

HOW TO LISTEN, FOLLOW DIRECTIONS and TAKE NOTES

1. Compare the directions you wrote down to the list provided by instructors. What did you notice?
2. What might help you to remember the directions accurately?
3. PRACTICE TASK: As the instructors repeat the directions, write key active listening words (write, do, try, remember, summarize, compare...).
4. Write down questions you might ask the instructors to make sure you have the right information.
5. How might you apply these strategies in a work setting, for example, during a morning line-out session?

Listening Skills

Listen for meaning

Listening for meaning is a form of active listening. Active and attentive listeners not only pay attention to words, they also focus on the intent of each word—the message a word is intended to communicate. To decipher messages, first determine the central idea being communicated. Then pay close attention to anecdotes, explanations, and other details meant to clarify meaning. While you work to improve listening skills, always pay close attention to the central focus of what is being relayed.

While you're listening, and after the listen task has ended, check your comprehension. Did what you learn make sense within the context of the topic or central idea being communicated? Monitoring and checking comprehension makes sure that you're active listening strategy is working.

Adjust your note taking style to the lecture

Ineffective listeners often attempt to jot down every detail from a lecture. They are under the impression that a detailed outline equates to good notes. Students who utilize this strategy often get discouraged when they review their notes only to find the breadth, detail and lack of focus in their note-taking is confusing and leaves them unable to identify central themes and important topics. Effective listeners adapt their note-taking to the teaching styles of their teachers and lectures. They focus on central ideas and jot down details that expand on, or clarify, the central concepts of a lecture.

Tackle difficult to understand material

It's not uncommon for students tune out professors when they start discussing confusing or complex topics. Even when it's possible to hear every word during a lecture, it can be very difficult to process confusing or complicated concepts. Good listeners harness their mental faculties to process what is being presented.

Concentrate and pay attention

People who struggle with listening often have a difficult time concentrating. Good listeners must work to develop the ability to concentrate and ignore distractions. This requires the ability to tune out personal worries, thoughts about family members and friends, and thoughts about upcoming activities. Those who can hone the ability to concentrate can improve listening skills.

Be prepared

If you do not complete required reading or review notes from previous lectures prior to class, it is very difficult to process information and attentively listen to lectures. This is why you should never neglect to complete reading or other class assignments. Attending a lecture prepared provides you the background knowledge required to be an effective listener—and an effective student.

Focus on what's important

One of the keys of effective listening is the ability to concentrate on central ideas and main focuses. It is a mistake to only be concerned about facts and extemporaneous detail during a lecture. In other words, effective listeners focus on the stories or ideas behind the facts. They then are able to pick up on the supporting fact, details and evidence for the main concepts, ideals and topics being discussed.

Choose to be interested

Many people tune out lectures because they're bored or disinterested. As a result, they neglect to take notes on key concepts. Effective listeners become interested in the subject material, so they can process the information and pay attention to classroom lectures.

Copyright 2016 Educationcorner.com. All rights reserved. Retrieved from:
<http://www.educationcorner.com/listening-skills.html>.

ω LEARNING BY LISTENING ω

You can learn a lot through listening. In college, it will be a prime source of information. Unfortunately, people do not instinctively listen well. Quite the reverse! Listening is a skill which must be developed.

If you apply the following suggestions, you will find yourself listening more effectively, both in class and out.

