

How are your listening skills in classes? Are you really as good a listener as you think you are? Communication is 40% listening, so it is an important skill to learn and practice. All of us listen in different ways at different times. We listen better in some situations than in others. Following is three levels of listening that requires a certain level of concentration and sensitivity as they progress. However, as you move up in the level of listening you also have a greater potential for understanding, retention, and effective communication.

Level One: Basic Listening

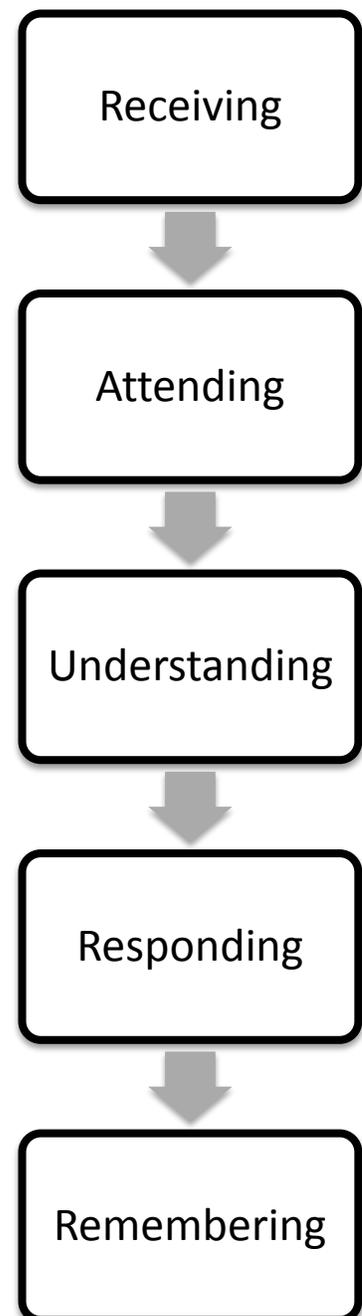
- Listening on and off
- Turning in and out
- Aware of the presence of others but mainly paying attention to yourself
- Half listening
- Paying attention enough to respond once
- Quiet, passive listening
- Hearing information, but not listening to it
- Thinking of other things

Level Two: Surface Listening

- Present for information
- Receives information
- Listens passively, with no effort to understand
- Notices facts
- Does not have a plan for organizing thoughts
- Puts information into own words

Level Three: Critical Active Listening

- Draws conclusions
- Makes connections between new information and previously learned information
- Uses information in new situations
- Evaluates information with regard to accuracy and relevance



What kind of listener are you?

A passive listener...

Comes to class unprepared
Chooses to be uninterested in topic
Gets distracted by speaker's delivery style, dress, voice, etc.
Allows personal bias, problems, and emotions to take control

An active listener...

Comes to class ready to learn
Maintains eye contact with speaker
Finds something worthwhile/useful in the lecture topic
Listens to both opinions and facts
Makes connections with previously learned information
Thinks critically while listening
Limits excessive writing by using a note taking system
Does not talk while others are speaking

How can you become a more active listener?

- ✓ Review notes and text readings on a regular basis
- ✓ Develop and stick to a note taking system that works with the speaker's style
- ✓ Take advantage of ability to think much faster than the speaker can speak Think of ways to use extra time wisely – develop questions to ask after class, make connections, compare and contrast ideas
- ✓ Try to take in new information with an open mind; don't judge
- ✓ Avoid distractions and outside elements that could deter you from really listening
- ✓ Be present when listening in classes
- ✓ Listen as though you are going to be required to present the same message to a different audience later
- ✓ Accept responsibility for understanding
- ✓ Ask questions
- ✓ Be the kind of listener you want others to be when you are talking