

B.A.(Prog) II sem

AECC-English

Effective Listening Skills - An Essential for Effective communication

Listening is a significant part of communication process. Communication cannot take place until and unless a message is heard and retained thoroughly and positively by the receivers/listeners. Listening is a dynamic process. Listening means attentiveness and interest perceptible in the posture as well as expressions. Listening implies decoding (i.e., translating the symbols into meaning) and interpreting the messages correctly in communication process.

Listening differs from hearing in sense that:

Hearing implies just perceiving the sounds while listening means listening with understanding whatever you are listening. Both the body as well as mind is involved in listening process.

Listening is an active process while hearing is a passive activity.

Hearing is an effortless activity while listening is an act requiring conscious efforts, concentration and interest. Listening involves both physical and

psychological efforts.

Effective listening requires both deliberate efforts and a keen mind. Effective listeners appreciate flow of new ideas and information. Organizations that follow the principles of effective listening are always informed timely, updated with the changes and implementations, and are always out of crisis situation. Effective listening promotes organizational relationships, encourages product delivery and innovation, as well as helps organization to deal with the diversity in employees and customers, it serves.

To improve your communication skills, you must learn to listen effectively. Effective listening gives you an advantage and makes you more impressive when you speak. It also boosts your performance.

Effective Listening Skills

Discover your interests' field.

Grasp and understand the matter/content.

Remain calm. Do not lose your temper. Anger hampers and inhibits communication. Angry people jam their minds to the words of others.

Be open to accept new ideas and information.

Jot down and take a note of important points.

Work upon listening. Analyse and evaluate the speech in spare time.

Rephrase and summarize the speaker's ideas.

Keep on asking questions. This demonstrates that how well you understand the speaker's ideas and also that you are listening.

Avoid distractions.

“Step into the shoes of others”, i.e., put yourself in the position of the speaker

and observe things from his view point. This will help creating an atmosphere of mutual understanding and improve the exchange of ideas in communication process.

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:

Is attentive- Good listener must pay attention to the key points. He should be alert. He should avoid any kind of distraction.

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 message of speaker.

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).

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.

Opportunities- A good listener tries to take benefit from the opportunities arising. He asks "What's in it for me?"

To conclude, effective listening enhances the communication quality. It makes all attentive. It encourages optimistic attitude, healthy relations and more participation. It leads to better decision- making in an organization. Effective listening is directly related to our ability to do team work. It must be noted that "We listen at about an efficiency rate of 25 percent maximum, and we remember only about 50 percent of what is delivered during a ten minute speech/lecture/communication."