

# 'IMPROVING YOUR LISTENING SKILLS'



## GENERAL LISTENING SKILLS

### **Poor listeners:**

- Interrupt the flow of speech or thinking
- Change the subject
- Think of their reply and what it means to them while other person is speaking
- Generalise, jump to conclusions, make interpretations, try to 'problem fix'
- Are looking elsewhere, not concentrating on what is being said
- Listen only to the voice and do not take into account body language etc
- Think they know more than the teacher and so tune out
- Focus on what the speaker looks or sounds like, rather than what they are saying
- Listen only to the facts, not their context
- Try to write word for word what is being said, rather than writing down key points and phrases
- Choose not to be interested in what is being said

### **Good listeners:**

- Allow people to finish their thoughts before responding
- Stay on topic
- Think carefully about what is being said and what it means for that person (not for themselves)
- Reflect the thoughts and feelings of the other person and put aside their own concerns
- Show they are listening by nodding heads, making eye contact, making listening noises, mmm, yes
- Take into account body language, tone, facial expressions etc
- Choose to actively engage their minds to listen to what is being said and try to understand
- Are looking to get as much out of what is said as possible (doing this in class means you will probably have less to work out for yourself later)
- Don't jump to conclusions about what is being said, or finish another person's sentence (you may not know what they were going to say)
- Take notes that are meaningful and accurate – noting key concepts, phrases, definitions and issues
- Evaluate what is being said and note down any questions they have to ask at an appropriate time

### **Listening to other students in class:**

#### **GOLDEN RULE:**

**DO UNTO OTHERS  
AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM  
DO TO YOU**

le Do not be judgmental, don't make them feel silly or stupid, don't laugh at them, tease them, talk while they are talking or be impolite.

Don't be selfish! Even if you don't want to listen, there are probably other people in the class who do.

**Talking and disturbing the lesson is one of THE MOST SELFISH acts you can commit.**

It is totally self-centred and is saying I don't care about anyone else except myself.

Even if you don't agree, remember everyone is entitled to their view, we are all different and we all have different insights. You can actually learn quite a lot by listening to your peers in class. Don't react emotionally or let your value judgments or beliefs draw you into an argumentative approach. Respect others' opinions.

Use **YES AND** not **NO BUT**

A good way to see if you understand what someone has said is to repeat it back to them.. 'yes, so I think what you are saying is..... and I think....' (rather than using 'but' which has negative connotations).

**Listening to teachers in class:**

- You may not like the voices (rhythm, pitch, tone) of some people.
- You may not be as interested in one subject or topic as you are in others.
- You may be bored at times or not in the mood to listen.

**BUT**

You do need to find ways to get yourself engaged in every lesson in order to give yourself the best chance of academic success.

- To do this: ask yourself questions about what is going on : what is this related to, what will come next, do I need to ask any questions.
- Take notes. By writing things down it forces you to concentrate.
- Try and predict what will come next.
- Periodically summarise what the teacher is saying to yourself.

