

Suggestions for Good Listening

The average college student spends about 14 hours per week in class listening (or perhaps I should say "[hearing](#)"--there is a difference!) to lectures. See if you can improve your listening skills by following some of the strategies below:

1. **Concentrate** - resist distractions!
2. **Be physically attentive.** Face the professor, maintain eye contact, and uncross arms and legs.
3. **Try to be open - minded.** Be aware of your own biases or prejudices that can put up barriers to effective listening.
4. **Concentrate on finding areas that interest you.** Try to relate what you hear to what you know.
5. **Listen for the main idea.**
6. **Focus on content, not delivery.** Have you ever counted the number of times a teacher clears his/her throat in a fifteen minute period? If so, you weren't focusing on content.
7. **Paraphrase-** "I think you're saying..." This gives the professor an opportunity to explain if you don't have it right.
8. **Pay attention to non-verbal messages.** Sometimes the emotional message is more important than the words you are hearing.
9. **Don't pretend to be listening.** You can get caught if asked a question. Pretending to listen will probably take just as much energy as paying attention, so put your attention and energy to good use.
10. **Stay active by asking mental questions.** Active listening keeps you on your toes. Here are some questions you can ask yourself as you listen. What key point is the professor making? How does this fit with what I know from previous lectures? How is this lecture organized?

