

Want to Improve Your Listening Skills? Know the Eight Principles - Part I

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Can I improve my listening skills? This is one of the common questions that our expert English tutors come across. Of course, like you can improve any other skill, you can improve your listening skills as well. Learning to listen is a pre-requisite to learning the English language. Unless you are able to understand the message received, how are you expected to effectively communicate?



Active listening is so important that many employers have made it mandatory for a person to pass a listening test first, before making the final decision to hire a candidate. Improving your listening skills is the first step to improve your English.

Why effective listening is important?

- You get to learn new information when you listen with full concentration.
- It helps you to comprehend a speaker's body language, expressions, gestures and other nonverbal clues.
- Effective listening helps you get along with others as you are on the same page as them.
- It gives you an idea of what other people thoughts and behavior is. Likewise, you can deal with them in a better manner.

LISTENING IS NOT EQUAL TO HEARING

"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply."

- Stephen R. Covey,

The latter defines hearing, you simply hear so that you can react to a conversation. Listening needs much more than that, it calls for your 100% dedicated attention. Listening involves your complete focus on the conversation, and paying attention to what is said, the language, the tone of the voice and the body language. To put in simple terms, effective listening is an amalgamation of verbal as well as nonverbal communication.

A person is a good listener when he knows what is being discussed, and what is left unsaid, at least partially. Listening requires you to be more active and not just from your ears. Let us look at some principles that can take you a long way in getting a mastery over listening.

Principles of listening

•Talk less, listen more

Have you heard the famous saying by Mark Twain, "If we were supposed to talk more than we listen, we would have two tongues and one ear." This quote puts down the first principle of listening – talk less and listen more. When you are in a conversation, listen to what the other person has to say, let them finish the talking and then you talk. Don't jump in the middle and finish their sentences, nobody likes being interrupted, do you?

•Focus, concentrate

You want to [improve your English](#) and listening is invariably a key to achieve that goal. So, relax and just focus on what the speaker has to say. Clear your mind and concentrate. It's very easy for the human mind to get distracted even at the slightest of disturbance. So, it takes a lot of practice to focus and concentrate. Shove away other thoughts and just concentrate on the words being communicated.

•Express your feedback

listening. Just nod, or use other gestures to let the speaker know that he is being understood. This will put the speaker at ease and encourage him to continue. You could maintain an eye contact and let the speaker get the clue that you are understanding the communication.

We shall discuss more principles of effective listening in our next article. Stay connected to English.eagetutor.com.

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