

# UNIT -2 LISTENING SKILLS

## Definition of listening skills:-

- Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process.
- Listening is key to all effective communication. Without the ability to listen effectively, messages are easily misunderstood. As a result, communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated. Listening is not the same as hearing:-
- Hearing refers to the sounds that enter your ears. It is a physical process that, provided you do not have any hearing problems, happens automatically.
- **Listening, however, requires more than that: it requires focus and concentrated effort, both mental and sometimes physical as well.**
- Listening skill can be defined as, "Listening is the act of hearing attentively". It is also a process similar to reading which should possess knowledge of phonology, syntax, semantics and text understanding. **Thomlison (1984) defines listening as, "Active listening, which is very important for effective communication"**. Listening can be also defined as, "More than just hearing and to understand and interpret the meaning of a conversation".
- **According to M.V.Rodrigues,**"Listening is a process of receiving, interpreting and reacting to the messages received from the communication sender".

## Objectives of Listening:-

Listening is an important aspect of business communication. It stands third after writing and speaking. A business communicator has to listen to various customer, employees, officer, suppliers, financiers etc. Obviously, it is an unavoidable task for a business person. This important reason as to why a business communicator should know about listening is enumerated as under:-

1. **To gain new information and ideas.**
2. **To question and test evidence and assumptions.**
3. **To be inspired and motivated.**
4. **To improve overall communication.**

1. **To Gain New Information and Ideas:** A business person has to get new information and ideas from various parties. For example he gets the information from customers regarding the product. He takes various ideas from the employees inside the organization. He receives order or instruction from his superiors. He gets training from his instructor. All these activities require him to be a good listener.

**2. To Question Test Evidence and Assumptions:** Any activity, particularly business, activity requires good analytical skill to survive in the environment. A good listener does not feel much difficulty in doing so. Good listeners test those facts and opinions against assumptions and then question the speaker. In this way he is able to analyze the message and treat it on its merit.

**3. To be inspired and Motivated:** A dynamic business man wants to be motivated again and again. Good listening enables him to take inspiration from the message and brings about enthusiasm in his attitude.

**4. To Improve Overall Communication:** A business person needs strong communication skills to survive in the market and to face a high degree of competition. This can only be achieved by having strength in all areas of communicating i.e. writing, reading, speaking and particularly listening.

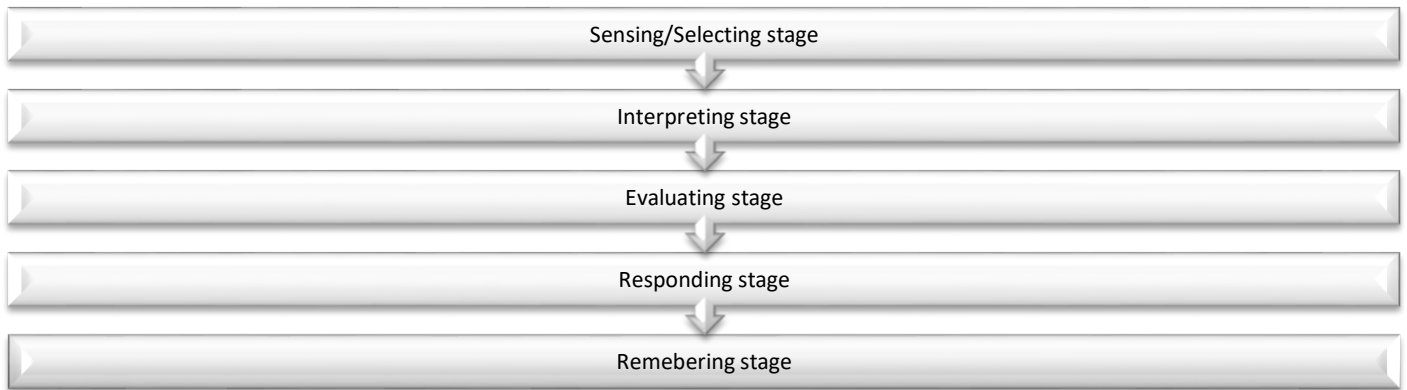
## **Principles of Listening:-**

Essentials of listening skills are as follows:-

- 1. Listen with Patience:-**The speaker deserves a patient hearing, even if the listener does not agree with him. The listener can encourage the speaker to continue talking in simple manner.
- 2. Understand the emotions of the speaker:-**It is important for the listener to understand the speaker both intellectually and emotionally. Effective listener must concentrate fully on what a speaker is saying because many speakers are not able to express their emotions in a clear manner.
- 3. Restatement and summary:-**Listener must reframe in summary form what the speaker has said to him, and do so in such a way that it reassures the speaker and makes him go on talking.
- 4. Avoid interrupting the speaker:-**An effective listener should not try to express his views while the speaker is expressing his own as this could repress what the speaker is trying to say.
- 5. Talk less, listen more:-**If two people have to communicate effectively, both of them should give more weightage to listening attentively as offering lengthy explanations.
- 6. Establish a close Relationship with the speaker:-**It is good idea for the listener to try and form a friendly equation with the speaker based on **trust** and goodwill.
- 7. Set aside time for questions and discussion:-**Allotting separate time for questions and answers as well as discussions, when the speaker has finished talking, is always a good idea.

