

Listening Badge

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Listening is an important skill to develop. Even in today's highly visual world, we still need good listening skills so that we can gain the information we need. These activities will help you to improve your listening.

Otter Level

Do 4, including the 2 starred.

1. * Have someone read aloud to you for 20 minutes each day for 2 weeks. If no one is available to read to you, you may listen to audio books appropriate for your age. Some people find it hard to sit and listen if they are doing nothing with their hands: if you are one of those people, try to do a quiet activity whilst you are being read to eg; knitting, crochet, needlework. Often when the hands are busy with a repetitive activity, then the brain can concentrate better on the listening. Make sure you do not distract other people from listening by your quiet activity.
2. * Visit an older person eg; a grandparent, family friend and ask them to tell you stories of their childhood or youth. Listen respectfully and attentively whilst they talk.
3. Listen to the weather forecast on the radio every day for 2 weeks: write down what you remember. Does your memory improve as you get more used to listening?
4. Walk outside and look around you for 10 minutes and write down all the sounds you hear. Now close your eyes: do you hear more sounds than you did with your eyes open? Write down the new sounds you heard.
5. Sit in your home and look around you for 10 minutes and write down all the sounds you hear. Now close your eyes: do you hear more sounds than you did with your eyes open? Write down the new sounds you heard.
6. Before education was available to most people, much more information was passed on orally (by word of mouth). Often this was done in the form of various rhymes or sayings. Find 3 rhymes or sayings that teach information eg; how to remember the days of the week or the months of the year, how to count, etc.

Dolphin Level

Do 5, including the 2 starred.

1. * Do Otter #1 and #2.
2. * Before education was available to most people, much more information was passed on orally (by word of mouth). Often this was done in the form of various rhymes or sayings. Find 5 rhymes or sayings that teach information eg; how to remember the days of the week or the months of the year, how to count, etc.
3. Learn to identify 5 bird songs.
4. Walk outside and look around you for 10 minutes and write down all the sounds you hear. Now close your eyes: do you hear more sounds than you did with your eyes open? Write down the new sounds you heard.

5. Sit in your home and look around you for 10 minutes and write down all the sounds you hear. Now close your eyes: do you hear more sounds than you did with your eyes open? Write down the new sounds you heard.
6. Listen to the weather forecast on the radio every day for 2 weeks: write down what you remember. Does your memory improve as you get more used to listening? Too often we forget information as soon as we have heard it . . . unless we pay good attention.
7. Attend a classical music concert/opera/musical theatre performance where the skill of good, attentive listening is required.

Butterfly Level

Do 6, including the 2 starred.

1. * Do Dolphin #1 and #2
- 2.* Listen to 3 famous speeches that you can find on audio CD/cassette and also in written form eg; speeches by Sir Winston Churchill, John F Kennedy, Dr Martin Luther King Jr, etc. Listen to the speech first and write down what you remember. Listen again and see how much you gained on a second listening. Finally read the speech. How much of the speech did you remember by listening?
3. Attend a classical music concert/opera/musical theatre performance where the skill of good, attentive listening is required.
4. Attend a stage play or literary reading. Afterwards write down the key points as you remember them. Then read the play or the literary work. How much did you remember?
5. Watch your favourite film all the way through. At the most emotional parts eg; high drama, comic moments, tense action scenes, switch off the sound. What sort of music is being used in these sections? How does the music affect your emotions?
6. Learn 12 basic phrases in a foreign language with the use of a learning programme that uses an audio aid (CD/Cassette) as a companion to a book. How much easier is it to learn the language when you hear it, as opposed to read it? Do you feel that you need both oral and visual?
7. Learn to identify 6 different bird songs.
8. Watch a television programme with the sound switched off, but the closed captioning on: this will help you appreciate your sense of hearing, and the world of a deaf person.

Eagle Level

Do 7, including the two starred.

1. * Do Butterfly #1 and #2
2. * Learn to take good notes from an audio presentation: some information is important to write down and some is not necessary. Learn two different methods of note taking eg; diagramming a subject, linear note-taking etc. These skills will help you if you advance into higher academic learning.
3. Watch a comedy show on DVD/video. Then re-watch the show with the sound switched off. Did the action make you laugh (physical comedy), the language usage (wit/pun/etc) or the taped laughter on the sound track? How funny was it without the sound? Was it really funny at all?

4. Research careers that require good listening skills eg; air traffic-controllers; emergency dispatch operators; secretary; interpreter, court reporter, medical transcriptionist. What training is required in listening skills? What sort of salary can one expect in these positions? If possible shadow a person in one of these positions for a week.
5. Advertisers know that people retain the information they are presented with first and last. The information in the middle is usually lost fairly soon after hearing. Watch or listen to advertisements for 6 different pharmaceutical products. What information is included at the beginning and ending sections? What is in the middle section? What is the dispersal of positive and negative information? How do you feel this information is structured to sell the product?
6. Watch a television program with the sound switched off, but the closed captioning on: this will help you appreciate your sense of hearing, and the world of a deaf person.
7. Listen to the beat/tempo of various types of music eg; classical waltz, jazz, marching band, ballad, etc. Write down how the beat makes you feel. Investigate how the beat of music affects the body physiologically.
8. Listen to a news program on talk radio. How much of what is said is “filling the air time” and how much is conveying information? Compare it with a news program on television: which is easier for you to follow? Which has more “filler material” the radio or the television? How much do you feel is fact and how much is opinion?
9. Learn to identify 6 different bird songs.
10. Attend a stage play or literary reading. Afterwards write down the key points as you remember them. Then read the play or the literary work. How much did you absorb through listening?