



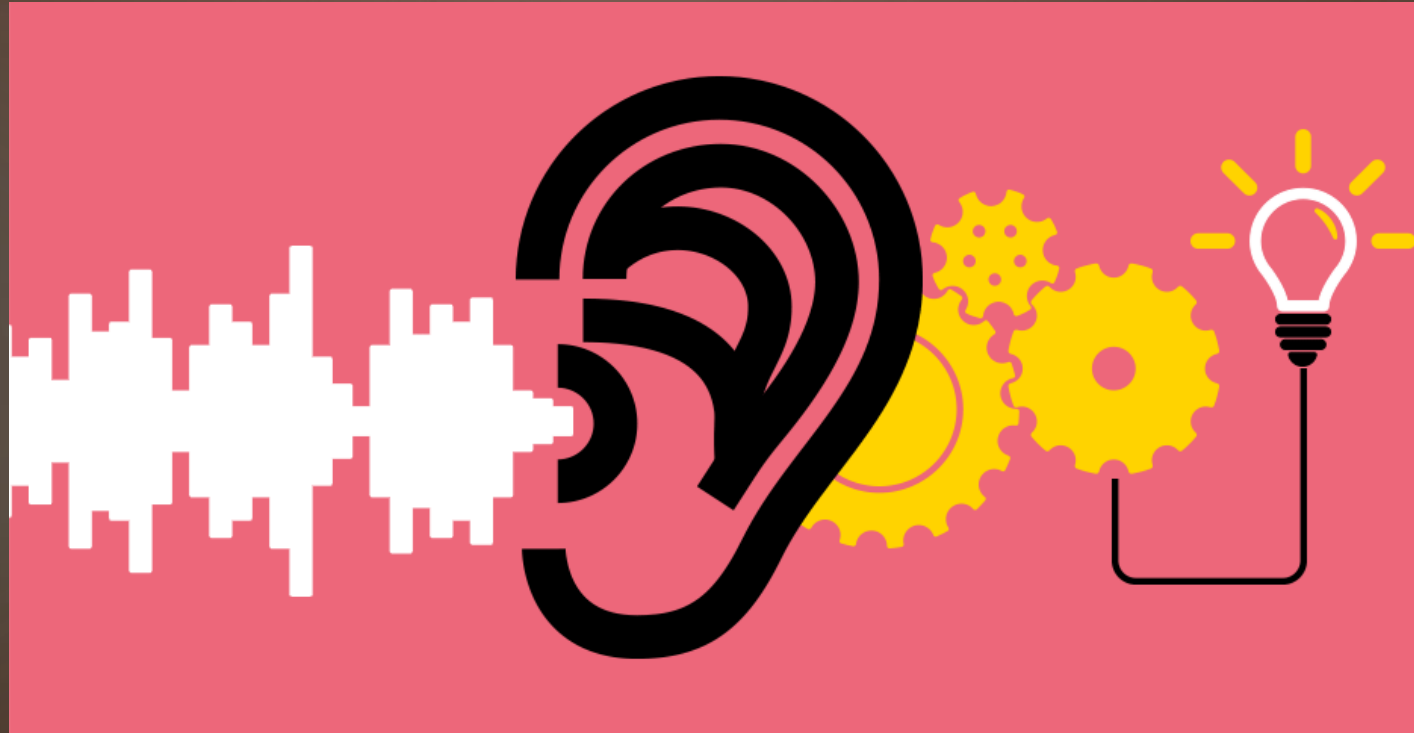
# GEN0210 Discourse English for Communication

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Listening

# Listening Skills

- ▶ Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process.



# Listening Skills

- ▶ Listening is key to all effective communication.
- ▶ Without the ability to listen effectively, messages are easily misunderstood.
- ▶ As a result, communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated.





- ▶ Listening is so important that many top employers provide listening skills training for their employees.
- ▶ This is not surprising when you consider that good listening skills can lead to
  - better customer satisfaction
  - greater productivity with fewer mistakes, and
  - increased sharing of information that in turn can lead to more creative and innovative work.

- ▶ Good listening skills also have benefits in our personal lives, including:
- ▶ A greater number of friends and social networks,
- ▶ improved self-esteem and confidence,
- ▶ higher grades at school and in academic work,
- ▶ and even better health and general well-being.





