

Unit 1

The Importance of Listening

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1.1 Introduction

“Are you listening to me?” This question is often asked because the speaker thinks the listener is nodding off or daydreaming. We sometimes think that listening means we only have to sit back, stay barely awake, and let a speaker’s words wash over us. While many Americans look upon being active as something to admire, to engage in, and to excel at, listening is often understood as a “passive” activity. More recently, *O, the Oprah Magazine* featured a cover article with the title, “How to Talk So People *Really* Listen: Four Ways to Make Yourself Heard.” This title leads us to expect a list of ways to leave the listening to others and insist that they do so, but the article contains a surprise ending. The final piece of advice is this: “You can’t go wrong by showing interest in what other people say and making them feel important. In other words, the better *you* listen, the more you’ll be listened to.” Jarvis, T. (2009, November). How to talk so people *really* listen: Four ways to make yourself heard. *O, the Oprah Magazine*. **1**

You may have heard the adage, “We have two ears but only one mouth”—an easy way to remember that listening can be twice as important as talking. As a student, you most likely spend many hours in a classroom doing a large amount of focused listening, yet sometimes it is difficult to apply those efforts to communication in other areas of your life. As a result, your listening skills may not be all they could be. In this chapter, we will examine listening versus hearing, listening styles, listening difficulties, listening stages, and listening critically.

1.2 Listening vs. Hearing

Listening or Hearing Hearing is an accidental and automatic brain response to sound that requires no effort. We are surrounded by sounds most of the time. For example, we are accustomed to the sounds of airplanes, lawn mowers, furnace blowers, the rattling of pots and pans, and so on. We hear those incidental sounds and, unless we have a reason to do otherwise, we train ourselves to ignore them. We learn to filter out sounds that mean little to us, just as we choose to hear our ringing cell phones and other sounds that are more important to us.

Figure 1.1 Hearing vs. Listening



Listening, on the other hand, is purposeful and focused rather than accidental. As a result, it requires motivation and effort. Listening, at its best, is active, focused, concentrated attention for the purpose of understanding the meanings expressed by a speaker. We do not always listen at our best, however, and later in this chapter we will examine some of the reasons why and some strategies for becoming more active critical listeners.

1.3 Benefits of Listening

Listening should not be taken for granted. Before the invention of writing, people conveyed virtually all knowledge through some combination of showing and telling. Elders recited tribal histories to attentive audiences. Listeners received religious teachings enthusiastically. Myths, legends, folktales, and stories for entertainment survived only because audiences were eager to listen. Nowadays, however, you can gain information and entertainment through reading and electronic recordings rather than through real-time listening. If you become distracted and let your attention wander, you can go back and replay a recording. Despite that fact, you can still gain at least four compelling benefits by becoming more active and competent at real-time listening.

- **You Become a Better Student**

When you focus on the material presented in a classroom, you will be able to identify not only the words used in a lecture but their emphasis and their more complex meanings. You will take better notes, and you will more accurately remember the instructor's claims, information, and conclusions. Many times, instructors give verbal cues about what information is important, specific expectations about assignments, and even what material is likely to be on an exam, so careful listening can be beneficial.

- **You Become a Better Friend**

When you give your best attention to people expressing thoughts and experiences that are important to them, those individuals are likely to see you as someone who cares about their well-being. This fact is especially true when you give your attention only and refrain from interjecting opinions, judgments, and advice.

- **People Will Perceive You as Intelligent and Perceptive**

When you listen well to others, you reveal yourself as being curious and interested in people and events. In addition, your ability to understand the meanings of what you hear will make you a more knowledgeable and thoughtful person.

- **Good Listening Can Help Your Public Speaking**

When you listen well to others, you start to pick up more on the stylistic components related to how people form arguments and present information. As a result, you have the ability to analyze what you think works and doesn't work in others' speeches, which can help you transform your speeches in the process. For example, really paying attention to how others cite sources orally during their speeches may give you ideas about how to more effectively cite sources in your presentation.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Hearing is the physiological process of attending to sound within one's environment; listening, however, is a focused, concentrated approach to understanding the message a source is sending.

- Learning how to be an effective listener has numerous advantages. First, effective listening can help you become a better student. Second, effective listening can help you become more effective in your interpersonal relationships. Third, effective listening can lead others to perceive you as more intelligent. Lastly, effective listening can help you become a stronger public speaker.

EXERCISE

1. With a partner, discuss how you find out when you haven't been listening carefully. What are some of the consequences of poor listening?

1.4 Listening Styles

If listening were easy, and if all people went about it in the same way, the task for a public speaker would be much easier. Even Aristotle, as long ago as 325 BC, recognized that listeners in his audience were varied in listening style. He differentiated them as follows:

Rhetoric falls into three divisions, determined by the three classes of listeners to speeches. For of the three elements in speech-making—speaker, subject, and person addressed—it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speech's end and object. The hearer must be either a judge, with a decision to make about things past or future, or an observer. A member of the assembly decides about future events, a juryman about past events: while those who merely decide on the orator's skill are observers.²

Thus Aristotle classified listeners into those who would be using the speech to make decisions about past events, those who would make decisions affecting the future, and those who would evaluate the speaker's skills. This is all the more remarkable when we consider that Aristotle's audiences were composed exclusively of male citizens of one city-state, all prosperous property owners.

Our audiences today are likely to be much more heterogeneous. Think about the classroom audience that will listen to your speeches in this course. Your classmates come from many religious and ethnic backgrounds. Some of them may speak English as a second language. ^{2.}

Aristotle. (c. 350 BCE). *Rhetoric* (W. Rhys Roberts, Trans.). Book I, Part 3, para. 1. Retrieved from <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.1.1.html>

Some might be survivors of war-torn parts of the world such as Bosnia, Darfur, or northwest China. Being mindful of such differences will help you prepare a speech in which you minimize the potential for misunderstanding.

Part of the potential for misunderstanding is the difference in listening styles. In an article in the *International Journal of Listening*, Watson, Barker, and Weaver Watson, K. W., Barker, L. L., & Weaver, J. B., III. (1995). The listening styles profile (LSP-16): Development and validation of an instrument to assess four listening styles. *International Journal of Listening*, 9, 1–13. identified four listening styles: people, action, content, and time.

People

The people-oriented listener is interested in the speaker. People-oriented listeners listen to the message in order to learn how the speaker thinks and how they feel about their message. For instance, when people-oriented listeners listen to an interview with a famous rap artist, they are likely to be more curious about the artist as an individual than about music, even though the people-oriented listener might also appreciate the artist's work. If you are a people-oriented listener, you might have certain questions you hope will be answered, such as: Does the artist feel successful? What's it like to be famous? What kind of educational background does he or she have? In the same way, if we're listening to a doctor who responded to the earthquake crisis in Haiti, we might be more interested in the doctor as a person than in the state of affairs for Haitians. Why did he or she go to Haiti? How did he or she get away from his or her normal practice and patients? How many lives did he or she save? We might be less interested in the equally important and urgent needs for food, shelter, and sanitation following the earthquake.

The people-oriented listener is likely to be more attentive to the speaker than to the message. If you tend to be such a listener, understand that the message is about what is important to the speaker.

Action

Action-oriented listeners are primarily interested in finding out what the speaker wants. Does the speaker want votes, donations, volunteers, or something else? It's sometimes difficult for an action-oriented speaker to listen through the descriptions, evidence, and explanations with which a speaker builds his or her case.

Action-oriented listening is sometimes called task-oriented listening. In it, the listener seeks a clear message about what needs to be done, and might have less patience for listening to the reasons behind the task. This can be especially true if the reasons are complicated. For example, when you're a passenger on an airplane waiting to push back from the gate, a flight attendant delivers a brief speech called the preflight safety briefing. The flight attendant does not read the findings of a safety study or the regulations about seat belts. The flight attendant doesn't explain that the content of his or her speech is actually mandated by the Federal Aviation Administration. Instead, the attendant says only to buckle up so we can leave. An action-oriented listener finds "buckling up" a more compelling message than a message about the underlying reasons.

