

## 4 tips to improve active listening skills

[listening comprehension questions]

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**Date:** June 2020

**Time:** (06:13)

**Location:** YouTube

**Level:** \*\*\*\* (B1/B2/C1)

**Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wUCyjiyXdg>

**MP3 link:** <https://www.academic-englishuk.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Active-listening-skills.mp3>

Check these words before listening:

### Key vocabulary

1. To connect with people.
2. To build relationships.
3. Passive listening.
4. Mentally engaged.
5. Dissatisfying / discouraging.
6. Obvious.
7. Prerequisites.
8. First and foremost.
9. Non-verbal clues.
10. Engaged.
11. Devices.
12. Posture.
13. Observing.
14. Verbal communication.
15. Mental health therapist.
16. Small utterances.
17. Reflecting.
18. Follow-up question.
19. Resist the temptation.
20. A rule of thumb.

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# Teacher

## LISTENING QUESTIONS

**Aim:** to develop the students' ability to listen to a 6-minute lecture, to take notes and then use those notes to answer a range of test-type questions.

**Lesson Time:** Approximately 1:00 hour

### Lesson Plan

#### Lead in

- Ask Students to read the 'title' & predict the content of the lecture.
- Ask students to write down key terms & language from the discussion.
- Feed in / check key vocabulary.

#### Three types of lesson

##### **Lesson#1:** [hard]

1. Students listen once & take notes.
2. Give 5 minutes to tidy notes.
3. Listen again & add to notes (use a different colour pen).
4. Distribute questions – set 10-15 minutes to answer.
5. Feedback: distribute or project answers.

##### **Lesson #2:** [medium]

1. Students listen once & take notes.
2. Distribute questions: set 5-10 minutes for students to answer the questions from their notes.
3. Listen again. Students answer the missed questions as they listen.
4. Give extra 10 minutes to consolidate answers.
5. Feedback: distribute or project answers.

##### **Lesson #3:** [easy]

1. Distribute questions. Students have 5-10 minutes to look at the questions.
2. Students listen & answer the questions.
3. Give 5 minutes to tidy answers.
4. Students listen again. Check answers & answer missed questions.
5. 5-10 minutes to tidy answers.
6. Feedback: distribute or project answers.

#### Speaking Task.

- Put students into pairs or threes.
- Give out active listening practice worksheet.
- Students take it in turns to work through the four tasks practising the key skills.
- Feedback as a whole group.

## 4 tips to improve active listening skills

by Alex Lyon (2020)

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**i) Introduction:** fill in the gaps in these 3 statements – the first letter is provided.

- a) Good listening is probably the easiest way to 1) **C** \_\_\_\_\_ with other people and  
2) **B** \_\_\_\_\_ relationships.
- b) Active listening is the 3) **O** \_\_\_\_\_ of passive listening.
- c) Active listening means listening 4) **C** \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_ / 4

