

LISTENING SKILLS: THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

BY DR. YOGITA LONARE
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
DURGA MAHAVIDHYALAYA
RAIPUR (C.G.)

OBJECTIVES:

- Explain the process and benefits of listening.
- Describe various types of listening.
- Discuss the good listening habits
- Explain barriers to effective listening.

INTRODUCTION:

- According to John Marshall "listening is as powerful means of communication and influence as to talk well"
- We are given two ears but only one mouth. This is because God knew that listening was twice as hard as talking.
- Information is an intangible substance that must be sent by the speaker and received by an active listener.

WHAT IS LISTENING?

Listening is the process of receiving messages from oral, verbal, and nonverbal communication and interpreting the same. It is necessary to hear a different sheet hearing and listening. Hearing is receiving the sound through ears without evaluation and interpretation. Listening is a very broad concept. Hearing is just a part of listening. We listen through ears, eyes, mind, and heart. Listening takes the total environment into consideration. Listening in a classroom is different to that of listening the same from the same teacher privately.

THE PROCESS OF LISTENING AND GOOD LISTENING HABITS:

Real listening is an active process that has three basic steps -

1. Hearing - hearing just means listening enough to catch what the speaker is saying.

For example, say you were listening to a report on zebras, and the speaker mentioned that no two are alike. if you can repeat the fact. then you have heard what has been said.

2. Understanding - the next part of listening happens when you take what you have heard and understand it in your own way.

3. Judging -after you are sure you understand what the speaker has said, think about whether it makes sense.

GOOD LISTENING HABITS

1. Give your full attention to the person who is speaking. Don't look out the window or at what else is going on in the room.
2. Make sure your mind is focused, too. It can be easy to let your mind wander.
3. 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.

4. Let yourself finish listening before you begin to speak. You can't really listen if you are busy thinking about what you want to say next.

5. 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. Attention to statements that begin with phrases such as "my point is...." or "the thing to remember is....".

6. Ask questions. If you are not sure you understand what the speaker has said, just ask. It is good idea to repeat in your own words what the speaker set so that you can be sure your understanding is correct.

7. Give feedback. Sit up straight and look directly at the speaker. Now and then, nod to show that you understand. At appropriate points you may also smile, frown, laugh or be silent.

ESSENTIALS TO BECOME A GOOD LISTENER:

- Mental eye contact with the instructor.
- Focus on content, not delivery.
- Avoid emotional involvement.
- Avoid distractions.
- Treat listening as a challenging mental task.
- Stay active by asking mental questions.
- Use the gap between the rate of speech and your rate of thought.

BENEFITS OF LISTENING:

- Listening increases accuracy.
- Listening increases confidence.
- Listening can bring a harmonic climate.
- Listening helps in enhancing productivity.
- Listening minimizes the loss of potential revenues.
- Listening prevents miscommunication of objectives and priorities among people.
- Listening also prevents time loss.

POOR LISTENING HABITS:

Poor listening habits are not considered to be a static one.

The following list of observations made by the researchers is based on the study of human psychology.

1. Listening but not hearing- sometimes a person hears only to facts or details of to the way they presented and misses the real meaning.
2. Re-hearing: it means that some people have intuition to say something on any matter of issue so that they will listen until they get the opportunity to talk.

3. Interrupting- it is a general habit we can observe in some people, these people do not wait for the complete meaning to determine, but interrupt so forcefully that the speaker stops in mind-sentence.

4. Felling protective- this is a perception of a listener that he/she nose what the intention of the speaker aur bhai something was said or for various reasons, they expect to be attacked and react protectively.

5. Listening for a point of dis agreement- some listeners look to wait for getting a point to attack on the speaker. They just show interest in that dimension only.

6. Lack of positive opinion on subject matter on speaker- some business start listening with lack of positive opinion on subject matter or speaker.

TYPES OF LISTENING:

1. Active listening - They learn better and faster.
2. Partial listening - such people listen with rebellious ear. They are ready for constant and next reply rather than seriously listening.
3. Intermittent listening - such listeners listen to with deaf ears. They close ears to unpleasantness. They compulsively shake their heads when they are not listening to everything carefully. Consequently the recollection would be started of what has been said.
4. Appreciative listening - such people absorb all the speaker's meaning by being sensible to tone of voices, facial expressions, body reactions, as well as the words themselves.

5. Discriminative listening - by being sensitive to the changes in the speaker's rate, volume, force, pitch, and emphasis the informative listener can detect even the slightest shift in nuances.

6. Relationships listening - the purpose of relationship listening is either to help an individual or to improve the relationship between people. Therapeutic listening is a special type of relationship listening.

7. Informative listening - informative listening to understand is found in all areas of our lives. Informative listening refers to the situation where the listener's primary concern is to understand the message.

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING:

Listening is not that easy. There are a number of common barriers. The following are some variables that create barriers so listening.

1. **CONTENT** : if the content of the speech is not interesting to the listener it stands as a barrier for listening .
2. **SPEAKER**: when the speaker is not linked by the listener, it obstructs the listening process.
3. **DISTRACTIONS** : the objects like sounds, lights odours, mannerism, voice inflections, and moving objects can easily distract listeners.

4. **MINDSET ATTITUDE** : the listeners attitude towards the content or the speaker may lead to interpretations of the message.

5. **LANGUAGE** : unfamiliar or unknown language is a major barrier of listening. If a word has different meanings, listeners find it difficult to comprehend.

THE PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE LISTENING :

1. Stop talking
2. Prepare yourself to listen
3. Put the speaker status at ease
4. Avoid distraction
5. Empathize

6. Be patient
7. Avoid personal prejudice
8. Listen to the tone
9. Wait and watch for nonverbal communication

Thus listening is not something that just happens, it is an active process in which a conscious decision is made to listen to understand the messages of the speaker. Listening should remain neutral and nonjudgemental.

THANK YOU!