Content

Content-oriented listeners are interested in the message itself, whether it makes sense, what it means, and whether it's accurate. When you give a speech, many members of your classroom audience will be content-oriented listeners who will be interested in learning from you. You therefore have an obligation to represent the truth in the fullest way you can. You can emphasize an idea, but if you exaggerate, you could lose credibility in the minds of your content-oriented audience. You can advocate ideas that are important to you, but if you omit important limitations, you are withholding part of the truth and could leave your audience with an inaccurate view.

Imagine you're delivering a speech on the plight of orphans in Africa. If you just talk about the fact that there are over forty-five million orphans in Africa but don't explain why, you'll sound like an infomercial. In such an instance, your audience's response is likely to be less enthusiastic than you might want. Instead, content-oriented listeners want to listen to well-developed information with solid explanations.

Time

People using a time-oriented listening style prefer a message that gets to the point quickly. Time-oriented listeners can become impatient with slow delivery or lengthy explanations. This kind of listener may be receptive for only a brief amount of time and may become rude or even hostile if the speaker expects a longer focus of attention. Time-oriented listeners convey their impatience through eye rolling, shifting about in their seats, checking their cell phones,

and other inappropriate behaviors. If you've been asked to speak to a group of middle-school students, you need to realize that their attention spans are simply not as long as those of college students. This is an important reason speeches to young audiences must be shorter, or broken up by more variety than speeches to adults.

In your professional future, some of your audience members will have real time constraints, not merely perceived ones. Imagine that you've been asked to deliver a speech on a new project to the board of directors of a local corporation. Chances are the people on the board of directors are all pressed for time. If your speech is long and filled with overly detailed information, time-oriented listeners will simply start to tune you out as you're speaking. Obviously, if time-oriented listeners start tuning you out, they will not be listening to your message. This is not the same thing as being a time-oriented listener who might be less interested in the message content than in its length.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A listening style is a general manner in which an individual attends to the messages of another person.
- People-oriented listeners pay attention to the personal details of a speaker and not to the speaker's actual message.
- Action-oriented listeners pay attention to the physical actions a speaker wants the listener to engage in.
- Content-oriented listeners pay attention to the meaning and credibility of a speaker's message.
- Time-oriented listeners pay attention to messages that are short and concise as a result of limited attention spans or limited time commitments.

EXERCISES

1. In a small group, discuss what each person's usual listening style is. Under what circumstances might you practice a different listening style?
2. Make a list of benefits and drawbacks to each of the listening styles discussed in this section.
3. As you prepare for your next speech, identify ways that you can adapt your message to each of the listening styles noted in this section.

1.5 Why Listening Is Difficult

At times, everyone has difficulty staying completely focused during a lengthy presentation. We can sometimes have difficulty listening to even relatively brief messages. Some of the factors that interfere with good listening might exist beyond our control, but others are manageable. It's helpful to be aware of these factors so that they interfere as little as possible with understanding the message.

- **Noise**

Noise is one of the biggest factors to interfere with listening; it can be defined as anything that interferes with your ability to attend to and understand a message. There are many kinds of noise, but we will focus on only the four you are most likely to encounter in public speaking situations: physical noise, psychological noise, physiological noise, and semantic noise.

- **Physical Noise**

Physical noise consists of various sounds in an environment that interfere with a source's ability to hear. Construction noises right outside a window, planes flying directly overhead, or loud music in the next room can make it difficult to hear the message being presented by a speaker even if a microphone is being used. It is sometimes possible to manage the context to reduce the noise. Closing a window might be helpful. Asking the people in the next room to turn their music down might be possible. Changing to a new location is more difficult, as it involves finding a new location and having everyone get there.

- **Psychological Noise**

Psychological noise consists of distractions to a speaker's message caused by a receiver's internal thoughts. For example, if you are preoccupied with personal problems, it is difficult to give your full attention to understanding the meanings of a message. The presence of another person to whom you feel attracted, or perhaps a person you dislike intensely, can also be psychosocial noise that draws your attention away from the message.

- **Physiological Noise**

Physiological noise consists of distractions to a speaker's message caused by a listener's own body. Maybe you're listening to a speech in class around noon and you haven't eaten anything. Your stomach may be growling and your desk is starting to look tasty. Maybe the room is cold and you're thinking more about how to keep warm than about what the speaker is saying. In either case, your body can distract you from attending to the information being presented.

- **Semantic Noise**

Semantic noise occurs when a receiver experiences confusion over the meaning of a source's word choice. While you are attempting to understand a particular word or phrase, the speaker continues to present the message. While you are struggling with a word interpretation, you are distracted from listening to the rest of the message. One of the authors was listening to a speaker who mentioned using a sweeper to clean carpeting. The author was confused, as she did not see how a broom would be effective in cleaning carpeting. Later, the author found out that the speaker was using the word "sweeper" to refer to a vacuum cleaner; however, in the meantime, her listening was hurt by her inability to understand what the speaker meant. Another example of semantic noise is euphemism. Euphemism is diplomatic language used for delivering unpleasant information. For instance, if someone is said to be "flexible with the truth," it might take us a moment to understand that the speaker means this person sometimes lies. Many distractions are the fault of neither the listener nor the speaker. However, when you are the speaker, being aware of these sources of noise can help you reduce some of the noise that interferes with your audience's ability to understand you.

- **Attention Span**

A person can only maintain focused attention for a finite length of time. In his 1985 book *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, New York University's Steinhardt School of Education professor Neil Postman argued that modern audiences have lost the ability to sustain attention to a message.⁽³⁾ The Web shatters focus, rewires brains. Whether or not these concerns are well founded, you have probably noticed that even when your attention is "glued" to something in which you are deeply interested, every now and then you pause to do something else, such as getting a drink of water, stretching, or looking out the window

3. Postman, N. (1985). *Amusing ourselves to death: Public discourse in the age of show business*. New York: Viking Press.

The limits of the human attention span can interfere with listening, but listeners and speakers can use strategies to prevent this interference. As many classroom instructors know, listeners will readily renew their attention when the presentation includes frequent breaks in pacing.⁽⁴⁾ For example, a fifty- to seventy-five-minute class session might include some lecture material alternated with questions for class discussion, video clips, handouts, and demonstrations. Instructors who are adept at holding listeners' attention also move about the front of the room, writing on the board, drawing diagrams, and intermittently using slide transparencies or PowerPoint slides.

If you have instructors who do a good job of keeping your attention, they are positive role models showing strategies you can use to accommodate the limitations of your audience's attention span.

- **Receiver Biases**

Good listening involves keeping an open mind and withholding judgment until the speaker has completed the message. Conversely, biased listening is characterized by jumping to conclusions; the biased listener believes, "I don't need to listen because I already know what I think." Receiver biases can refer to two things: biases with reference to the speaker and preconceived ideas and opinions about the topic or message. Both can be considered noise. Everyone has biases, but good listeners have learned to hold them in check while listening.

The first type of bias listeners can have is related to the speaker. Often a speaker stands up and an audience member simply doesn't like the speaker, so the audience member may not listen to the speaker's message. Maybe you have a classmate who just gets under your skin for some reason, or maybe you question a classmate's competence on a given topic. When we have preconceived notions about a speaker, those biases can interfere with our ability to listen accurately and competently to the speaker's message.