- ▶ Studies have shown that,
- ▶ whereas speaking raises blood pressure,
- ▶ attentive listening can bring it down.



# Listening is Not the Same as Hearing





- ▶ Hearing refers to the sounds that enter your ears.
- ▶ It is a physical process that, provided you who do not have any hearing problems, happens automatically.



- ▶ Listening, however, requires more than that:
- ▶ it requires focus and concentrated effort, both mental and sometimes physical as well.



- ▶ Listening means paying attention not only to the story,
- ▶ but how it is told,
- ▶ the use of language and voice,
- ▶ and how the other person uses his or her body.
- ▶ In other words, it means being aware of both verbal and non-verbal messages.
- ▶ Your ability to listen effectively depends on the degree to which you perceive and understand these messages.



- ▶ Listening is not a passive process.
- ▶ In fact, the listener can, and should, be at least as engaged in the process as the speaker.
- ▶ The phrase 'active listening' is used to describe this process of being fully involved.



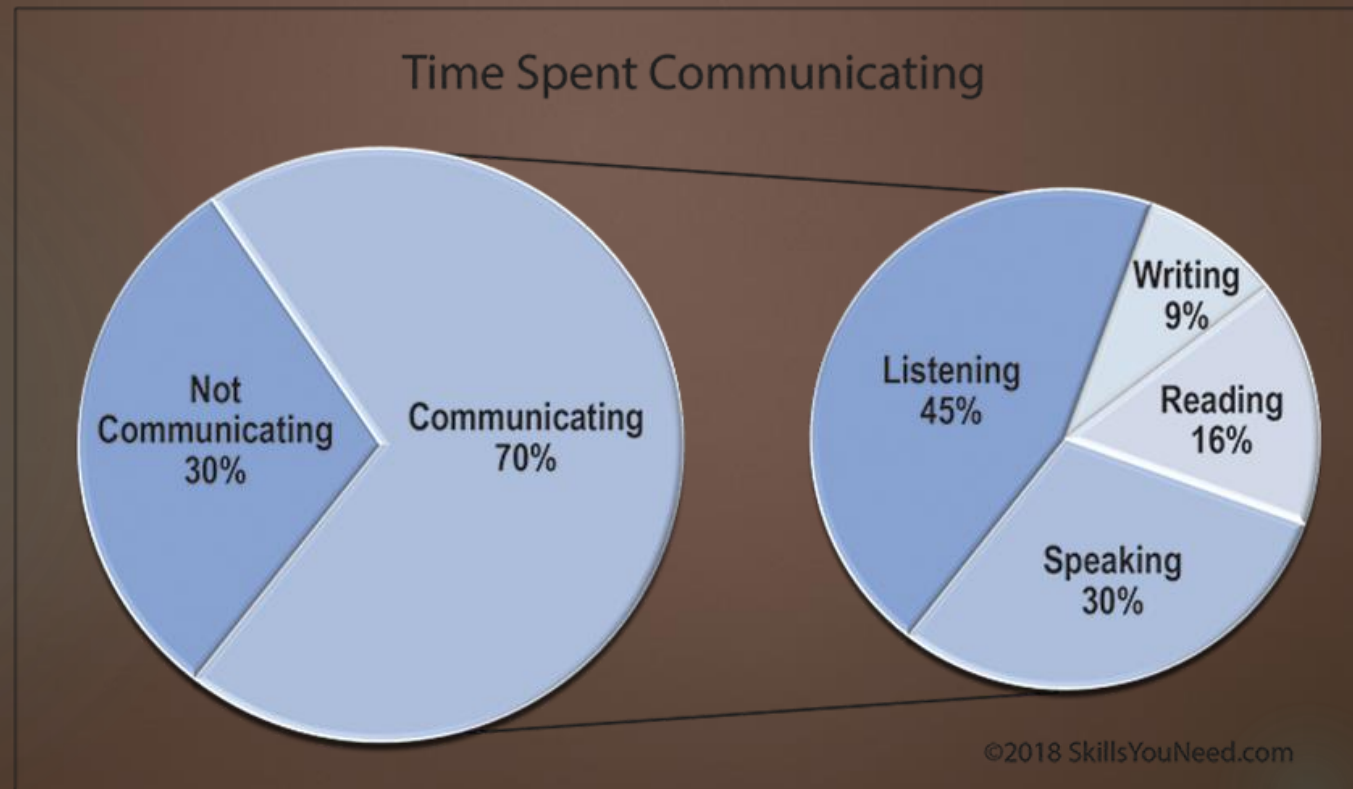


# We Spend a lot of Time Listening

- ▶ Adults spend an average of 70% of their time engaged in some sort of communication.



