

# LISTENING

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## AGENDA

- Starter
- Listening Dos and Don'ts
- Picking Up the Signals
- Telephone
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

### Objectives

Students will identify characteristics of active listening.

Students will identify and familiarize themselves with the verbal and nonverbal signals that are important to good listening.

Students will practice listening techniques and skills.

### Materials Needed

- One copy of the “Listening Signals” activity sheet for each student (Part II)

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**Starter (3 minutes)**

Explain to students that you will begin the lesson with a riddle. Tell them not to say the answer if they have heard the riddle, because they will spoil it for those who have not heard it.

Tell students the following riddle: “A man walks into a museum, sees a portrait on the wall, and says, ‘That man’s father is my father’s son.’ Who is the person in the picture?” (Answer: the first man’s son or nephew)

Allow students one minute to quietly figure out the answer. Tell students that you will tell them the answer at the end of the period.

Explain that the reason you began the class with a riddle is to illustrate that a person must do more than just hear what is being said—they must also listen very carefully. Point out that good listening means both hearing and understanding.

Explain to students that in this lesson they will discuss techniques that help people listen effectively.

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**Part I Listening Dos and Don'ts (5 minutes)**

Purpose: Students identify characteristics of active listening by observing role plays and discussing their observations.

**1. Students observe a demonstration of poor listening habits.**

Note: Before beginning this activity, select a student volunteer. In order to prevent hurt feelings, explain to them that you will be demonstrating what bad listening looks like while they tell you a story.

Ask the student to tell you about a favorite movie, plans for the weekend, or a special sport or hobby. Once the student begins speaking, act as though you are not paying attention by looking for your grade book, doodling, slouching, snoring, asking unrelated questions, or repeating what the student says imprecisely.

**2. Students identify poor listening habits.**

Stop and ask students if they think that you were a good listener. Have them critique your listening. List the poor behaviors they observed where everyone can see.

Suggest that another poor listening habit is thinking about a response instead of listening to the speaker.

**3. Students identify good listening techniques.**

Have students suggest ways in which you could have been a better listener. Refer students to the list of poor listening habits to stimulate their thinking. (Student responses should include the following: making eye contact, attentive posture, nodding or performing other gestures that acknowledge understanding, asking relevant questions, and repeating ideas in your own words.)

Write student suggestions next to the list of poor listening habits to make a list of dos and don'ts for listening.

#### **4. Students observe a demonstration of good listening techniques.**

Repeat the conversation with the volunteer, this time using good listening skills. If time allows, let other students take over your role.

#### **5. Students discuss listening skills.**

Explain that it is often easy to tell when someone is not listening to you. It is frustrating for a speaker when others are not being good, active listeners.

Explain to students that as listeners, they can use the techniques just discussed to show the speaker that they are listening actively. These techniques can be summarized as focus on the speaker, confirm what they are saying, and respond with your own thoughts.

Refer to each suggestion on the listening dos list and ask students to classify them as techniques for focusing, confirming, or responding. Write the appropriate word next to each suggestion on the list.

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## **Part II Picking Up the Signals (15 minutes)**

Purpose: Students identify and familiarize themselves with signals that are important to good listening.

#### **1. Students understand the difference between listening and hearing.**

Review with students that listening and hearing are not the same thing. People hear simply because sound reaches their ears—hearing is passive. Listening, on the other hand, is an active thinking skill that requires focus in order to understand, integrate, and evaluate/interpret what is heard.

#### **2. Students learn verbal signals that can help them focus on important ideas.**

Explain that focusing is the key to listening. Tell students that they can develop the important skill of focusing by learning to interpret signals. Explain that speakers often use signal words and phrases to alert listeners to important ideas. Recognizing a speaker's signals helps a listener to focus on the message.

Distribute the “Listening Signals” activity sheet to students. Ask if any of these phrases seem familiar. Have students identify who might use them (e.g., parents, teachers, bosses, friends). Have students add other signal words and phrases to the sheet. Tell students that these verbal signals are important to remember as they listen to others.

### **3. Students identify nonverbal signals.**

Explain that speakers may guide listeners at certain points with movements and gestures to reinforce verbal signals. Ask students to generate a list of these nonverbal signals. (Student responses may include moving arms, standing up, moving closer to listeners, etc.) Have them add their responses to their activity sheets.

Tell students that watching the speaker’s eyes and actions can help them to further understand what is being said.

### **4. Students work in pairs to practice using verbal and nonverbal signals.**

Divide students into pairs. Have one student in each pair speak to their partner about an important topic (e.g., homework policy, plans for the future). The rest of the students should listen to their partners and observe their verbal and nonverbal signals.

After one minute, ask students to switch roles.

### **5. Students discuss their observations.**

As a class, discuss student observations. Ask them how being sensitive to signals improved their listening.

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## **Part III Telephone (20 minutes)**

Purpose: Students play a game of “Telephone” to practice their listening skills.