The second type of bias listeners can have is related to the topic or content of the speech. Maybe the speech topic is one you've heard a thousand times, so you just tune out the speech. Or maybe the speaker is presenting a topic or position you fundamentally disagree with. When listeners have strong preexisting opinions about a topic, such as the death

⁽⁴⁾(Middendorf, J., & Kalish, A. (1996)). The "change-up" in lectures. *The National Teaching and Learning Forum*, 5(2)

penalty, religious issues, affirmative action, abortion, or global warming, their biases may make it difficult for them to even consider new information about the topic, especially if the new information is inconsistent with what they already believe to be true. As listeners, we have difficulty identifying our biases, especially when they seem to make sense. However, it is worth recognizing that our lives would be very difficult if no one ever considered new points of view or new information. We live in a world where everyone can benefit from clear thinking and open-minded listening.

Listening or Receiver Apprehension

Listening or receiver apprehension is the fear that you might be unable to understand the message or process the information correctly or be able to adapt your thinking to include the new information coherently. (Wheeless, L. R. (1975)). An investigation of receiver apprehension and social context dimensions of communication apprehension. *(Speech Teacher, 24, 261-268)*. In some situations, you might worry that the information presented will be “over your head”—too complex, technical, or advanced for you to understand adequately.

Many students will actually avoid registering for courses in which they feel certain they will do poorly. In other cases, students will choose to take a challenging course only if it's a requirement. This avoidance might be understandable but is not a good strategy for success. To become educated people, students should take a few courses that can shed light on areas where their knowledge is limited.

As a speaker, you can reduce listener apprehension by defining terms clearly and using simple visual aids to hold the audience's attention. You don't want to underestimate or overestimate your audience's knowledge on a subject, so good audience analysis is always important. If you know your audience doesn't have special knowledge on a given topic, you should start by defining important terms. Research has shown us that when listeners do not feel they understand a speaker's message, their apprehension about receiving the message escalates. Imagine that you are listening to a speech about chemistry and the speaker begins talking about “colligative properties.” You may start questioning whether you're even in the right place. When this happens, apprehension clearly interferes with a listener's ability to accurately and competently understand a speaker's message. As a speaker, you can lessen the listener's apprehension by explaining that colligative properties focus on *how much* is dissolved in a solution, not on *what* is dissolved in a solution. You could also give an example

that they might readily understand, such as saying that it doesn't matter what kind of salt you use in the winter to melt ice on your driveway, what is important is how much salt you use.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

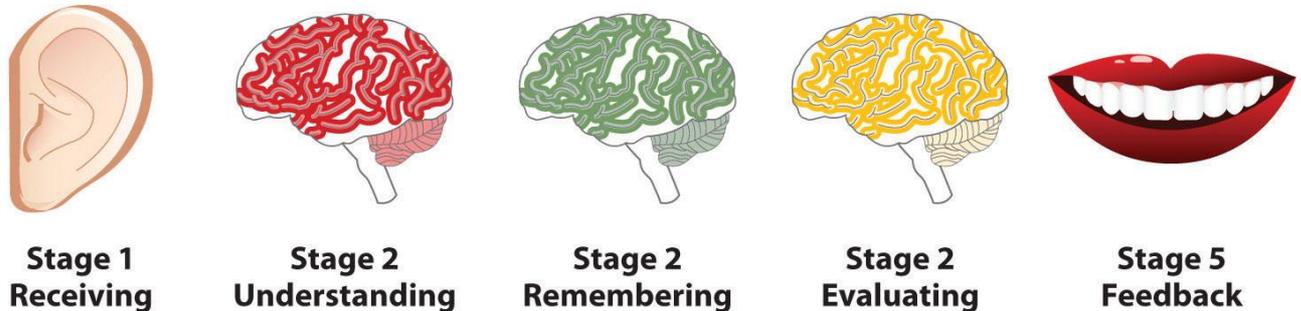
- Listeners are often unable to accurately attend to messages because of four types of noise. Physical noise is caused by the physical setting a listener is in. Psychological noise exists within a listener's own mind and prevents him or her from attending to a speaker's message. Physiological noise exists because a listener's body is feeling some sensation that prevents him or her from attending to a speaker's message. Semantic noise is caused by a listener's confusion over the meanings of words used by a speaker.
- All audiences have a limited attention span. As a speaker, you must realize how long you can reasonably expect an audience to listen to your message.
- Listeners must be aware of the biases they have for speakers and the topics speakers choose. Biases can often prevent a listener from accurately and competently listening to a speaker's actual message.
- Receiver apprehension is the fear that a listener might be unable to understand the message, process the information correctly, or adapt thinking to include new information coherently. Speakers need to make sure their messages are appropriate to the audience's knowledge level and clearly define and explain all terms that could lead to increased anxiety.

EXERCISES

1. In a group, discuss what distracts you most from listening attentively to a speaker. Have you found ways to filter out or manage the distraction?
2. This chapter refers to psychological noise as one of the distractions you might experience. Identify strategies you have successfully used to minimize the impact of the specific psychological noises you have experienced.
3. Make a list of biases you might have as a listener. You can think about how you'd answer such questions as, With whom would I refuse to be seen socially or in public? Who would I reject as a trustworthy person to help if I were in danger? What topics do I refuse to discuss? The answers to these questions might provide useful insights into your biases as a listener.

1.6 Stages of Listening

Figure 1.3 Stages of Feedback



As you read earlier, there are many factors that can interfere with listening, so you need to be able to manage a number of mental tasks at the same time in order to be a successful listener. Author Joseph DeVito has divided the listening process into five stages: receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding.(5)

Receiving Receiving is the intentional focus on hearing a speaker’s message, which happens when we filter out other sources so that we can isolate the message and avoid the confusing mixture of incoming stimuli. At this stage, we are still only hearing the message. Notice in [Figure 4.3 "Stages of Feedback"](#) that this stage is represented by the ear because it is the primary tool involved with this stage of the listening process.

One of the authors of this book recalls attending a political rally for a presidential candidate at which about five thousand people were crowded into an outdoor amphitheater. When the candidate finally started speaking, the cheering and yelling was so loud that the candidate couldn’t be heard easily despite using a speaker system. In this example, our coauthor had difficulty receiving the message because of the external noise. This is only one example of the ways that hearing alone can require sincere effort, but you must hear the message before you can continue the process of listening.

Understanding In the understanding stage, we attempt to learn the meaning of the message, which is not always easy. For one thing, if a speaker does not enunciate clearly, it may be difficult to tell what the message was—did your friend say, “I think she’ll be late for class,” or “my teacher delayed the class”? Notice in [Figure 4.3 "Stages of Feedback"](#) that stages two, three, and four are represented by the brain because it is the primary tool involved with these stages of the listening process.

Even when we have understood the words in a message, because of the differences in our backgrounds and experience, we sometimes make the mistake of attaching our own meanings to the words of others. For example, say you have made plans with your friends to meet at a certain movie theater, but you arrive and nobody else shows up. Eventually you find out that your friends are at a different theater all the way across town where the same movie is playing. Everyone else understood that the meeting place was the “west side” location, but you wrongly understood it as the “east side” location and therefore missed out on part of the fun.

The consequences of ineffective listening in a classroom can be much worse. When your professor advises students to get an “early start” on your speech, he or she probably hopes that you will begin your research right away and move on to developing a thesis statement and outlining the speech as soon as possible. However, students in your class might misunderstand the instructor’s meaning in several ways. One student might interpret the advice to mean that as long as she gets started, the rest of the assignment will have time to develop itself. Another student might instead think that to start early is to start on the Friday before the Monday due date instead of Sunday night.

So much of the way we understand others is influenced by our own perceptions and experiences. Therefore, at the understanding stage of listening we should be on the lookout for places where our perceptions might differ from those of the speaker.

