

# Listening Development



## What is Active Listening?

It's fully focusing on the speaker by listening carefully, not interrupting, and showing you understand by asking questions or responding thoughtfully.

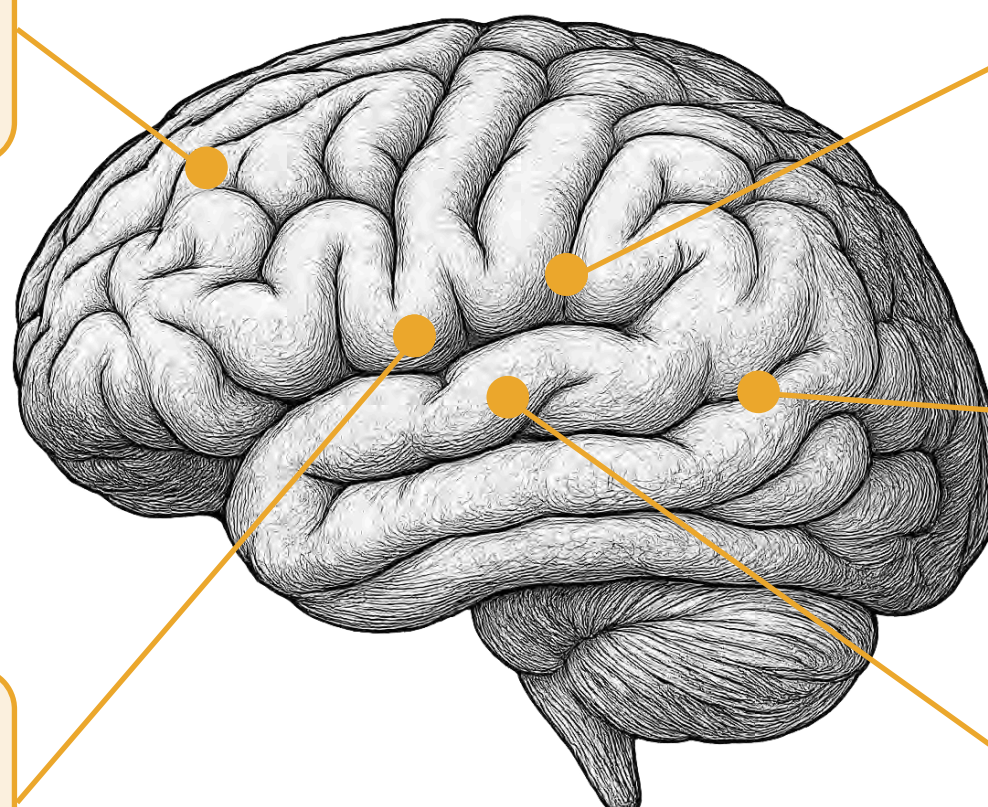
Active Listening  
Middle School



Our brains process much more than just words when we listen.  
Learn about the sections of your brain that give you the ability to listen:

### Prefrontal Cortex

It acts as the brain's CEO, handling higher-level thinking, planning, and decision-making



### Limbic System

It's involved in processing emotions, forming memories, and regulating basic drives like hunger and movement

### Wernicke's Area

It's a part of the brain crucial for understanding language, both spoken and written

### Broca's Area

It's responsible for forming the words and sentences you want to say, both in speaking and writing

### Auditory Cortex

It receives sound information from the ears and helps us understand what we hear

✓ We listen at about 125-250 words per minute, but we can think at 1000-3000 words per minute. This gap creates challenges for active listening. What happens in that "gap" when you're listening? Check all that apply to you:

- ☐ Planning what I'll say next
- ☐ Evaluating what the speaker is saying
- ☐ Letting my mind wander to unrelated topics
- ☐ Making assumptions about what they'll say next
- ☐ Judging the speaker or message
- ☐ Making connections to my own experiences
- ☐ Getting distracted by environmental factors
- ☐ Focusing on the speaker's nonverbal cues

# Levels of listening



Different situations call for different levels of listening engagement. Identify these levels:

Levels of Listening	Description	Example Situation
Ignoring		
Pretend listening		
Selective listening		
Attentive listening		
Active listening		
Empathic listening		



Rate (1-5) how frequently you engage in each listening mode:

1 = Rarely

5= Very Frequently

Area	Rating
Content listening (focusing on facts and information)	
Attentive posture (leaning slightly forward, facing speaker)	
Nodding and facial expressions that show engagement	
Limited distracting movements or fidgeting	
Removing distractions (putting away devices, etc.)	
Respect for appropriate personal space	

# Active Listening Techniques



Different situations call for different levels of listening engagement. Identify these levels:

Paraphrasing

Clarifying

Summarizing

Probing questions

Reflection of feeling

Encouraging

(A) "What specifically do you think caused that to happen?"

(B) "Let me see if I understand—you're saying that..."

(C) "Could you help me understand what you mean by 'unfair'?"

(D) "So the three main points we need to focus on are..."

(E) "I see... go on... tell me more about that."

(F) "You seem frustrated about how the group project is going."

# Listening Barriers



Which of these get in the way of your listening? Check all that apply:

☐ **Rehearsing** (planning your response while others speak) ☐ **Filtering** (hearing only what you want to hear)

☐ **Multi-tasking** (dividing attention between listening and other activities)

☐ **Identifying** (relating everything to your own experience) ☐ **Mind-reading** (assuming you know what others think)

☐ **Advising** (thinking about solutions before fully understanding)

☐ **Sparring** (looking for points to disagree with) ☐ **Placating** (agreeing without really listening)

☐ **Daydreaming** (letting your mind wander to unrelated topics) ☐ **Judging** (evaluating before understanding)

For one significant barrier you checked, describe a specific strategy to overcome it:

# Digital Listening Skills



Digital environments present unique listening challenges. Analyze these aspects:

Aspect	Impact on Listening	Improvement Strategy
Multitasking temptations		
Lack of listening cues (eye contact, nodding, etc.)		
Technical issues		
Environment distractions		
Screen fatigue		



Check the digital listening habits you currently practice:

☐ Rehearsing (planning your response while others speak) ☐ Filtering (hearing only what you want to hear)

☐ Multi-tasking (dividing attention between listening and other activities)

☐ Identifying (relating everything to your own experience) ☐ Mind-reading (assuming you know what others think)

☐ Advising (thinking about solutions before fully understanding)

☐ Sparring (looking for points to disagree with) ☐ Placating (agreeing without really listening)

☐ Daydreaming (letting your mind wander to unrelated topics) ☐ Judging (evaluating before understanding)

One digital listening habit I want to develop is:

# Listening Development Plan



Based on this worksheet, identify your listening strengths and growth areas:

My top listening strengths:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Areas for improvement:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_



Choose ONE specific listening skill to develop:

Skill I want to improve:

\_\_\_\_\_

Why this matters to me:

\_\_\_\_\_

How I'll practice this skill:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

How I'll track my progress:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_