

BE A GOOD LISTENER

One way to improve your concentration in the classroom is to practice being an effective listener. Good listening skills are necessary for understanding lectures, taking meaningful notes, participating in discussions, and communicating well with others. Effective listening is much more than just hearing; listening requires understanding information that is spoken. Here are several suggestions for developing the habit of being a good listener.

- Do your best to ignore distractions and stay focused on what the speaker is saying.
- Listen for the big picture, i.e., the main ideas, rather than trying to catch all the details.
- Try to bring a positive attitude to the situation by creating, in yourself, an interest in some part of the topic. Being genuinely interested will make listening effectively much easier.
- Be an active listener by creating questions about the topic. Write the questions in the margins of your notes to ask at the appropriate time.
- Don't allow your emotions to create a barrier to your listening ability. Sometimes this can happen when a topic is controversial or when you strongly agree or disagree with a viewpoint being presented. Be aware of this possibility and work to concentrate on what the speaker is communicating. Put your emotions on hold so that you won't miss or misinterpret what is being conveyed.
- Maintain eye contact from your seat with the speaker, even if they do not maintain it with you. Avoid looking around the room or skimming through the text book or surfing the net during class.
- Be prepared by having read the assignment or by having read ahead. This will help you zero in on important facts if the professor mentions something you have read.
- Sit near the front of the room and near the center closest to the speaker.
- Take notes but do not write every word down.