

ask for supporting facts and principles — appropriately, of course, with the intent of rounding out the content so it will be more meaningful and you can remember it longer. Do give the speaker adequate time to explain the topic, but don't let your questions go unanswered if you don't understand. As an aside, class participation may be a part of your grade. Your questions will let the teacher know you are listening as well as attempting to understand and remember.

5. **Keep an open mind.** Don't share your own viewpoint too quickly. If you make up your mind too fast that you have an opposing viewpoint, you may tend to concentrate more on your rebuttal than the speaker's ideas. Be aware of your prejudices as well. Don't become emotionally upset or defensive when specific words trigger your anger or frustration. Instead, continue to concentrate on the essence of the lecture. If you do feel strongly about something that was said, ask at the end of the lecture or try to see the instructor privately to make sure you haven't misunderstood the intent. Often different words mean different things to different people.

6. **Practice regularly.** In order to become a more experienced listener, don't just expose your mind to light, recreational input. Challenge your new listening abilities with heavier more thought-provoking information. Take interesting electives or sit in on a variety of campus lectures. Listen to increasingly complex

information. You can become an expert at sorting out facts as well as synthesizing new ideas — an effective listener.

These new "listening skills" will be valuable to you in a college setting now — as well as dealing with the complexities of a work situation some day. Good listening skills will always be helpful.

Concentration is the key issue here. While you can't wave a magic wand and eliminate the barriers to good listening, you can become a better listener today by working at it.

Students who wish to address these issues can come by the UK Counseling Center in 201 Frazee Hall or call, (859) 257-8701.



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Active Listening *in the classroom*



Dear Counselor,

I usually do very well in classes that are interesting to me and poorly when they aren't. Right now I have a required history class that is truly a sleeper, yet I can't afford to fail it. Every time I go to class I have every intention of listening, however, halfway through the hour I'm looking at the clock on the wall waiting for it to be over. Help! I need to make myself listen — at least well enough to pass. Are some

Dear Distracted in 109,

Good listening is a learned skill. Just being quiet while another person is talking is not necessarily listening. Neither is “passive” learning which leaves one's head swimming with sounds and words yet devoid of usable information. Good listening in the classroom is a particularly active pursuit that requires concentration, skill and practice. You can get better at it (and probably improve your grades even in boring classes!) by following some simple suggestions.

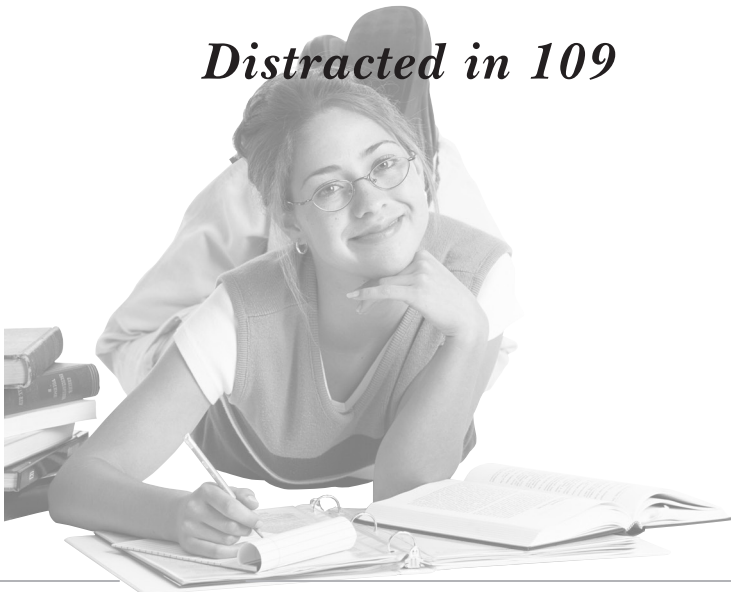
behind you. Make eye contact if you can. Be aware of nonverbal communications, yet don't let the speaker's vocal quality, accent, mannerisms, or appearance interfere with the message you receive. Focus on, evaluate, and be critical of content, not delivery.

- 3. Be a good note taker.** Taking notes helps keep your attention on the ideas being expressed, but don't over do

I have every intention of listening ...

people naturally good listeners? Or is it something I can learn?

Distracted in 109



- 1. Prepare to listen.** One of the main aids to good listening in the classroom is adequate preparation for class. Try to read your assignment ahead of time. If you are not fascinated with the material, at least try to find some part of it that seems interesting or of use to you. Familiarize yourself with terms, definitions, and the spelling of names so you won't be side-tracked with details as they are discussed during the lecture.
- 2. Sit at the front of the room.** Put as few distractions as possible between yourself and the instructor. It will be easier to pay attention and ignore other dozing students if they are

it. Don't write down everything the speaker says or you won't be able to keep up with the lecture. In general, jot down concepts, key words, phrases, and ideas to review and interpret later. If the speaker says, “these are the main points” or jots down lists of terms on the blackboard, take note of these as possible exam questions.

- 4. Ask questions.** Ask questions to clarify your understanding as well as to seek additional information. If you are hearing what seems to be disconnected facts, dates, and names, ask for summarizing concepts. If you are hearing more global ideas, opinions, and concepts,