

Listening Skills for Lectures

LISTENING EFFECTIVELY is hearing and understanding what a speaker is saying and how it applies to you, and then remembering it for future use and evaluation. There are ways to improve your listening skills for lectures. The following is a list of some basic techniques:

1. Recognize how ideas are organized. Lectures usually begin with some type of introduction, followed by a thesis statement which is supported by additional information. Most professors bring closure to their lecture by summarizing what they have covered. Learn to identify the lecture style that is used by your professor.
2. Become involved in what is being said. Be an avid listener. Constantly analyze what is being said.
3. Cut through (or screen out) distractions.
 - background noise
 - unusual accents, dialects, and language mistakes
 - speaker disorganization, emotion, or habits
 - unrelated material
 - your own inner voice
4. Organize statements into main points and supporting reasons. Using an outline form may be helpful.
5. Discriminate between relevancies and irrelevancies. Remember that not all information is important.
6. Maintain an active body state. Keeping alert and having eye-contact with the speaker will help you listen more effectively.
7. In order to improve your listening skills, you will need to practice using the suggested techniques until they become automatic. The chart below summarizes eight habits which differentiate effective and non-effective listening. Choose one or two habits to practice today.



Eight Habits that Differentiate between Ineffective and Effective Listening

The Ineffective Listener

1. Subject is dry - doesn't apply to me.
2. Judges the delivery - gets hung up on errors.
3. Tends to enter into arguments quickly and make judgments before comprehending.
4. Listens for facts
5. Uses one type of note-taking and takes excessive notes
6. Passive - shows no energy. Acts bored.
7. Easily distracted.
8. Does not exercise his mind - seeks easy, recreational reading material.

The Effective Listener

- Pays attention – asks, “what's in it for me? “
- Judges the content - skips over the errors.
- Doesn't judge until their comprehension is complete.
- Listens for central ideas.
- Has several note-taking systems and writes down only the important information.
- Active - stays involved with the speaker.
- Fights distractions - knows how to concentrate.
- Exercises her mind with more difficult material and is familiar with harder subjects.

What You Can Do

- Find areas of interest.
- Judge the content, not the delivery.
- Hold your fire - don't judge too soon.
- Listen for ideas and patterns of organization.
- Use different kinds of organization. Be flexible.
- Work at active listening.
- Resist distractions.
- Practice reading more difficult Material.