Remembering

Remembering begins with listening; if you can’t remember something that was said, you might not have been listening effectively. Wolvin and Coakley note that the most common reason for not remembering a message after the fact is because it wasn’t really learned in the first place.⁽⁶⁾ However, even when you are listening attentively, some messages are more difficult than others to understand and remember. Highly complex messages that are filled with detail call for highly developed listening skills. Moreover, if something distracts your attention even for a moment, you could miss out on information that explains other new concepts you hear when you begin to listen fully again.

(6) Wolvin, A., & Coakley, C. G. (1996). *Listening* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

It's also important to know that you can improve your memory of a message by processing it meaningfully—that is, by applying it in ways that are meaningful to you. Gluck. Instead of simply repeating a new acquaintance's name over and over, for example, you might remember it by associating it with something in your own life. "Emily," you might say, "reminds me of the Emily I knew in middle school," or "Mr. Impiari's name reminds me of the Impala my father drives."

Finally, if understanding has been inaccurate, recollection of the message will be inaccurate too.

Evaluating

The fourth stage in the listening process is evaluating, or judging the value of the message. We might be thinking, "This makes sense" or, conversely, "This is very odd." Because everyone embodies biases and perspectives learned from widely diverse sets of life experiences, evaluations of the same message can vary widely from one listener to another. Even the most open-minded listeners will have opinions of a speaker, and those opinions will influence how the message is evaluated. People are more likely to evaluate a message positively if the speaker speaks clearly, presents ideas logically, and gives reasons to support the points made.

Unfortunately, personal opinions sometimes result in prejudiced evaluations. Imagine you're listening to a speech given by someone from another country and this person has an accent that is hard to understand. You may have a hard time simply making out the speaker's message. Some people find a foreign accent to be interesting or even exotic, while others find it annoying or even take it as a sign of ignorance. If a listener has a strong bias against foreign accents, the listener may not even attempt to attend to the message. If you mistrust a speaker because of an accent, you could be rejecting important or personally enriching information. Good listeners have learned to refrain from making these judgments and instead to focus on the speaker's meanings.

Responding

Responding—sometimes referred to as feedback—is the fifth and final stage of the listening process. It's the stage at which you indicate your involvement. Almost anything you do at this stage can be interpreted as feedback. For example, you are giving positive feedback to your instructor if at the end of class you stay behind to finish a sentence in your notes or approach

the instructor to ask for clarification. The opposite kind of feedback is given by students who gather their belongings and rush out the door as soon as class is over. Notice in [Figure 1.3 "Stages of Feedback"](#) that this stage is represented by the lips because we often give feedback in the form of verbal feedback; however, you can just as easily respond nonverbally.

Formative Feedback

Not all response occurs at the end of the message. Formative feedback is a natural part of the ongoing transaction between a speaker and a listener. As the speaker delivers the message, a listener signals his or her involvement with focused attention, note-taking, nodding, and other behaviors that indicate understanding or failure to understand the message. These signals are important to the speaker, who is interested in whether the message is clear and accepted or whether the content of the message is meeting the resistance of preconceived ideas. Speakers can use this feedback to decide whether additional examples, support materials, or explanation is needed.

Summative Feedback

Summative feedback is given at the end of the communication. When you attend a political rally, a presentation given by a speaker you admire, or even a class, there are verbal and nonverbal ways of indicating your appreciation for or your disagreement with the messages or the speakers at the end of the message. Maybe you'll stand up and applaud a speaker you agreed with or just sit staring in silence after listening to a speaker you didn't like. In other cases, a speaker may be attempting to persuade you to donate to a charity, so if the speaker passes a bucket and you make a donation, you are providing feedback on the speaker's effectiveness. At the same time, we do not always listen most carefully to the messages of speakers we admire. Sometimes we simply enjoy being in their presence, and our summative feedback is not about the message but about our attitudes about the speaker. If your feedback is limited to something like, "I just love your voice," you might be indicating that you did not listen carefully to the content of the message.

There is little doubt that by now, you are beginning to understand the complexity of listening and the great potential for errors. By becoming aware of what is involved with active listening and where difficulties might lie, you can prepare yourself both as a listener and as a speaker to minimize listening errors with your own public speeches.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The receiving stage of listening is the basic stage where an individual hears a message being sent by a speaker.
- The understanding stage of listening occurs when a receiver of a message attempts to figure out the meaning of the message.
- The remembering stage of listening is when a listener either places information into long-term memory or forgets the information presented.
- The evaluating stage of listening occurs when a listener judges the content of the message or the character of the speaker.
- The responding stage of listening occurs when a listener provides verbal or nonverbal feedback about the speaker or message.
- During the responding stage of listening, listeners can provide speakers with two types of feedback designed to help a speaker know whether a listener is understanding and what the listener thinks of a message. Formative feedback is given while the speaker is engaged in the act of speech making. Summative feedback is given at the conclusion of a speech.

EXERCISES

1. Make a list of some of the abstract words you have misunderstood. What were the consequences of the misunderstanding?
2. Reflect on your listening in class or in other settings where remembering information is important. What keeps you from remembering important information accurately?
3. Give an example of a time when you felt that your message was misunderstood or treated with shallow attention. How did you know your message had been misunderstood or rejected? What does this mean you must do as a student of public speaking?

1.7 Listening Critically

As a student, you are exposed to many kinds of messages. You receive messages conveying academic information, institutional rules, instructions, and warnings; you also receive messages through political discourse, advertisements, gossip, jokes, song lyrics, text messages, invitations, web links, and all other manner of communication. You know it's not all the same, but it isn't always clear how to separate the truth from the messages that are

misleading or even blatantly false. Nor is it always clear which messages are intended to help the listener and which ones are merely self-serving for the speaker. Part of being a good listener is to learn when to use caution in evaluating the messages we hear.

Critical listening in this context means using careful, systematic thinking and reasoning to see whether a message makes sense in light of factual evidence. Critical listening can be learned with practice but is not necessarily easy to do. Some people never learn this skill; instead, they take every message at face value even when those messages are in conflict with their knowledge. Problems occur when messages are repeated to others who have not yet developed the skills to discern the difference between a valid message and a mistaken one. Critical listening can be particularly difficult when the message is complex. Unfortunately, some speakers may make their messages intentionally complex to avoid critical scrutiny. For example, a city treasurer giving a budget presentation might use very large words and technical jargon, which make it difficult for listeners to understand the proposed budget and ask probing questions.

Six Ways to Improve Your Critical Listening

Critical listening is first and foremost a skill that can be learned and improved. In this section, we are going to explore six different techniques you can use to become a more critical listener.

Recognizing the Difference between Facts and Opinions

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan is credited with saying, “Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their own facts.” Wikiquote. (n.d.). Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Retrieved from http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Daniel_Patrick_Moynihan Part of critical listening is learning to separate opinions from facts, and this works two ways: critical listeners are aware of whether a speaker is delivering a factual message or a message based on opinion, and they are also aware of the interplay between their own opinions and facts as they listen to messages.

In American politics, the issue of health care reform is heavily laden with both opinions and facts, and it is extremely difficult to sort some of them out. A clash of fact versus opinion happened on September 9, 2010, during President Obama’s nationally televised speech to a joint session of Congress outlining his health care reform plan. In this speech, President Obama responded to several rumors about the plan, including the claim “that our reform

effort will insure illegal immigrants. This, too, is false—the reforms I’m proposing would not apply to those who are here illegally.” At this point, one congressman yelled out, “You lie!” Clearly, this congressman did not have a very high opinion of either the health care reform plan or the president. However, when the nonpartisan watch group Factcheck.org examined the language of the proposed bill, they found that it had a section titled “No Federal Payment for Undocumented Aliens.”⁷

Often when people have a negative opinion about a topic, they are unwilling to accept facts. Instead, they question all aspects of the speech and have a negative predisposition toward both the speech and the speaker.

