

SURVIVING THE CLASSROOM: HOW DO I GET MORE OUT OF THE LECTURE?

Critical to your success in class is your ability to listen, understand, and learn from your professor's lecture. The good listener can make a poor speaker useful, but a good speaker cannot make a poor listener good. The ideal situation for communication is to have both a good speaker and a good listener. However, if one must be poor, it is the speaker who is less important.



Consider the following ten points that distinguish a good from a poor listener. Check your listening skills and see if there are opportunities for improvement that might help you do better in class.

THE GOOD LISTENER	THE POOR LISTENER
✔ Looks for information that can be used even if the subject is not interesting.	✘ Judges the subject uninteresting and writes off the whole subject as a waste.
✔ Concentrates on the content of the speaker's message.	✘ Criticizes the speaker's method of delivery.
✔ Hears the speaker out before deciding whether or not to continue paying attention.	✘ Gets overly excited about early points and fails to hear the entire message.
✔ Listens for ideas.	✘ Listens only for facts.
✔ Adjusts his/her note-taking to the speaker's method.	✘ Tries to outline in a logical order even when the speaker is disorganized and not logical.
✔ Makes a conscious effort to pay attention.	✘ Fakes paying attention.
✔ Does not distract others or allow himself/herself to be distracted.	✘ Tolerates the distractions of others or creates distractions himself/herself.
✔ Welcomes difficult or complex presentations of material as a challenge.	✘ Always avoid difficult presentations and never tries to develop the skills necessary to understand and learn from them.
✔ Does not let words or phrases that are loaded with emotion or controversy distract them from listening and learning from the speaker.	✘ Let's emotion-laden words distract him/her and loses his/her ability to continue listening and learning.
✔ Uses the ability to think faster than the speaker speaks to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Anticipate the speaker's next point. ♦ Identify what the speaker presents as evidence, fact, and opinion. ♦ Mentally recapitulates every four or five minutes. 	✘ Wastes the opportunity to anticipate where the speaker is going with his presentation by wandering off on unrelated mental tangents or listening to his/her MP ³ Player, texting, or otherwise shutting off the speaker.