

LISTENING TIPS

You can learn a lot through listening. In college, listening will be a primary method of receiving of information. Unfortunately, people do not instinctively listen well. Listening is a skill that must be developed.

If you apply the following suggestions, you will find yourself listening more effectively both in and out of class:

- **Determine why it is important for you to listen to what the speaker is saying.**
We only do well those things that we want to do well. If you don't have an immediate reason for listening to a speaker, you are an unmotivated listener. Motivate yourself to listen by finding a reason for listening.
- **Take responsibility for understanding.** Learning is up to the learner. If you choose to sit passively and blame the speaker for your lack of success, then you are not a serious learner. Listening diligently is your responsibility.
- **Listen without bias.** Don't tune the speaker out because you don't like something about the speaker or his/her message. The people whose ideas disagree with our own are the very people we should listen to with the greatest care. Be sure you understand something before you reject it.
- **Focus on what the speaker is saying.** Don't let your mind wander. Your brain will tempt you to stray; however, your attention span can be increased through careful effort. Practice the habit of attention, and don't be discouraged by some failures.
- **Listen for the speaker's pattern of organization.** In a lecture, a speaker is generally referring to notes or some other source of information. You can understand much better if you are able to determine what the speaker's objective is and how s/he will fulfill her/his intended message.
- **Listen for the main idea or ideas of the presentation.** Facts are important because they support the speaker's points. Determine what are the main ideas and supporting details.
- **Be sure to sit where you can hear.** Move away from sources of noise, human or mechanical. Sit where you can see the speaker easily and where other distractions are at a minimum.
- **Take notes while you listen.** Even if you recognize everything being said, jot it down because you won't remember it later unless you do.