This is not to say that speakers should not express their opinions. Many of the greatest speeches in history include personal opinions. Consider, for example, Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech, in which he expressed his personal wish for the future of American society. Critical listeners may agree or disagree with a speaker’s opinions, but the point is that they know when a message they are hearing is based on opinion and when it is factual.

Uncovering Assumptions

If something is factual, supporting evidence exists. However, we still need to be careful about what evidence does and does not mean. Assumptions are gaps in a logical sequence that listeners passively fill with their own ideas and opinions and may or may not be accurate. When listening to a public speech, you may find yourself being asked to assume something is a fact when in reality many people question that fact. For example, suppose you’re listening to a speech on weight loss. The speaker talks about how people who are overweight are simply not motivated or lack the self-discipline to lose weight. The speaker has built the speech on the assumption that motivation and self-discipline are the only reasons why people can’t lose weight. You may think to yourself, what about genetics? By listening critically, you will be more likely to notice unwarranted assumptions in a speech, which may prompt you to

⁷Factcheck.org, a Project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. (2009, September 10). Obama’s health care speech. Retrieved from <http://www.factcheck.org/2009/09/obamas-health-care-speech>

question the speaker if questions are taken or to do further research to examine the validity of the speaker’s assumptions. If, however, you sit passively by and let the speaker’s assumptions go unchallenged, you may find yourself persuaded by information that is not factual.

When you listen critically to a speech, you might hear information that appears unsupported by evidence. You shouldn’t accept that information unconditionally. You would accept it under the condition that the speaker offers credible evidence that directly supports it.

Table 1.1 Facts vs. Assumptions

Facts	Assumptions
Facts are verified by clear, unambiguous evidence.	Assumptions are not supported by evidence.
Most facts can be tested.	Assumptions about the future cannot be tested in the present.

Be Open to New Ideas

Sometimes people are so fully invested in their perceptions of the world that they are unable to listen receptively to messages that make sense and would be of great benefit to them. Human progress has been possible, sometimes against great odds, because of the mental curiosity and discernment of a few people. In the late 1700s when the technique of vaccination to prevent smallpox was introduced, it was opposed by both medical professionals and everyday citizens who staged public protests. **(8)** More than two centuries later, vaccinations against smallpox, diphtheria, polio, and other infectious diseases have saved countless lives, yet popular opposition continues.

In the world of public speaking, we must be open to new ideas. Let’s face it, people have a tendency to filter out information they disagree with and to filter in information that supports what they already believe. Nicolaus Copernicus was a sixteenth-century astronomer who dared to publish a treatise explaining that the earth revolves around the sun, which was a violation of Catholic doctrine. Copernicus’s astronomical findings were labeled heretical and his treatise banned because a group of people at the time were not open to new ideas.

(8)Edward Jenner Museum. (n.d.). Vaccination. Retrieved from <http://www.jennermuseum.com/Jenner/vaccination.html>

In May of 2010, almost five hundred years after his death, the Roman Catholic Church admitted its error and reburied his remains with the full rites of Catholic burial. While the Copernicus case is a fairly dramatic reversal, listeners should always be open to new ideas. We are not suggesting that you have to agree with every idea that you are faced with in life; rather, we are suggesting that you at least listen to the message and then evaluate the message.(9)

Rely on Reason and Common Sense

If you are listening to a speech and your common sense tells you that the message is illogical, you very well might be right. You should be thinking about whether the speech seems credible and coherent. In this way, your use of common sense can act as a warning system for you.

One of our coauthors once heard a speech on the environmental hazards of fireworks. The speaker argued that fireworks (the public kind, not the personal kind people buy and set off in their backyards) were environmentally hazardous because of litter. Although there is certainly some paper that makes it to the ground before burning up, the amount of litter created by fireworks displays is relatively small compared to other sources of litter, including trash left behind by all the spectators watching fireworks at public parks and other venues. It just does not make sense to identify a few bits of charred paper as a major environmental hazard.

If the message is inconsistent with things you already know, if the argument is illogical, or if the language is exaggerated, you should investigate the issues before accepting or rejecting the message. Often, you will not be able to take this step during the presentation of the message; it may take longer to collect enough knowledge to make that decision for yourself.

However, when you are the speaker, you should not substitute common sense for evidence. That's why during a speech it's necessary to cite the authority of scholars whose research is irrefutable, or at least highly credible. It is all too easy to make a mistake in reasoning, sometimes called fallacy, in stating your case. One of the most common fallacies is *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, a "common sense" form of logic that translates roughly as "after the fact, therefore because of the fact." The argument says that if A happened first, followed by B, then A caused B. We know the outcome cannot occur earlier than the cause, but we also know that the two events might be related indirectly or that causality works in a different direction.

(9)Owen, R. (2010, May 23). Catholic church reburies "heretic" Nicolaus Copernicus with honour. *Times Online*. Retrieved from <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article7134341.ece>

For instance, imagine a speaker arguing that because the sun rises after a rooster's crow, the rooster caused the sun to rise. This argument is clearly illogical because roosters crow many times each day, and the sun's rising and setting do not change according to crowing or lack thereof. But the two events are related in a different way. Roosters tend to wake up and begin crowing at first light, about forty-five minutes before sunrise. Thus it is the impending sunrise that causes the predawn crowing.

Relate New Ideas to Old Ones

As both a speaker and a listener, one of the most important things you can do to understand a message is to relate new ideas to previously held ideas. Imagine you're giving a speech about biological systems and you need to use the term "homeostasis," which refers to the ability of an organism to maintain stability by making constant adjustments. To help your audience understand homeostasis, you could show how homeostasis is similar to adjustments made by the thermostats that keep our homes at a more or less even temperature. If you set your thermostat for seventy degrees and it gets hotter, the central cooling will kick in and cool your house down. If your house gets below seventy degrees, your heater will kick in and heat your house up. Notice that in both cases your thermostat is making constant adjustments to stay at seventy degrees. Explaining that the body's homeostasis works in a similar way will make it more relevant to your listeners and will likely help them both understand and remember the idea because it links to something they have already experienced.

If you can make effective comparisons while you are listening, it can deepen your understanding of the message. If you can provide those comparisons for your listeners, you make it easier for them to give consideration to your ideas.

Take Notes

Note-taking is a skill that improves with practice. You already know that it's nearly impossible to write down everything a speaker says. In fact, in your attempt to record everything, you might fall behind and wish you had divided your attention differently between writing and listening.

Careful, selective note-taking is important because we want an accurate record that reflects the meanings of the message. However much you might concentrate on the notes, you could inadvertently leave out an important word, such as *not*, and undermine the reliability of your

otherwise carefully written notes. Instead, if you give the same care and attention to listening, you are less likely to make that kind of a mistake.

It's important to find a balance between listening well and taking good notes. Many people struggle with this balance for a long time. For example, if you try to write down only key phrases instead of full sentences, you might find that you can't remember how two ideas were related. In that case, too few notes were taken. At the opposite end, extensive note-taking can result in a loss of emphasis on the most important ideas.

To increase your critical listening skills, continue developing your ability to identify the central issues in messages so that you can take accurate notes that represent the meanings intended by the speaker.

1.8 Listening Ethically

Ethical listening rests heavily on honest intentions. We should extend to speakers the same respect we want to receive when it's our turn to speak. We should be facing the speaker with our eyes open. We should not be checking our cell phones. We should avoid any behavior that belittles the speaker or the message.

Scholars Stephanie Coopman and James Lull emphasize the creation of a climate of caring and mutual understanding, observing that "respecting others' perspectives is one hallmark of the effective listener."**(10)** Respect, or unconditional positive regard for others, means that you treat others with consideration and decency whether you agree with them or not.