- ▶ Research shows that
- ▶ an average of 45% is spent listening compared to 30% speaking, 16% reading and 9% writing. (Adler, R. et al. 2001).
- ▶ That is, by any standards, a lot of time listening.
- ▶ It is worthwhile, therefore, taking a bit of extra time to ensure that you listen effectively.





# The Purpose of Listening

- ▶ Why is listening so important?
- ▶ Listening serves a number of possible purposes, and the purpose of listening will depend on the situation and the nature of the communication.



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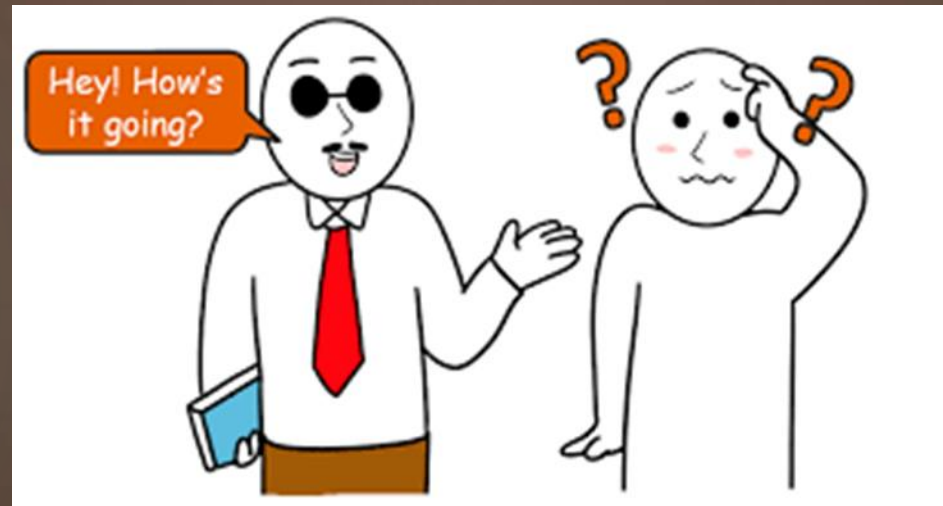
# The Purpose of Listening

- ▶ 1. To specifically focus on the messages being communicated, avoiding distractions and preconceptions.



# The Purpose of Listening

- ▶ 2. To gain a full and accurate understanding into the speakers point of view and ideas.



# The Purpose of Listening

- ▶ 3. To critically assess what is being said.



# The Purpose of Listening

- ▶ 4. To observe the non-verbal signals accompanying what is being said to enhance understanding.





# The Purpose of Listening

- ▶ 5. To show interest, concern and concentration.





# The Purpose of Listening

- ▶ 6. To encourage the speaker to communicate fully, openly and honestly.



# The Purpose of Listening

- ▶ 7. To develop a selflessness approach, putting the speaker first.



# The Purpose of Listening

- ▶ 8. To arrive at a shared and agreed understanding and acceptance of both sides views.



- ▶ Often our main concern while listening is to formulate ways to respond.
- ▶ This is not a function of listening.
- ▶ We should try to focus fully on what is being said and how it's being said in order to more fully understand the speaker.





- ▶ Effective listening requires concentration and the use of your other senses –
- ▶ not just hearing the words spoken.



