

ACCESS

Study Skills Tip of the Week

Improve Your Listening Skills

Listening is not the same as hearing. Listening is a conscious activity based on three basic skills: attitude, attention, and adjustment. These skills are known collectively as Triple-A-Listening.

- **Maintain a constructive attitude**

A positive attitude paves the way for open-mindedness. Don't assume from the outset that a lecture is going to be dull. And even if the lecturer makes statements you don't agree with, don't decide he or she is automatically wrong. Don't let reactive interference prevent you from recalling the speaker's key points.

- **Strive to pay attention**

You cannot attain concentration by concentrating on the act of concentration. Your attention must focus on the lecture. When you hear a lecture, the words enter your short-term memory, where they have to be swiftly processed into ideas. If they aren't processed, then they will be dumped from short-term memory and will be gone forever. Attentive listening makes sure the ideas are processed.

- **Cultivate a capacity for adjustment**

Although some speakers clearly indicate what they intend to cover in their lectures, you need to be flexible enough to follow a lecture regardless of the direction it may take. If, however, you are thoroughly lost, or if the speaker's messages are not coming across and you need to ask a clarifying question, do so.

How are your listening skills? Take the quiz on the other side and find out.

The above information was adapted from Walter Park's [How to Study in College](#).

For more information about this and other study strategies call

ACCESS A+ Program
100 A Williston Hall (815) 753-1126
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Listening Questionnaire: How's Your Classroom Performance?

Read each statement and decide how the habit reflects your listening.

Answer

“yes” if you use the habit over half your listening time.

“no” if you don't use the habit much.

“sometimes” if you use the habit periodically.

1. Do you often doodle while listening?

no yes sometimes

2. Do you show you are paying attention through your eye contact, posture, and facial expressions?

no yes sometimes

3. Do you write down everything you hear?

no yes sometimes

4. Do you listen largely for main ideas as opposed to facts and details?

no yes sometimes

5. Do you often daydream or think about personal concerns while listening?

no yes sometimes

6. Do you ask questions about what you do not understand in a lecture?

no yes sometimes

7. Do you frequently feel tired or sleepy when attending a lecture?

no yes sometimes

8. Do you mentally review information as you listen to make connections among points?

no yes sometimes

9. Do you often call a lecture boring?

no yes sometimes

10. Do you recall what you already know about a subject before the lecture begins?

no yes sometimes

11. Do you generally avoid listening when difficult information is presented?

no yes sometimes

12. Do you pay attention to the speaker's nonverbal cues?
 no yes sometimes
13. Do you often find yourself thinking up arguments to refute the speaker?
 no yes sometimes
14. Do you generally try to find something of interest in a lecture even if you think it's boring?
 no yes sometimes
15. Do you usually criticize the speaker's delivery, appearance, or mannerisms?
 no yes sometimes
16. Do you do what you can to control distractions around you?
 no yes sometimes
17. Do you often fake attention to the speaker?
 no yes sometimes
18. Do you periodically summarize or recapitulate what the speaker has said during the lecture?
 no yes sometimes
19. Do you often go to class late?
 no yes sometimes
20. Do you review the previous class lecture notes before attending class?
 no yes sometimes

Scoring

Count the number of YES answers to even numbered items: _____

Count the number of NO answers to odd numbered items: _____

The even-numbered items are considered effective listening habits.
The odd-numbered items are considered ineffective listening habits.

Learning Success by Carl Wahlstrom and Brian Williams

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