Doug Lipman (1998), Lippman, D. (1998). *The storytelling coach: How to listen, praise, and bring out people's best*. Little Rock, AR: August House. a storytelling coach, wrote powerfully and sensitively about listening in his book:

Like so many of us, I used to take listening for granted, glossing over this step as I rushed into the more active, visible ways of being helpful. Now, I am convinced that listening is the single most important element of any helping relationship.

Listening has great power. It draws thoughts and feelings out of people as nothing else can. When someone listens to you well, you become aware of feelings you may not have realized

that you felt. You have ideas you may have never thought before. You become more eloquent, more insightful....

As a helpful listener, I do not interrupt you. I do not give advice. I do not do something else while listening to you. I do not convey distraction through nervous mannerisms. I do not finish your sentences for you. In spite of all my attempts to understand you, I do not assume I know what you mean.

I do not convey disapproval, impatience, or condescension. If I am confused, I show a desire for clarification, not dislike for your obtuseness. I do not act vindicated when you misspeak or correct yourself.

I do not sit impassively, withholding participation.

Instead, I project affection, approval, interest, and enthusiasm. I am your partner in communication. I am eager for your imminent success, fascinated by your struggles, forgiving of your mistakes, always expecting the best. I am your delighted listener. Lippman, D. (1998). *The storytelling coach: How to listen, praise, and bring out people's best*. Little Rock, AR: August House, pp. 110–111.

This excerpt expresses the decency with which people should treat each other. It doesn't mean we must accept everything we hear, but ethically, we should refrain from trivializing each other's concerns. We have all had the painful experience of being ignored or misunderstood. This is how we know that one of the greatest gifts one human can give to another is listening.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Critical listening is the process a listener goes through using careful, systematic thinking and reasoning to see whether a speaker's message makes sense in light of factual evidence. When listeners are not critical of the messages they are attending to, they are more likely to be persuaded by illogical arguments based on opinions and not facts.
- Critical listening can be improved by employing one or more strategies to help the listener analyze the message: recognize the difference between facts and opinions, uncover assumptions given by the speaker, be open to new ideas, use both reason and

common sense when analyzing messages, relate new ideas to old ones, and take useful notes.

- Being an ethical listener means giving respectful attention to the ideas of a speaker, even though you may not agree with or accept those ideas.

EXERCISES

1. Think of a time when you were too tired or distracted to give your full attention to the ideas in a speech. What did you do? What should you have done?
2. Give an example of a mistake in reasoning that involved the speaker mistaking an assumption for fact.

1.6 Chapter Exercises

SPEAKING ETHICALLY

Imagine that you're in the audience when the main speaker proposes an action that is so offensive to you that you earnestly want to stand up and walk right out of the room. You are sitting near the end of a row, so it would be possible to do so. You notice that other people are listening intently. You hope others will not assume that by your presence, you show that you agree. What is the most ethical choice?

1. Continue listening to be sure your understanding is accurate and to see whether the speaker explains the point of view in a way that makes it more acceptable.
2. Interrupt the speaker so other listeners won't be "taken in" by the message.
3. Walk out as a symbolic gesture of disagreement.

END-OF-CHAPTER ASSESSMENT

1. The difference between hearing and listening is
 - a. very small; the two processes amount to about the same thing
 - b. hearing is mindful and intentional, but listening is effortless
 - c. hearing is effortless, but listening is mindful and intentional
 - d. hearing requires strong motivation and attention, but listening is an automatic human response to speech
 - e. hearing depends on listening, but listening does not depend on hearing

2. Although you are a strong advocate of First Amendment rights, especially the protection of religious freedom, you find an exception to your beliefs when a speaker defends the rights of separatist religious sects to practice polygamy. Which of these responses is most ethical?

. Wait until the end of the presentation, then stand up and insist that the speaker listen to your rebuttal, just as you have listened to him or her.

- a. Seek a way to infiltrate the sect in order to investigate the truth of what's really going on.
- b. Go home to look up passages in the Bible that either support or refute the speaker's claims, then write an anonymous letter to a newspaper opinion page.
- c. Sit quietly and listen to the speech to decide whether the message contains elements of value or whether to leave your original opinion unmodified.
- d. Have a sense of humor; lighten the mood with a little laughter.

3. Which of the following statements is best?

- . A fact is carefully reasoned.
- a. A fact is verifiable by authoritative evidence.
 - b. A carefully considered opinion is as good as factual evidence.
 - c. Assumptions are always wrong.
 - d. Opinions, even expert opinions, never belong in human discourse.

4. What is critical listening?

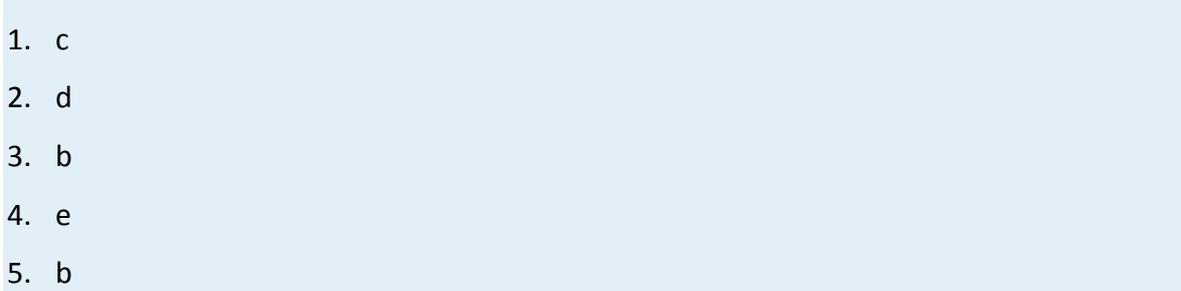
- . negative judgments listeners develop during a speech
- a. the practice of detecting flaws in a speech
 - b. a listener's use of his or her opinions in order to mentally refute factual details in the speech
 - c. the rejection of a message
 - d. careful scrutiny of the ideas and logical elements of a speech

5. Listening to a speech with an open mind means

- . accepting the claims and conclusions of the speech
- a. listening in order to learn
 - b. listening in order to quote the speaker later
 - c. replacing your outdated knowledge with the newer information in the speech
 - d. you must allow the speaker his or her First Amendment rights



ANSWER KEY

- 
1. c
 2. d
 3. b
 4. e
 5. b

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Unit-2

Effective Listening and Notetaking

Structure

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Listening Tips
- 2.3 Ten Questions to Ask Yourself While Listening
- 2.4 Ten BAD Listening Habits, by Ralph G. Nichols
- 2.5 How to Take Good Lecture Notes
- 2.6 Bibliography and references

2.1 Introduction

Listening is a skill that should be taught since eighty percent of what you know is learned by listening. This packet contains specific recommendations to help you listen to a lecture more efficiently.

Efficient notetaking is necessary for students to have a record of lectures for future study and review. This packet gives a variety of techniques to improve notetaking skills including mapping.

This information has been adapted from a variety of Study Skills textbooks. The last page of this packet is a bibliography of these textbooks.

2.2 Listening Tips

You must learn to listen effectively because eighty percent of what you know is acquired through listening. Listening is a skill that requires the constant application of certain principles until they become habitual. Here are some suggestions:

1. Be prepared to listen by keeping up to date with your textbook reading. Read the chapter before the lecture!
2. Determine the main idea and all important details that were given in connection with it.
3. Learn to recognize that the speaker is making an important point by:
 - a. pausing
 - b. giving examples
 - c. repeating what has been said
 - d. repeating the textbook
 - e. increasing volume or changing pitch of voice

- f. taking more time on one area
 - g. adding class activities or worksheets
 - h. using body language (facial expression, gestures, posture, pace)
 - i. writing on the chalkboard
 - j. using direct statements (this is very important) or signal words (examples: significant, most)
1. Find area of interest - maintain eye contact even if the subject appears boring. There will be some information that will be useful.
 2. Judge the content, not delivery. Find out what the speaker knows, not how he presents it.
 3. Withhold evaluation until comprehension is complete – don't become preoccupied with rebuttal before idea is completely presented. Don't listen defensively.
 4. Listen for ideas - main ideas, central facts, organizational patterns.
 5. Be flexible in notetaking.
 6. Work at listening - spend energy to give conscious attention.
 7. Resist distractions - a matter of concentration.
 8. Exercise your mind - develop an appetite for hearing a variety of presentations difficult enough to challenge your mental capacities.
 9. Keep your mind open - be careful of emotional impact of certain words - don't listen defensively composing a rebuttal.
 10. Capitalize on thought speed.