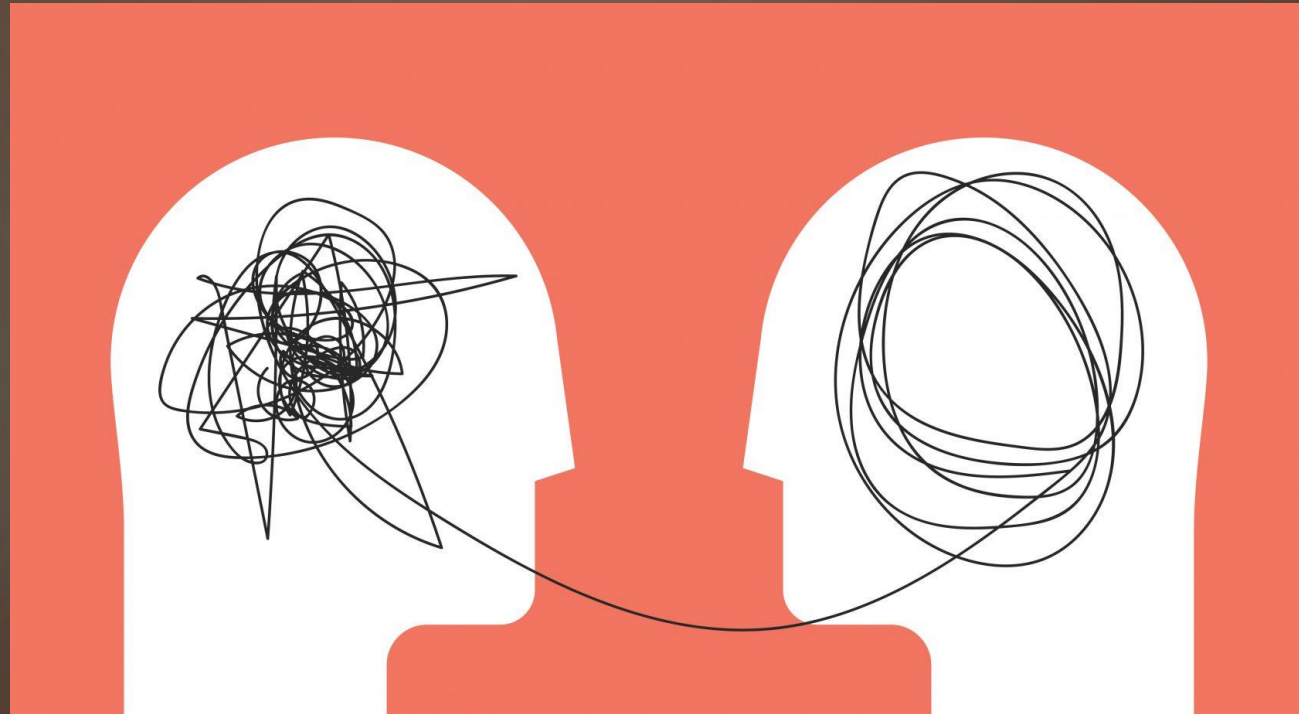
- ▶ Listening is not the same as hearing and in order to listen effectively you need to use more than just your ears.





# Barriers to Effective Listening

- ▶ To improve the process of effective listening,
- ▶ it can be helpful to turn the problem on its head and look at barriers to effective listening, or ineffective listening.



- ▶ For example, one common problem is that instead of listening closely to what someone is saying,
- ▶ we often get distracted after a sentence or two and instead start to think about what we are going to say in reply or think about unrelated things.
- ▶ This means that we do not fully listen to the rest of the speaker's message.





- ▶ Of course the clarity of what the speaker is saying can also affect how well we listen. Generally we find it easier to focus if the speaker is fluent in their speech, has a familiar accent, and speaks at an appropriate loudness for the situation.
- ▶ It is more difficult, for example, to focus on somebody who is speaking very fast and very quietly, especially if they are conveying complex information.



- ▶ We may also get distracted by the speaker's personal appearance or by what someone else is saying, which sounds more interesting.





- ▶ These issues not only affect you, but you are likely to show your lack of attention in your body language.





- ▶ Generally, we find it much harder to control our body language, and you are likely to show your distraction and/or lack of interest by lack of eye contact, or posture.
- ▶ The speaker will detect the problem, and probably stop talking at best.
- ▶ At worse, they may be very offended or upset.



- ▶ Finally, it is important not to jump to conclusions about what you see and hear.
- ▶ You should always seek clarification to ensure that your understanding is correct.



# The 10 Principles of Listening

- ▶ A good listener will listen not only to what is being said, but also to what is left unsaid or only partially said.
- ▶ Effective listening therefore involves observing body language and noticing inconsistencies between verbal and non-verbal messages, as well as just what is being said at any given moment.



- ▶ For example, if someone tells you that they are happy with their life but through gritted teeth or with tears filling their eyes,
- ▶ you should consider that the verbal and non-verbal messages are in conflict. Maybe they don't mean what they say.
- ▶ Listening is therefore not just a matter of using your ears, but also your eyes.
- ▶ There are ten principles behind really good listening.