1. Determine why what the speaker is saying is important to you. If you don't have an immediate, vivid reason for listening to a speaker, you are an unmotivated listener.
2. Remember: the responsibility for interest and understanding lies with you, not with the speaker. Learning is up to the learner. If you simply want to sit passively and blame the speaker for your lack of success, then you're not a serious learner.
3. If you can't hear, arrange things so you can. Move away from sources of noise-human or mechanical. Sit where you can see the speaker easily, and where other distractions are at a minimum.
4. Listen to what the speaker is saying. Don't tune the speaker out because you don't like something about him/her or the message. Be sure you understand something before you reject it.
5. Look for the speaker's pattern of organization. In a lecture, a speaker is generally referring to notes or some other source of information. You can understand much better if you are able to recognize what the speaker's driving at and how the speaker's getting there.
6. Look for the main idea or ideas of the presentation. Facts are important only as they support the speaker's points. If you have trouble distinguishing between the important and the trivial, a friend or a tutor in the Academic Skills Center can help you.
7. Don't let your mind wander. Your thoughts move far more rapidly than the swiftest mouth, and the urge to stray is tempting. Your attention span can be increased, however, through deliberate effort. Continue to practice the habit of attention and don't be discouraged by early failures.
8. Take notes while you listen. even if you recognize everything being said, jot it down, because you won't remember it later unless you do.

Improving Your Note Taking

- **Make clear and accurate notes**

Make sure to take legible and accurate notes since it is not uncommon to forget key details discussed during class after it has ended. Frequently, students comprehend the teacher's lecture and think they'll remember everything, so they neglect to jot down specific details only to find later that they can't recall what it was they needed to remember. Students who keep accurate notes can review them later to review key points, recall necessary detail, solidify knowledge and study up on concepts they didn't fully comprehend during the lecture. Additionally, since teachers frequently cover many topics during the course of their lectures, effective notes enable students to concentrate on specific topics that are most relevant.

- **Come to class prepared**

Students properly prepared for class usually take better notes than those who come unprepared. Proper preparation includes completing assigned reading prior to class and reviewing notes from previous lectures. Students who review their notes from previous lectures (1) will have a better context for learning new topics presented in the next lecture and (2) can ask questions about confusing concepts they didn't quite understand from the previous lecture.

- **Compare your notes**

To ensure your notes are as accurate and detailed as possible, compare them with the notes of other students after class is over. This is useful because your colleagues will frequently write down lecture details that you forgot or missed. This strategy will make classroom notes more thorough and precise.

- **Minimize distractions**

Effective note takers avoid classroom distractions. This can include sitting in spots with fewer distractions and not signing up for classes with friends that you might want to talk with during lectures. Some students will even sit in spots where it is difficult to constantly glance at the clock.

- **Organize your notes**

Notes organized by date, class, and subject make it easier to locate specific lecture details. It is also a good idea to keep information from different dates and classes separated or to begin each class with a new piece of paper. A good format for organizing your notes is the [Cornell System for Taking Notes](#).

- **Use abbreviations and symbols**

Since teachers usually cover a lot of information during each lecture, it can be hard to write down everything important they say. This is why we recommend using symbols and that you abbreviate long words and use short phrases in your notes when possible. Many students use the following symbols and abbreviations while taking notes: & (and), w/o (without), eg (for example), ie (that

is). When utilizing abbreviations, create a key of your most commonly used abbreviations, so you will not forget what they are.

- **Write clearly**

The most copias notes will be of no benefit if you can't read them. This is why it is important to use good penmanship when taking notes. It is also recommended that you leave space in margins and near key concepts in your notepad, so you can add important details relating to previous lecture topics that are addressed during future lectures.

- **Review your notes**

In order to retain information discussed during lectures, it is best to review notes immediately after class. This will help you better understand the lecture, your notes, and it will enable you to focus on what you just learned for long-term retention. You should review your notes a second time just before your next lecture. This will help refresh in your mind important topics and concepts, and prepare you for the next lecture. You should continue to review your notes on a regular basis between your lectures and your exams.

- **Write down questions**

No matter how intelligent a student is, from time to time they're bound get confused and end up having questions unanswered by the lecture. For this reason, it is a good idea to write down questions to ask after class, or during subsequent lectures. You can also answer your own questions through a web search, a tutor, other student or by using reference books—but only if you wrote down your questions in enough detail during the lecture.

If you want to increase the effectiveness of your studying and performance on exams, it's imperative to learn how to take good notes. Effective notetaking is a key element of the formula for success for successful students.

Copyright 2016 Educationcorner.com.