Speech speed - 100-200 words per minute

Thought speed - 400-500 or more words per minute.

Take advantage of differential - do not allow distractions during this time.

2.3 Ten Questions to Ask Yourself While Listening

1. What is he saying; what does it really mean?
2. How does that relate to what he said before?
3. Where is he going; what's the point he's trying to make?
4. How is that helpful; how can I use this?
5. Does this make any sense?
6. Am I getting the whole story?
7. How does this relate to what I already know?
8. Is he leaving anything out?
9. How does this relate to what I already know?
10. Do I understand what he's saying or should I ask for clarification?

2.3 Ten BAD Listening Habits, by Ralph G. Nichols

1. Finding the subject uninteresting
2. Judging delivery, not content.
3. Allowing excessive emotional involvement
4. Listening for details, not central ideas
5. Using non-flexible notetaking
6. Paying poor attention to the speaker
7. Being easily distracted
8. Avoiding difficult material
9. Refusing to accept new ideas
10. Thinking about irrelevant topics

2.4 How to Take Good Lecture Notes

A good set of lecture notes is one of your most important assets in getting ready for an examination. If you have the facts in readable form, you are well equipped to do the necessary reviewing.

Many students take notes in a very haphazard style claiming that they will copy them later. This is a poor policy for two reasons:

- (1) usually the notes don't get copied and the originals are not much use after a few days or weeks have gone by, and
- (2) if the notes are copied, it is a waste of time because they can just as well be done correctly in the first place.

Three important findings from studies concerned with notetaking:

1. Notetaking helps you listen; it does not interfere with listening and comprehension.
2. Students who study their notes using the recitation method remember one and a half times more after six weeks than students who do not review.
3. Students who take no notes or do not study their notes forget approximately 80% of the lectures by the end of two weeks.

Good lecture notes must:

1. present a neat, attractive appearance.
2. indicate the main points of the lecture.
3. show the relationship of the details to the main points.
4. include enough illustrative detail to enrich notes and content.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TAKING NOTES:

1. **USE INK!** Notes in pencil will smear and are hard to read anyway. Be sure to use a **large** notebook.
2. **Date your notes** for reference in test preparation.
3. **Leave wide margins** and don't crowd your lines together. Notebook paper is cheap - never mind if you use a whole line for just one work. Plenty of white space is important in order to show the relationships of ideas to each other.
4. **Use notetaking shorthand to** reduce as many ideas as possible.
 - a. Reduce to essential words - don't use complete sentences.
 - b. Use symbols as a substitute for words.
 - c. Abbreviate by using initials, half words, creative spelling.
5. **Don't take too many notes.** Do more listening than writing.
6. **Don't try to take down *everything* the lecturer says.** All lecturers have to repeat a great deal, but you only need to put it down once.
7. **Don't take down the first thing he says on any topic** - it's probably introductory material.
8. **Listen for signals.** He's almost sure to say something about "The first point I want to discuss today..."

9. **Don't try to make a formal outline.** You'll only get bogged down in your letters and numbers and won't be able to concentrate on listening and trying to understand.
10. **Underline the first main topic.** Then write down, in list form but without numbers, the most important things he talks about. (Don't try to make sub-topics and sub-sub-topics.) Keep on doing this until you find that he is talking about something else. Then you will know it's time for another main topic.
11. **Don't bother to number sub-topics unless the lecturer says: "There are three reasons..."** or mentions a specific number of facts. Then number them so you will be sure to learn that many facts when you study for your examination. In other words, don't number just for the sake of numbering, but make the numbers mean something.
12. **Read your notes over** as soon after class as possible to fix

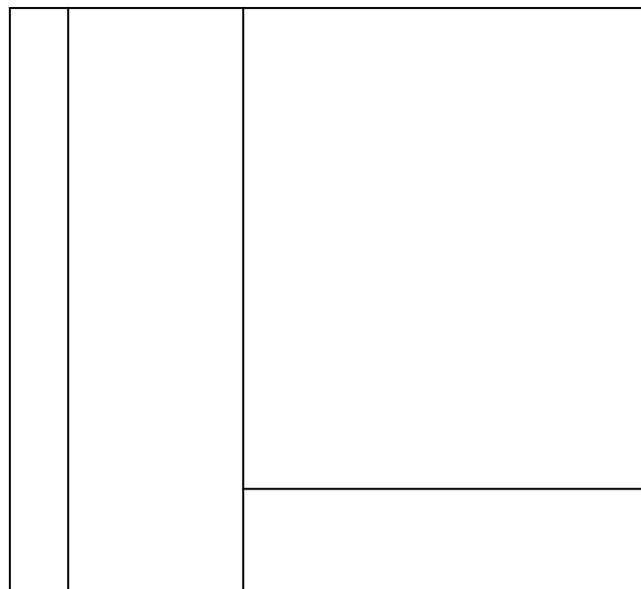
Handwriting, spelling and clarity.



HERE IS A SAMPLE NOTETAKING TECHNIQUE:

The 2-6-2 Form of Lecture Notes

1. Use lined notebook paper measuring 8-1/2" x 11" with three holes in the margin.
2. Before writing on your note paper, divide the sheets the following way:



SUMMARY

3. Take your notes in the large, open section of the paper just as you would take notes ordinarily.
4. When going over your notes, place key questions in the two-inch margin on the left. These questions will help you in your review of these notes at a later time.

5. Write brief summaries in the section 2 x 6 inches at the bottom of the page. These will help you in your review, when you want to know general ideas, or which topics deserve extra attention (these are the ones which seem vague to you.)

In reviewing notes, use the questions and summaries as “talking” or “starting” points for recitation. Go into the notes themselves only when you feel that you are not prepared to develop the questions and summaries.

COMMON ABBREVIATIONS FOR NOTETAKING

Devise your own abbreviation for words used frequently in a course. Be consistent! Always use the same abbreviation for the same word.

@ at	O degree	# number
% percent	→ increase	← decrease
\$ dollar	yr year	lb pound
w/ with	w/o without	w/i within
MPH miles per hour	< greater than	> less than
‘ feet	“ inches	ch chapter
ex example	lr learn	i.e. that is
& and	dept department	max maximum
min minimum	gvt government	diff different
lr learn	q question	wrt write
b/4 before	b/c because	etc and so on
pg page	2 two, too to	wrd word

SOLUTIONS TO COMMON PROBLEMS IN NOTETAKING

- A. **Illegibility** - It is usually sufficient that a student can read his own notes. It is advisable to go over notes while still fresh in order to clarify any illegible parts. This is particularly important in the case of notes that had to be taken rapidly.
- B. **Points Missed** - Leave spaces. Try to fill in later from the text or by checking with classmates or teacher.

