



## LISTEN TO WHAT YOU HEAR

The average college student spends about 14 hours per week in class listening (or perhaps “hearing”—there is a difference!) to lectures. Listening is something you consciously choose to do. Listening requires concentration so that your brain processes meaning from words and sentences. Listening leads to learning.

See if you can improve your listening skills by following some strategies:

- **Stay active by asking mental questions.** Active listening keeps you on your toes. Here are some questions you can ask yourself as you listen: What key point is the professor making? How does this fit with what I know from previous lectures? How is this lecture organized?
- **Avoid emotional involvement.** When you are too emotionally involved in listening, you tend to hear what you want to hear—not what is actually being said. Try to remain objective and open-minded.
- **Avoid distractions.** Don't let your mind wander or be distracted by the person shuffling papers near you, and turn off your cell phone (no texting!)
- **Treat listening as a challenging mental task.** Listening to an academic lecture is not a passive act—at least it shouldn't be. You need to concentrate on what is said so that you can process the information into your notes.
- **Focus on content, not delivery.** Have you ever counted the number of times a teacher clears his/her throat in a fifteen minute period? If so, you weren't focusing on content.

Most people tend to be "hard of listening" rather than "hard of hearing." Becoming an effective listener will serve you well forever.

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