## **Process of Listening:-**

The process of listening includes the following five elements:-



1. **Sensing/Selecting stage:** - To make sense out of our environment, we must choose which stimuli we will listen to and which we will ignore. This process is called selecting. For example, at a party a friend maybe talking to you while loud music is playing and other people are talking.
2. **Interpreting stage:-**During this stage, listener tries the process of receiving, interpreting, recalling, evaluating, and responding to verbal and nonverbal messages. People-oriented listeners are concerned with others' needs and feelings, which may distract from a task or the content of a message.
3. **Evaluating stage:** - The third 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.
4. **Responding stage:** - Responding sometimes referred to as feedback—is the fourth 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.
5. **Remembering stage:** - Remembering begins with listening; if you can’t remember something that was said, you might not have been listening effectively. 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.

### **Guidelines to effective listening:-**

Listening is very important aspect of communication. Around 20% of overall communication is listening. Therefore, one should strive for adopting good listening habit. There are following guidelines for good listening:-

- (1) **Preparation before listening.**
- (2) **Listening to understand, not to refute.**
- (3) **Focusing the attention.**
- (4) **Concentration on context.**
- (5) **Taking notes.**
- (6) **Make the speaker comfortable**
- (7) **Asking questions.**
- (8) **Grasp the total meaning.**
- (9) **Respond Honestly**

The details of each point are as follows:-

**1.Preparation before listening:-**As already mentioned that listening plays important role in communication. So one should prepare himself before starting listening. In preparation, there are following guidelines:

- (i) **Stop talking:** - Human brain can perform one activity efficiently at a time, so during listening there should be no talking by the listener.
- (ii) **Remove distraction:** - Noisy fan, traffic noise, entrance of unauthorized persons may interrupt the listening process. All these barriers should be removed.
- (iii) **Good environmental conditions:** - There should not be extraordinary cold or warm environment and ventilations should be proper.

**2. Listening to understand, not to refute:-**There could be many topics to which the listener has reservations. Apart from these reservations, the listener should try his best to understand the message.

**3. Focusing the attention:-**There may be many objects on which the listener should construct a mental outline of where the speaker is going in his speech.

**4. Concentration on context:-**The listener should keep in mind the background and theme of speech. This thing enables him to absorb the material quickly and efficiently.

**5. Taking notes:-**Listener should keep on taking notes. Hence, he should jot down ideas rather than sentences. In this way, he/she could make the message safe for a long time.

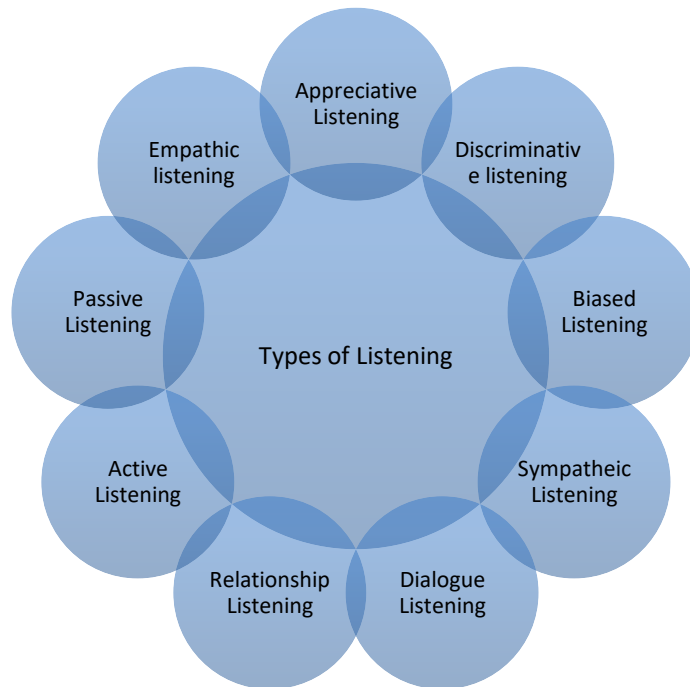
**6. Make the speaker comfortable:-** The listener should let the speaker know, through his mental and physical attitude, that he is an attentive listener. Doing so will make the speaker comfortable in the listener's presence and he will be able to talk more freely.

