

Did you know that there are many kinds of listening? If someone asks you to listen, it's important to know what type of listening is required in that situation. There are strategies that help you in each of those situations for Active Listening; Reflective Listening; and Empathic Listening. Each type helps you establish a connection with the person you are interacting with and helps you to keep an open mind, which eliminates many misperceptions; anger, frustration, or stress. In this lesson, we will focus on what it takes to be a good Active Listener.

Active Listening takes a lot of effort because you have to focus and remember what is being communicated to you. It works great in groups when you can identify what the needs of your team members are, if you are tutoring someone for instance, you need to pay careful attention to what someone knows and understands so you can help them make progress. This type of listening is exhausting so you may only have the energy to do it for a little while at a time.

Keep in mind that our brains can often be distracted by our perceptions. If you hear words that trigger certain thoughts or emotions then that can distract you from the overall message.

A good example of when Active Listening is required is when you are receiving directions. If you skip one, you can become lost fairly quickly.

- Eliminate distractions
- Do not try to think of your response
- Make eye contact
- Clarify your understanding

Use the [Listening Skills Handout](#) as a guide.