**ii) What are the two secrets to active listening?** (three to five words for each answer)

1	
2	

\_\_\_ / 2

### Four qualities of active listening

**iii) Number 1: non-verbal communication** (three to five words for each answer)

	Explanation	Example
1		
2		

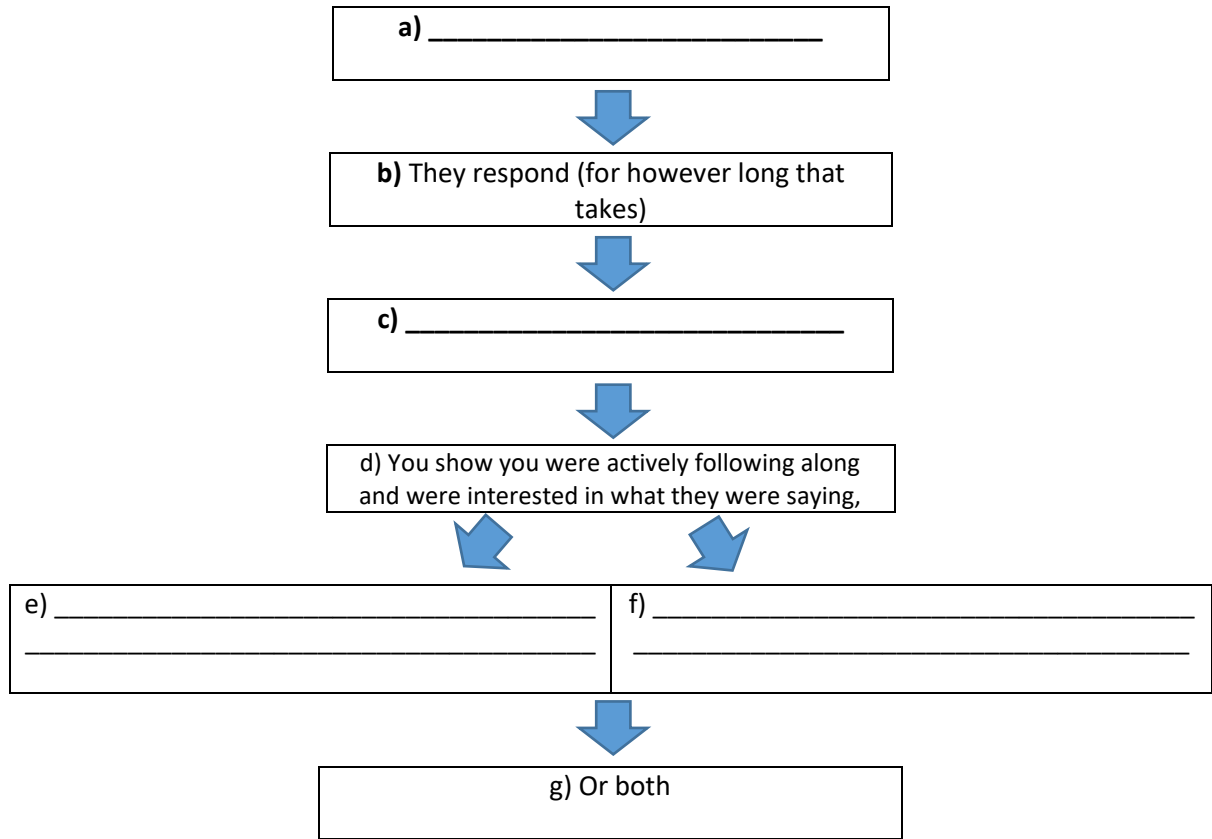
\_\_\_ / 4

**iv) Number 2: verbal communication.** (three to five words for each answer)

1		
		<b>Example</b>
2		

\_\_\_ / 3

**v) Number 3: Responding:** fill in this pattern structure. (three to five words for each answer)



\_\_\_ / 4

**vi) Number 4: keep the focus on them and let them talk.**

Name two key rules to keep the focus on them.

1	
2	

\_\_\_ / 2

**vii) What is the rule of thumb?**

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\_\_\_ / 1

**viii) What is the final question of the day?**

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\_\_\_ / 1

**Overall score** \_\_\_ / 22

## Active Listening Practice

These activities are designed to help improve your active listening skills. Speakers just speak naturally and give as much detail as possible. Listeners take notes as the speaker talks and practice the set skills below. Don't forget to include verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

### 1. Mirroring

**Speaker:** talk about a problem you have and how you will resolve it.

**Listener:** listen carefully and practice mirroring. When the speaker has finished, ask a follow up question or questions.

**Mirroring is a simple form of reflecting and involves repeating almost exactly what the speaker says.** Mirroring should be short and simple. It is usually enough to just repeat key words or the last few words spoken. Be aware not to over mirror as this can become irritating and therefore a distraction from the message.

### 2. Paraphrasing

**Speaker:** talk about something you really enjoy doing at the moment.

**Listener:** listen carefully and practice paraphrasing. When the speaker has finished, ask a follow up question or questions.

**Paraphrasing involves using other words to reflect what the speaker has said.** When paraphrasing, it is of utmost importance that you do not introduce your own ideas or question the speaker's thoughts, feelings or actions. Be aware not to over paraphrase as this can become irritating and therefore a distraction from the message.

### 3. Summarisation

**Speaker:** talk about something you find really annoying (in your life or in the world).

**Listener:** listen carefully and at the end of conversation summarise the main points. Ask for clarification on anything that you didn't quite understand.

**Summarising is repeating the main ideas of what has been said back to the speaker.** Summarising involves taking the main points of the received message and reiterating them in a logical and clear way, giving the speaker chance to correct if necessary

#### Clarification phrases:

- "I'm not quite sure I understand what you mean when you said...."
- "I don't feel clear about the point on...."
- "When you said ..... what did you mean?"

### 4. All skills above.

**Speaker:** If you could be anywhere at the moment, where would you be and why?

**Listening:** listen carefully and apply all four skills above (mirroring, paraphrasing, summarising, clarification) and ask follow up questions.

## 4 tips to improve active listening skills **ANSWERS**

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**i) Introduction:** fill in the gaps in these 3 statements – the first letter is provided

a) Good listening is probably the easiest way to 1) **connect** with other people and 2) **build** relationships.

b) Active listening is the 3) **opposite** of passive listening.

c) Active listening means listening 4) **completely**.

\_\_\_ / 4

**ii) What are the two secrets to active listening?** (three to five words for each answer)

1	<b>You have to commit and make listening a real priority.</b> Good listening is first and foremost <b>a choice that you make.</b> [any one of these answers in bold]
2	<b>It takes practice</b> like any skill you have to work at it.