**7. Asking questions:-**Asking right question on right time is quite different form interruption. Listener should have an idea to know right time to ask questions.

**8. Grasp the total meaning:-**The listener should try to listen to and understand the message of the speaker in its totality. He should not make hurried assumption or pass quick judgments regarding what is being said.

**9.Respond Honestly:-**When genuinely asked for his response, the listener should answer honestly if he wants something rewarding to emerge out of the discussion.

## Types of listening:-



1. **Empathic Listening:-**Empathic listening involves attempting to understand the feelings and emotions of the speaker – to put you into the speaker’s shoes and share their thoughts.
2. **Appreciative Listening:-**Appreciative listening is listening for enjoyment. A good example is listening to music, especially as a way to relax.
3. **Discriminative listening:-**Discriminative listening is the most basic type of listening, whereby the difference between difference sounds is identified. We learn to discriminate between sounds within our own language early, and later are unable to discriminate between the phonemes of other languages. This is one reason why a person from one country finds it difficult to speak another language perfectly, as they are unable distinguish the subtle sounds that are required in that language.
4. **Biased listening:-** Biased listening happens when the person hears only what they want to hear, typically misinterpreting what the other person says based on the stereotypes and other biases that they have. Such biased listening is often very evaluative in nature.
5. **Sympathetic listening:-**In sympathetic listening we care about the other person and show this concern in the way we pay close attention and express our sorrow for their ills and happiness at their joys.
6. **Dialogic listening:-**The word 'dialogue' stems from the Greek words 'dia', meaning 'through' and 'logos' mean 'words'. Thus dialogic listening mean learning through conversation and an engaged interchange of ideas and information in which we actively seek to learn more about the person and how they think. Dialogic listening is sometimes known as 'relational listening'.
7. **Relationship Listening:-** Sometimes the most important factor in listening is in order to develop or sustain a relationship. This is why lovers talk for hours and attend closely to what each other has to say when the same words from someone else would seem to be

rather boring. Relationship listening is also important in areas such as negotiation and sales, where it is helpful if the other person likes you and trusts you.

8. **Active Listening:-** Active listening goes beyond just listening. Active listening means being attentive to what someone else is saying. The goal of active listening is to understand the feelings and views of the person.
9. **Passive Listening:-** Passive Listening is listening without reacting: Allowing someone to speak, without interrupting. Not doing anything else at the same time. When a person is practicing passive listening, he is sitting quietly without responding to what the speaker is saying.

## **Importance's of effective listening:-**

The following points explain the importance of effective listening are as follows:-

### Imporatnce of effective listening

- Respect
- information
- Reduce conflicts
- Motivating Employee
- Developing Trust
- Increase confidence
- Enhance Accuracy
- Better Relationship

1. **Respect:** - A person show respect when he/she listens to the speaker with complete attention. Similarly, the speaker also gives respect in return.
2. **Information:** - One can explore and learn more about the society through attentive listening. Learning new societal concepts is important for the growth of both personal as well as professional life.
3. **Reduce Conflict:** -Listening can reduce conflict. A conflict can arise when an individual feels misunderstood or mistreated. For example, if you fail to listen to instructions and your coworker does the task you were supposed to perform, the coworker might be unhappy with you. Pay attention to nonverbal cues, as well. If an individual's facial expressions, gestures or behavior contradict her words, ask questions to find out what she really means.
4. **Motivating Employees:** -A manager can improve morale and productivity by understanding what motivates each employee. Listen to employees to discover what aspects of the job they find most rewarding and challenging. Don't expect to understand an employee's needs from a single

conversation. Continue to be an attentive listener so that the employee knows you are sincerely interested in what she has to say.

5. **Developing Trust:** -Listening is essential to building trust. If one member of a team doesn't listen to instructions, an entire project might fail. To develop trust, pay attention to verbal instructions and deadlines. Listen for statements a coworker might make regarding his own strengths and weaknesses as it relates to a project, so that you can collaborate in a way that maximizes each other's strengths.
6. **Increasing confidence:** -People, who listen well and carefully, tend to have better knowledge and clear understanding. Therefore, they are more confident in day to day activities and even while taking major decisions.
7. **Enhancing accuracy:** -Listening in a better way leads to a huge recollection of important facts and issues, resulting in more accuracy while solving complex issues, with lesser miscommunication and faults.
8. **Better Relationship:** -Listening is a very important part of effective communication. A good listener can encourage their partner to talk openly and honestly which helps to maintain the strong bonding or relationship between listener and speaker.