### **1. Students prepare to play “Telephone.”**

Divide the class into groups of six. Have each group stand in a circle. Ask one volunteer from each group to join you at the front of the class.

Give the volunteers the following directions:

- I am going to tell you a story. Your job is to listen carefully, and then to whisper the story to one other member of your group, using the exact words that I used.
- Don't let the other members of the group hear you.
- Each person passes the story word for word to the next person.
- Use verbal and nonverbal signals to make sure your listener understands what you say.

Tell volunteers the following story:

Let's begin with some facts. There are 15 passengers on a bus. At the first stop, four people get off the bus. Two are women, one is a man, and one is a baby. Next, two men get on and four children get off. That is the end of the story.

## 2. Students apply listening skills to a game of "Telephone."

Explain that students are going to play a version of the game "Telephone." Tell students that they will be practicing the "focus and confirm" techniques that they have been developing during this lesson:

- The listener focuses while listening. (Remind students of the techniques for focusing.)
- The listener then confirms what has been heard by repeating it to the next listener.

Have the volunteers return to their groups and tell the story to the person on their right, who will then pass the story to the next person, and so on, until everyone in the group has heard the story.

## 3. Students analyze the effectiveness of their listening skills.

When all groups have completed the activity, ask the last person in each group to repeat to the class what they heard.

Ask students if they know the driver's name. Tell them that they can't know the name because it was never said. Explain that good listening also means identifying what information isn't being conveyed.

Ask students how many people are on the bus as the story ends. Allow students a few minutes to work this out. If necessary, repeat the story. (There are 10 people on the bus—nine passengers and the driver.)

Ask students to consider how effectively they think they listened and whether good listening skills helped them to remember the story better.

Conclude by reminding students that active listening skills are an important part of good communication.

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## Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students how active listening contributes to effective communication. Elicit from students the following key points that were taught in this lesson:

- Being an active listener is key to good communication and requires more than just hearing.
- To be a good listener, focus, confirm, and respond.
- Recognizing verbal and nonverbal signals enables us to focus our listening more effectively.

## Student Assessment

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1. What is the difference between hearing and listening?
2. What are the steps to being a good listener?
3. List three examples of bad listening techniques and three examples of good listening techniques.
4. Are you a good listener? Why or why not? What can you do to improve as a listener?

## LESSON EXTENSIONS

### Using Quotations

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“The opposite of talking isn’t listening. The opposite of talking is waiting.”

Ask students if they agree with this quote. Have them write captions for news photos of two people having a conversation. Tell them to include the thoughts of the “listener” to show what they are really thinking.

### Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

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Have students prepare five-minute oral reports on a person in the news. (Historical figures may also be included.) Explain that the class will be taking notes, so speakers should be sure to include appropriate verbal and nonverbal signals.

Have students present their reports in small groups, with the other students providing feedback on the points covered.

### Writing in Your Journal

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Have students think about a time when someone was definitely not listening to them. Tell them to write about how they could tell the person wasn’t listening and what that felt like.

Have students share their writing in small groups and compile a class list of signs that someone isn’t listening.

### Using Technology

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Have students watch a talk or news show and evaluate the host’s listening skills during an interview.

Have each student write a review of the show, evaluating whether or not the host was an active listener.

## Homework

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Have students select one teacher in whose class they will practice specific listening skills for a week. Have students note how lectures begin and end, how the teacher indicates a change in topic, how they stress something of importance, and how they use the board. Ask students to list ways in which these techniques improve their listening comprehension.

Have volunteers create a transparency of their class notes and share them with the class.

## Additional Resources

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Divide the class into four groups: video, article, podcast, and social media. Have groups list the methods that their assigned medium uses to capture attention, organize information, and alert readers/viewers to what is important or coming soon.

Have the class compare notes on the techniques used by each medium. Ask, “Why are they trying so hard to grab your attention and keep it? How are these methods similar to the signals sent by an instructor during a lesson?”



# LISTENING SIGNALS

<p><b>VERBAL SIGNALS</b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b>                  Let's discuss                  I want to talk about                  Today's lecture covers                  First</p> <p><b>Main Ideas</b>                  Let me repeat                  This is really important                  Make a note of                  Remember that</p> <p><b>Change in Direction</b>                  Next                  Let's move on to                  On the other hand                  Even though</p> <p><b>Major Details</b>                  For instance                  For example                  Namely                  The following reasons</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b>                  Finally                  The last point                  In conclusion                  All in all</p>	<p><b>NONVERBAL SIGNALS</b></p> <p>Speaking more loudly                  Speaking more emphatically                  Movement                  Moving closer to the listener                  Eyes rolling                  Finger wagging</p>															
<p>Additional Signals</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: left; padding: 5px;">Verbal</td> <td style="width: 40%;"></td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: right; padding: 5px;">Nonverbal</td> </tr> <tr> <td><hr/></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><hr/></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><hr/></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><hr/></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Verbal		Nonverbal	<hr/>			<hr/>			<hr/>			<hr/>		
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