- C. **Spelling of a Word Not Known** - Write the word as best as possible phonetically. Code (Sp?) and check later.
- D. **Missed Lectures** - When a classmate must miss a lecture and entrusts you with taking notes for him, use a piece of carbon paper and provide him with his own copy. Thus, there is less chance that he will be using your notes at times when you would like to have them available for review and also less chance of the notes being lost. If you must miss a lecture, your classmates can reciprocate for you.
- E. **Ink or Paper Supply Becomes Exhausted** - A replacement might be obtained from a neighbor if it can be done quickly and unobtrusively. Otherwise the student should listen especially carefully and write the missing notes as soon as he possible can. Since forgetting is rapid when notes are not taken, it is wise to check paper, pencil, and ink before leaving for class.
- F. **Poor Physical Situation** - When seeing or hearing is difficult, a seat change for the next lecture, or even during the same lecture, is in order. If a problem arises such as light glare preventing students from seeing the place on the board where the lecturer is writing, the lecturer might be informed of this. He would probably rather be interrupted to be informed of such a condition than to have part of his lecture lost.
- G. **Poor Physical or Emotional Condition** - Try to concentrate deeply on the topics of the lecture and to become very interested in them. Such practice may help a student forget minor physical discomfort or emotional upset by detracting from it for a while.

MAPPING

Here is an alternative way of notetaking:

Since the brain does not deal with data in a chronological linear fashion, and we do not listen “like someone sucking up spaghetti”, mind map can show relationships and how the parts relate to the whole. Mapping allows you to see the total picture.

STEPS TO FOLLOW:

1. You need several sheets of blank paper, standard size.
2. Print the main subject in the middle of the page and draw a geometric shape around it.
3. All ideas plotted on a mind map should be expressed in just one or two key words.
4. Key words should be concrete, meaningful, and summon up the same image or idea each time they are used. Strong nouns or verbs.
5. Think of subtopics that will represent all the data. Print these on lines connecting to the main subject.
6. The supporting points come after subtopics.

ADVANTAGES:

1. The main idea is more clearly defined.
2. The relative importance of each idea is clearly indicated. More important ideas will be nearer the center and less important ideas will be near the edge.
3. The links between the key concepts will be immediately recognizable because of proximity and connection.
4. Recall and review will be more effective and rapid.
5. Structure allows for the easy addition of new information without scratching out or squeezing in.
6. Each map will look different, aiding recall.

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UNIT 3

Listen and Respond 3

3.1. Listening to lectures, presentations and other suitable listening materials from electronic media, and taking notes

For academic and other purposes, we read books, journals and refer to web-based materials. We also listen to lectures and discussions that provide important information for assignments and exams, or simply help to extend our knowledge of the subject of study.

For these reasons, it is important that we are able to take good notes while listening to a lecture, discussion or presentation.

In this activity you will consider what makes a good set of notes. You will also explore some techniques for taking efficient and useful notes while listening and practise note-taking from a lecture.

Activity 3a.i

- i. Say *true* or *false* for each of the following statements about taking notes.
- ii. Then, discuss with a friend why you chose *true* or *false*.
 - Good notes are legible and include a title and date.
 - Good notes should not be more than one page in length.
 - Good notes are well spaced out on paper and make use of lists.
 - Good notes do not contain all words and sentences written in full

Now check your reasoning with the following:

- i. True

Reason/s: If you cannot read your own notes they are useless. Details of the title of a lecture/presentation/ discussion, the lecturer's or presenter's name, the date etc. are essential for later use for revision, reference and assignments.

- ii. False

Reason/s: There is no maximum length for notes as lectures and presentations vary in the amount of useful information they contain. These factors will affect the length of your notes. Notes are a short form of important points. You need to be selective and brief when making them.

iii. True

Reason/s: Notes that are written too close together can be difficult to understand later. Leaving enough space between points can help you quickly distinguish between a

main point and a secondary point. Points are written in the list form, and never in paragraphs. They are also grouped according to main and related points. These help you quickly find groups of related points. Items in the lists are numbered: 1, i, ii; 2, i, ii etc; or ordered by letters: a, i, ii, b, i, ii, c, i, ii).

iv. True

Reason/s: Good note-takers use time-saving techniques when making notes. For example, they may use symbols, e.g. = & \ %; abbreviations, e.g. imp. (important), pt. (point), & etc; and use figures, e.g. 1947, 2km instead of using words for these. Only key words are used, and less important words, eg. a, the, was, are left out. This takes less time when you listen and write at the same time.

Note-taking techniques:

- spacing between points
- using abbreviations and symbol
- using key words
- using points in a list form

Activity 3a.ii

Listen to the audio of a lecture on tsunamis. As you listen, take notes.

(material: audio of a lecture; script to be provided at the end of this chapter/end of thaterial)

[Script This discussion is about tsunamis.

A tsunami is a huge wave in the ocean. Some of these move at a great speed and very quickly crash onto the shoreline. Tsunamis are usually caused by volcanic or earthquake activity under the ocean. The effects of tsunami on a community can be devastating. What causes a tsunami?

When an earthquake, volcanic explosion or landslide happens on the ocean floor, water is displaced. This water forms the start of the tsunami wave in the ocean.

When the waves reach shallow water three things happen. First, the height of the waves can increase by several metres. Then, the shallow water slows the waves. As a result, the waves get closer together becoming taller and taller.

It is hard to see that a tsunami is approaching. The clearest sign is the water near the coast moving backwards into the sea by several hundred meters just before the waves reach the shore. This is actually the depression in the sea bed created due to the huge waves following behind.

What effects does a tsunami have?

The main impacts of a tsunami are heavy flooding and high winds.

One example is the tsunami that occurred on 26 December 2004 in the Indian Ocean. It was caused by an earthquake under the sea measuring more than magnitude 9. The earthquake caused the seafloor to rise by several metres, displacing the seawater above. In the open ocean, the tsunami measured less than one metre high. Then it travelled at speeds up to 800km per hour. When the tsunami reached the shores, the height of the wave increased to 15 metres in some areas. Indonesia was hit by the tsunami first. Forty-five minutes later, the tsunami reached Thailand. Thirteen countries were affected, the worst being Indonesia. People were swept away in the waters, which arrived rapidly and with little warning.

The main impacts of the Indian Ocean tsunami were: a quarter of a million people died; two million people were made homeless; many water related diseases became widespread; and countries, such as the Indonesia, Thailand and Maldives, dependant on tourism and fishing, had to rebuild their industries.

The impacts of a tsunami can be lessened by:

- creating mangrove swamps on the coast that can function as a barrier to reduce the force of the water;
- getting a warning system ready so that people can move away from coastal areas to safer places when warned.

After the 2004 tsunami, an early warning system between countries surrounding the Indian Ocean has been set up.] **end of script**

Match your note with the note given below.

14 Feb 2016

Lecture by Prof _____

Tsunamis

1. What?

- i. huge ocean waves
- ii. move at grt spd to shore
- iii. devastating effect

2. Causes & effect

volcanic acts; earthquakes; landslide under sea
water displaced

3. Forms of ts

- i. ht of waves increase
- ii. waves slow 'cause of shallowness
 - iii. slow waves join & form a huge wave

4. Detecting ts

- i. not possible
- ii. only clear sign: water moving backwards into sea by many 100 mtr just before ts reaches shore

5. Effects

- i. heavy flooding
- ii. high winds

6. Example: Ts of 26.12.04; 13 countries affected; mainly Indonesia, Thailand, Maldives

7. Lessening impacts

- i. mangrove barriers to lessen force of water
- ii. use of early warning system; after 2004 ts, a system for Indian Ocean countries

3b. Listening to telephone calls and keeping notes while listening

Activity 3b.i

- Listen to the audio of a telephone conversation between a fridge technician and client. As you listen, take notes. (material: audio of a telephone conversation)
- Listen to a telephone call meant for your boss. Take down the important points that you'd tell her/him later. (material: audio of a telephone call)
- Match your note with the note given below.

(listening materials to be recorded)

Assignment

- Take notes when you listen to lectures in class
 - Match your notes with a friend's.
 - Discuss your notes with the teacher.
-

BLOCK 3 ORAL COMMUNICATION 1