eye contact that the speaker is trying to make.
- Make sure your mind is focused, too. It can be easy to let your mind wander if you think you know what the person is going to say next, but you might be wrong!
- Let the speaker finish before you begin to talk. Speakers appreciate having the chance to say everything they would like to say without being interrupted. When

you interrupt, it looks like you aren't listening, even if you really are.

- Concentrate on what the speaker is saying. You cannot fully hear their point of view or process information when you argue mentally or judge what they are saying before they have completed. An open mind is a mind that is receiving and listening to information.
- Listen for main ideas. The main ideas are the most important points the speaker wants to get across. They may be mentioned at the start or end of a talk, and repeated a number of times. Pay special attention to statements that begin with phrases such as "My point is..." or "The thing to remember is..."
- Ask questions. If you are not sure you understand what the speaker has said, just ask. It is a good idea to repeat in your own words what the speaker said so that you can be sure your understanding is correct.
- Give feedback. Now and then, nod to show that you understand. At appropriate points you may also smile, frown, laugh, or be silent. These are all ways to let the speaker know that you are really listening.
- If you're finding it particularly difficult to concentrate on what someone is saying, try repeating their words mentally as they say it, this will reinforce their message and help you control mind drift.
- Remember time is on your side! Thoughts move about four times as fast as speech. With practice, while you are listening you will also be able to think about what you are hearing, really understand it, and give feedback to the speaker.



Developing your skills



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF IN CONVERSATIONS

- What am I doing in this interaction?
- What are my strategies or goals in communicating this message?
- Where do I want to go in this conversation?
- What could I say differently?
- How could I say that to show I understood?
- What are their feeling towards me?
- What do I want or not want them to feel?
- What risks am I experiencing in this conversation?
- What cues am I responding to?
- How does their behaviour affect my approach in this discussion?
- How does what I say reflect genuineness to them?
- How could I have made what I just said more empathetic?
- How do I demonstrate respect?

- How is my level of communication and vocabulary affecting the dialogue?
- What different style of communication could I use to reach them better?
- How attentive am I at this time?
- How do I feel about their response?
- How did that question further the discussion and show I was listening?
- How mutually helpful is this conversation at this time?
- What can I do to improve the feedback I am giving?
- How well am I tuning into their feelings?

FURTHER INFORMATION

- [Learn Direct](#)
- [Mind Tools](#)
- [Tools for Communication](#)