

# Active listening essay sample



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Active listening is a skill that can be acquired and developed with practice. However, this skill can be difficult to master and will, therefore, take time and patience. 'Active listening' means, as its name suggests, actively listening, that is fully concentrating on what is being said rather than just 'hearing' the message of the speaker. Active listening involves listening with all senses. As well as giving full attention to the speaker, it is important that the 'active listener' is also 'seen' to be listening to them otherwise the speaker may conclude that what they are talking about is uninteresting to the listener. Interest can be conveyed to the speaker by using both verbal and non-verbal messages such as maintaining eye contact, nodding your head and smiling, agreeing by saying 'Yes' or simply 'Mmm hmm' to encourage them to continue.

By providing this 'feedback' the person speaking will usually feel more at ease and therefore communicate more easily, openly and honestly. Listening is the most fundamental component of interpersonal communication skills. Listening is not something that just happens (that is hearing), listening is an active process in which a conscious decision is made to listen to and understand the messages of the speaker. Listeners should remain neutral and non-judgmental, this means trying not to take sides or form opinions, especially early in the conversation. Active listening is also about patience - pauses and short periods of silence should be accepted.

Listeners should not be tempted to jump in with questions or comments every time there are a few seconds of silence. Active listening involves giving the other person time to explore their thoughts and feelings; they should, therefore, be given adequate time for that. Active listening not only

means focusing fully on the speaker but also actively showing verbal and non-verbal signs of listening. Generally speakers want listeners to demonstrate ' active listening' by responding appropriately to what they are saying. Appropriate responses to listening can be both verbal and non-verbal:

Source: [http://www. skillsyouneed. co. uk/IPS/active\\_listening. html](http://www.skillsyouneed.co.uk/IPS/active_listening.html)