\_\_\_ / 2

### Four qualities of active listening

**iii) Number 1: non-verbal communication** (three to five words for each answer)

	Explanation	Example
1	Demonstrating that you're engaged and paying attention nonverbally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put your devices away.</li> <li>Eye contact.</li> <li>Body posture.</li> </ul> <p>[any of these]</p>
2	Noticing the speaker's nonverbal cues. (notice the person visually)  Expression: you listen with your eyes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nervous.</li> <li>Frustrated.</li> <li>Annoyed.</li> </ul> <p>[any of these]</p>

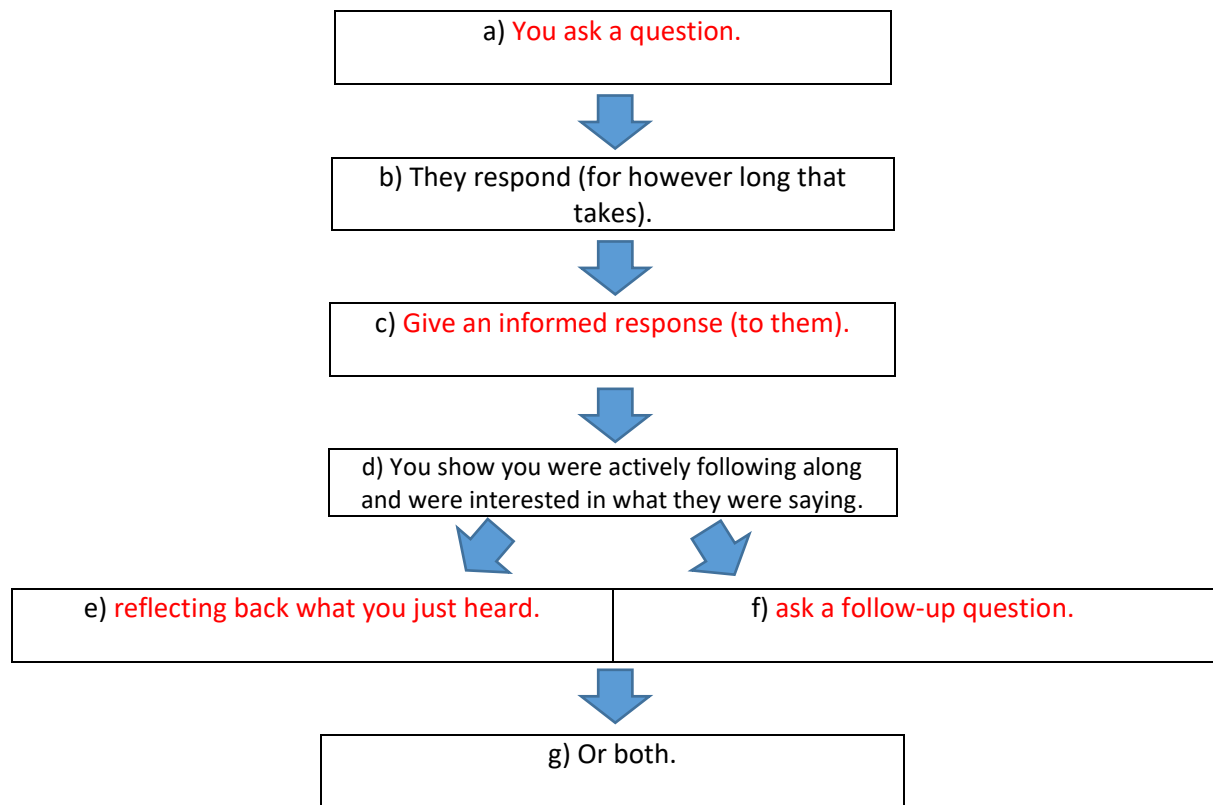
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**iv) Number 2: verbal communication** (three to five words for each answer)

1	Ask a question then they let the speaker fully answer it.	
		Example
2	Small utterances that show the other person that we're following them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Like I hear you, yeah, that makes sense.</li> <li>hmm, ah. [any of these]</li> </ul>

\_\_\_ / 3

v) **Number 3: Responding:** fill in this pattern structure. (three to five words for each answer)



\_\_\_ / 4

vi) **Number 4: keep the focus on them and let them talk.**

Name two key rules to keep the focus on them.

1	• Focus is all about the other person talking and not about you.
2	• Resist that temptation to jump in with your own story.
	• Do not change the subject to your favourite topic.
	• Keep your questions concise.
	• Stick to whatever topic they're interested in. [any of these]

\_\_\_ / 2

vii) **What is the rule of thumb?**

Dedicate at least **the first half** of the conversation to pure active listening.

\_\_\_ / 1

viii) **What is the final question of the day?**

Which one of these tips do you need the most work on?

\_\_\_ / 1

Overall score \_\_\_\_ / 22