## **Barriers to Effective Listening:-**

Listening is not easy and there are a number of obstacles that stand in the way of effective listening, both within outside the workplace. These barriers may be categorized as follows.

1. **Physiological Barriers:** - some people may have genuine hearing problems or deficiencies that prevent them from listening properly. It can be treated. Some people may have problem in processing information or retaining information in the memory.
2. **Physical Barriers:** - These referred to distraction in the environment such as the sound of an air conditioner, cigarette smoke, or an overheated room. It can interfere the Listening process. They could also be in the form of information overload. For example, if you are in meeting with your manager and the phone rings and your mobile beeps at the same time to let u know that you have the message. It is very hard to listen carefully to what is being said.
3. **Cultural Barriers:** - Culture can be barriers to listening, since they interfere with the ability to understand the meaning of words that are pronounced differently. The problem of different accents arises not only between cultures, but also within a culture. For example, in a country like India where there is enormous cultural diversity, accents may differ even between regions states.
4. **Psychological Barriers:** - The **Psychological or Emotional Barriers** refers to the psychological state i.e. Opinions, attitudes, status consciousness, emotions, etc. of a person that deeply affects the ability to communicate.
5. **Linguistic Barriers:** - Anything connected with language or with the scientific study of language is linguistic. Linguistic barriers are the obstructions people face in understanding one another because of the different languages they speak. For example- A Frenchman without knowledge of English faces linguistic barriers in England and America.

**Overcoming barriers to effective listening :-** When you find yourself getting distracted with either internal or external noise, pay attention by being mindful. When you discover any attachment to your point of view, case up on the attachment or completely let go it. Become curious about other points of view. When a speaker says something unclear, avoid misinterpretations by asking the speaker what he meant.

**Characteristics of Good and Effective Listener:-**

Good and effective listener tries to give maximum amount of thought to the speaker’s ideas being communicated, leaving a minimum amount of time for mental exercises to go off track. A good listener:

1. **Is attentive-** Good listener must pay attention to the key points. He should be alert. He should avoid any kind of distraction.
2. **Do not assume-** Good listener does not ignore the information he considers is unnecessary. He should always summarize the speaker’s ideas so that there is no misunderstanding of thoughts of speakers. He avoids premature judgements about the speaker’s message.
3. **Listen for feelings and facts-** Good listener deliberately listens for the feelings of the speaker. He concentrates totally on the facts. He evaluates the facts objectively. His listening is sympathetic, active and alert. He keenly observes the gestures, facial expression and body language of the speaker. In short, a good listener should be projective (i.e. one who tries to understand the views of the speaker) and empathic (i.e. one who concentrates not only on the surface meaning of the message but tries to probe the feelings and emotions of the speaker).
4. **Concentrate on the other speakers kindly and generously-** A good listener makes deliberate efforts to give a chance to other speakers also to express their thoughts and views. He tries to learn from every speaker. He evaluates the speaker’s ideas in spare time. He focuses on the content of the speaker’s message and not on the speaker’s personality and looks.
5. **Opportunists-** A good listener tries to take benefit from the opportunities arising.

**Difference between Listening and Hearing:-**

Basic For Comparison	Hearing	Listening
Meaning	Hearing refers to one’s ability to perceive sounds, by receiving vibrations through ears.	Listening is something done consciously, that involves the analysis and understanding of the sounds you hear.
Types of acts	Physiological Act means implies it is one of the biological mechanisms involved in the functioning of a human body.	Psychological Act means it relate to a conscious mind or mental phenomena.
Process	Hearing is a passive Bodily process	Listening is a mental process.



Attention and efforts	Neither pays any close attention nor put any mental efforts to figure out what we hear.	Here we pay close attention and put focused mental efforts to drive the meaning of a king of sound we have decided to listen.
Action	Its require involuntary action in which we don't deliberately try to listen and make no conscious effort.	It is voluntary since listening requires a conscious effort.

### **Difference between Active & Passive listening:-**

<b>Distinction</b>	<b>Active</b>	<b>Passive</b>
Definition	It means mindful and attentive listening to comprehend the meaning of the speakers.	Its means showing like listening to the speaker but not making an attempt to comprehend the meanings.
Connectivity Level	Listener connects with the world and actively participated with the goal of problem solving.	Listener disconnects himself from the outsiders and has minimal interaction with others
Self-Responsibility	Take Responsibility for their own learning and growth	Avoids Responsibility for learning and problem solving.
Mental approach	Sharp Mind, alert to explore ,reflect on information	Accepts and retain information as is with no intention to questions or challenges the idea for improvement.
Engagement Level	Having high engagement level	Having low engagement level