- ▶ If we were supposed to talk more than we listen, we would have two tongues and one ear.
- ▶ \_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ Mark Twain





- ▶ 1. Stop Talking
- ▶ Don't talk, listen.
- ▶ When somebody else is talking listen to what they are saying, do not interrupt, talk over them or finish their sentences for them.
- ▶ Stop, just listen.
- ▶ When the other person has finished talking you may need to clarify to ensure you have received their message accurately.



- ▶ 2. Prepare Yourself to Listen
- ▶ Relax.
- ▶ Focus on the speaker.
- ▶ Put other things out of mind.
- ▶ The human mind is easily distracted by other thoughts
  - ▶ – what's for lunch?
  - ▶ - what time do I need to leave to catch my train?
  - ▶ - is it going to rain?
- ▶ – try to put other thoughts out of mind and concentrate on the messages that are being communicated.

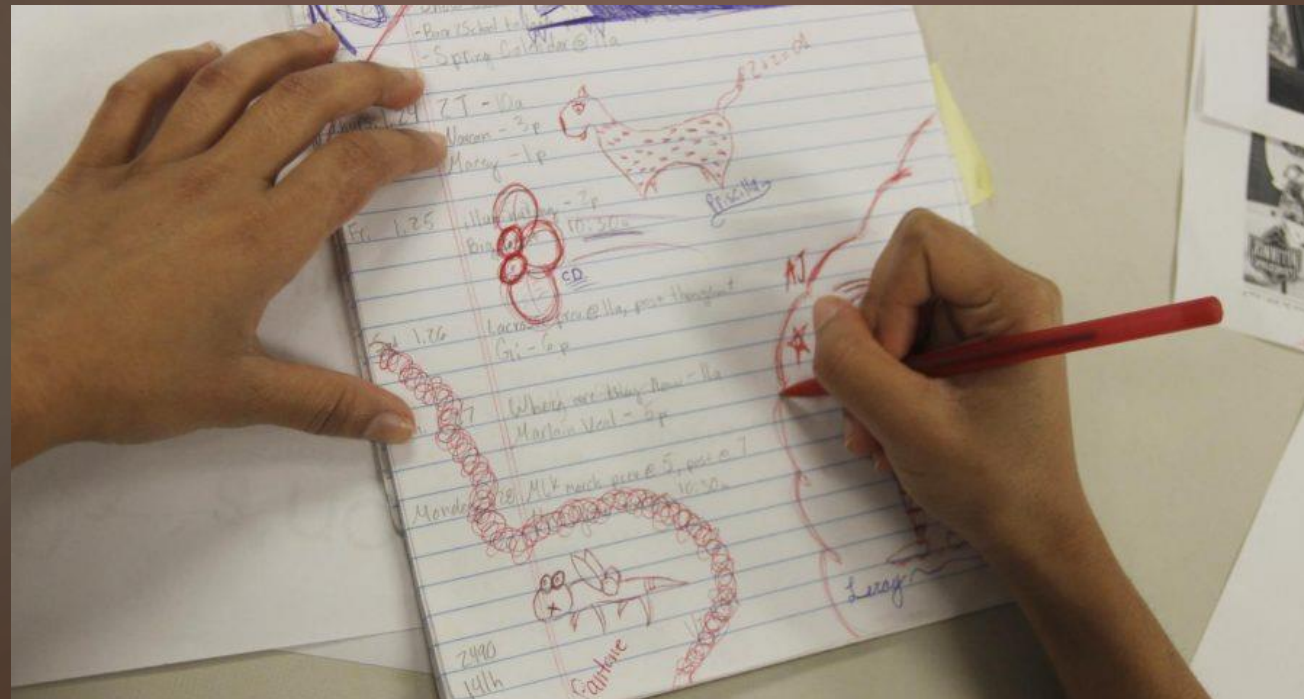


- ▶ 3. Put the Speaker at Ease
- ▶ Help the speaker to feel free to speak.
- ▶ Remember their needs and concerns.
- ▶ Nod or use other gestures or words to encourage them to continue.
- ▶ Maintain eye contact but don't stare
- ▶ – show you are listening and understanding what is being said.





