

**STUDY SMART**

Lesson #5

LISTENING

Almost everything you do or think can influence your success in school. But, of all that you can do in class, listening well may be the most important.

Q: Why is listening so important?

First, listening is how you find out what teachers expect. Most teachers will explain what they want you to learn, how to answer tests and write papers. They usually do this at the beginning of a grading period and when assignments are made. But, teachers also tell what they expect in other ways. They emphasize important points by changing the volume of their voice, by moving more rapidly and by repeating the points. If you listen well you can often find clues to what will be on a test. So, listening is a good way to find out what teachers expect.

Second, listening is one of the two main ways to get information you must learn. Most teachers use class time to present important ideas. If you listen carefully, you can learn more and save time.

In this lesson you will learn how to be a good listener using PAT. In the next lesson you will learn about listening problems and how to avoid them as well as ways to increase your listening power.

Q: How should I listen?

Remember to use PAT: prepare to listen, act to listen and test your listening.

There are two ways to **PREPARE** yourself to listen.

First, you can prepare at home. Do your homework, read ahead in the text, make up questions, think about what you believe your teachers will say. These actions will help you use your knowledge to learn more as you listen.

Second, you can prepare to listen in class. These are actions you should do right before class begins. You will want to get to your classroom at least 2 or 3 minutes early.

1. Review your notes from the previous class or classes. Look for main points and try to relate them to the lesson for the day.

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2. Sit and relax for a moment and think about what you think your teacher will say. What will the main points be?
3. Be sure you have everything you need to listen well. This includes pen, paper, books, etc. Also, plan to listen like your teacher talks. You will have to listen "fast," for example, if a teacher talks quickly.
4. Sit in the front middle of the room, you will learn more.

Q: What can I do to listen better once class begins?

Four **ACTIONS** you can take will help you focus your attention and learn more as you listen:

1. *Listen for main points.* Most teachers have one or two important points they want everyone to learn. You should listen for these main points.
2. *Listen willingly.* It is very hard to learn if you resent being in class or dislike the teacher. Instead, identify what you can learn and listen for it. Focus your attention on the class or the topic. Forget about distractors.
3. *Listen for clues to test questions.* Most teachers ask questions about important ideas, facts, people or events. These are also the things they talk about. Try to relate what your teachers say to their questions on tests. Listen for things like changes in voice tone, repeated statements, changes in volume, and extra movement. These are often clues to important points.
4. *Summarize frequently.* From time to time repeat to yourself the main points by relating them to each other. For example, you could repeat the steps to solve a problem or the reasons for an incident as these are presented. You should do this about every 10 minutes, but only during times when the teacher pauses or repeats. These summaries should only take 15 to 30 seconds.

Q: How can identify main points?

You have to listen carefully and look for clues from three sources. From the teacher you can look for increased movement such as pointing a finger, or waving arms and changes in voice tone and volume.

You also need to listen for a story line which links together the ideas being presented. This general idea or theme can help you identify other main points. Often teachers will tell you what you will learn at the beginning of a lesson. If you are not sure, then ask, "What will we learn today?"

Finally, listen for main idea words and phrases. Words like "because," "therefore," "in addition," and "if" can tell you that something important is about

to be said. You will find a large list of these main idea indicator words and what they mean on chart 5.1.

Q: Should I test my listening, too?

Yes, **TESTING** is the last part of PAT, our study smart system.

To test yourself, ask questions such as:

What is the main point?

What have I learned so far?

How does this lesson relate to the lesson yesterday?

Then, after class, see if you can recall the main points and organize them. You can do this by making an outline of the ideas. You can also write a summary (about one page) to identify main points. If you are not sure you have gotten the correct ideas, ask your teacher to read your summary.

Homework

Here are some activities you can do to improve your listening.

1. Count the main idea indicator words used by your teachers.
2. Compare the main points you heard with the main points another student heard.
3. Listen to a newscast on television and identify main ideas indicator words.
4. Read the main idea indicator words, learn them and state what they mean from memory.


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rt 5.1**Main Idea Indicator Words**

Additive words. These say, "Here's more of the same coming up. It's just as important as what we have already said."

also	further	moreover
and	furthermore	too
besides	in addition	

Equivalent words. These say, "Both what I have just said and this too."

as well as	equally important	similarly
at the same time	likewise	

Amplification words. With these, the speaker is saying, "I want to be sure that you understand my idea; so here's a specific instance."

as	in fact	such as
for example (e.g.)	like	that is
for instance	specifically	to illustrate

Alternative words. These words say, "Sometimes there is a choice; at other times there isn't."

either/or	other than	otherwise
neither/nor		

Repetitive words. These say, "I said it once, but I'm going to say it again in case you missed it the first time."

again	in other words	that is (i.e.)
to repeat		

Contrast and change words. "So far I've given you only one side of the story; now let's take a look at the other side."

but	instead of	regardless
conversely	on the contrary	still
despite	on the other hand	though
even though	nevertheless	whereas
however	notwithstanding	yet
in spite of	rather than	

Cause-and effect words. "All this has happened; now I'll tell you why."

accordingly	for this reason	then
as a result	hence	therefore
because	since	thus
consequently	so	

Qualifying words. These say, "Here is what we can expect; these are the conditions we are working under."

although	providing	whenever
if	unless	

Concession words. These say, "Okay!" We agree on this much."

accepting the data	granted that	of course
even though		

Emphasizing words. These say, "Wake up and take notice!"

above all	indeed	more important
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Order words. With these, the author is saying, "You keep your mind on reading; I'll keep the numbers straight."

finally	last	second
first	next	then

Time words. "Let's keep the record straight on who said what and especially when."

afterwards	meanwhile	subsequently
at the same time	next	then
before	now	ultimately
formerly	presently	until
later	previously	while

Summarizing words. These say, "We've said many things so far. Let's stop here and pull them together."

briefly	in brief	to summarize
for these reasons	in conclusion	to sum up