- ▶ 4. Remove Distractions
- ▶ Focus on what is being said.
- ▶ Don't doodle,
  - ▶ - shuffle papers,
  - ▶ - look out the window,
  - ▶ - pick your fingernails or similar.
- ▶ Avoid unnecessary interruptions.
- ▶ These behaviours disrupt the listening process and send messages to the speaker that you are bored or distracted.



- ▶ 5. Empathise
- ▶ Try to understand the other person's point of view.
- ▶ Look at issues from their perspective. Let go of preconceived ideas.
- ▶ By having an open mind we can more fully empathise with the speaker.
- ▶ If the speaker says something that you disagree with then wait and construct an argument to counter what is said but keep an open mind to the views and opinions of others.





- ▶ 6. Be Patient
- ▶ A pause, even a long pause, does not necessarily mean that the speaker has finished.
- ▶ Be patient and let the speaker continue in their own time, sometimes it takes time to formulate what to say and how to say it.
- ▶ Never interrupt or finish a sentence for someone.



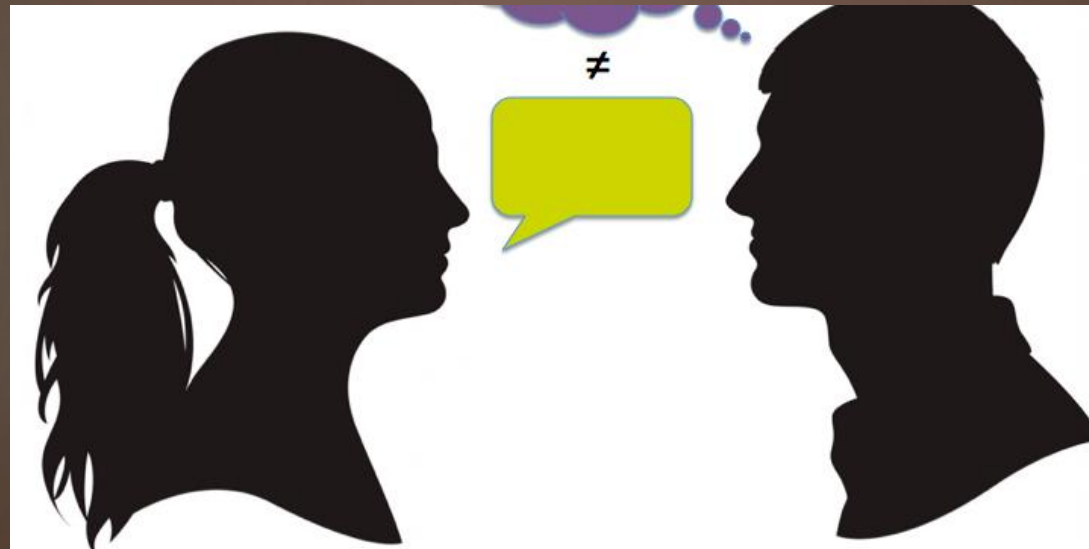
- ▶ 7. Avoid Personal Prejudice
- ▶ Try to be impartial.
- ▶ Don't become irritated and don't let the person's habits or mannerisms distract you from what the speaker is really saying.
- ▶ Everybody has a different way of speaking - some people are for example more nervous or shy than others, some have regional accents or make excessive arm movements, some people like to pace whilst talking - others like to sit still.
- ▶ Focus on what is being said and try to ignore styles of delivery.



- ▶ 8. Listen to the Tone
- ▶ Volume and tone both add to what someone is saying.
- ▶ A good speaker will use both volume and tone to their advantage to keep an audience attentive; everybody will use pitch, tone and volume of voice in certain situations – let these help you to understand the emphasis of what is being said.



- ▶ 9. Listen for Ideas – Not Just Words
- ▶ You need to get the whole picture, not just isolated bits and pieces.
- ▶ Maybe one of the most difficult aspects of listening is the ability to link together pieces of information to reveal the ideas of others.
- ▶ With proper concentration, letting go of distractions, and focus this becomes easier.



- ▶ 10. Wait and Watch for Non-Verbal Communication
- ▶ Gestures, facial expressions, and eye-movements can all be important.
- ▶ We don't just listen with our ears but also with our eyes – watch and pick up the additional information being transmitted via non-verbal communication.







**Every good  
conversation  
starts with  
good listening.**

- ▶ Ref: <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/listening-skills.html>