

# [Listening vs hearing essay sample](https://assignbuster.com/listening-vs-hearing-essay-sample/)

There are weighty differences between listening and hearing. Hearing is an automatic response while listening is a voluntary action. Hearing has little to do with choice, while listening has everything to do with choice. Think of it in this light: Just because you have hands, this does not make you a painter, sculptor, or carpenter. Just because you have feet, this does not make you a dancer or marathon runner. Thus, just because you have ears, this does not make you a listener. Stop reading for a moment and listen to the sounds around you. What are they? Do you hear traffic? Do you hear the buzz of a florescent light? Do you hear children playing, neighbors talking, or music in the background? If you can answer this question, you were listening. Yes! It is that simple. If you stopped to focus on the sounds around you, it was a voluntary decision and your hearing went a step further and turned into listening.

Test Your Listening Abilities   
The only real test for listening is to listen. The following assessment will help you understand if you are using your listening skills to best advantage. Review the following statements and put a check by the statements that match your listening traits. 1. I tune out when something is boring to me.

2. I listen to the whole story before making a decision or coming to a conclusion. 3. I often begin formulating a response in my head as the other person talks. 4. I really try to understand the other person’s point when listening. 5. Sometimes, I start listening on a negative note.

6. I objectively evaluate all information, regardless of the source. 7. My mind wanders to unrelated material when the speaker is talking. 8. I can tune out distractions such as noise when I am listening. 9. I judge the information before I truly understand what the speaker means. 10. I leave my emotions outside when listening. I listen with an objective mind. 11. I often interrupt the speaker so that I can say what I want to say. 12. I force myself to never mentally argue with the speaker when he or she is speaking. 13. I answer questions that are asked of other people.

14. I usually accept information as true from people I like and respect. 15. I eliminate some information from the message to simplify what I am hearing. 16. I force myself to be silent during conversations so that I can focus on what is being said instead of what I am going to say. If you checked more odd numbers than even numbers, you have created some monumental barriers to effective listening. If you checked more even numbers than odd numbers, you have learned how to eliminate many barriers to the listening process.

The Listening Process   
Listening does not just happen. There is a process that takes place in the brain that allows us to become more active listeners. The process involves four parts:   
· Receiving   
· Focusing   
· Understanding   
· Reacting

If you hear a car horn blowing behind you, you have received the sound. This does not mean that you were listening; it simply means that you were within the range of the sound. If you turn down the radio to see if the horn is blown again (or if it was a horn at all), you have begun to focus on the sound. This is the beginning of the listening process. You have made a voluntary decision to begin doing more than hearing. If the horn blows again and you recognize the sound as definitely being a horn, you have begun to understand the sound. Your brain relates this sound to sounds it has heard before and lets you know that the sound is indeed a horn, not a baby crying. Research suggests that twenty-four hours after you hear something, you will only remember about 50 percent of the information. After forty-eight hours, you only remember about 25 percent. Finally, you will have a reaction to everything you hear. The reaction may be to speed up or slow down or pull over if a horn is blowing. The reaction may be to change the baby’s diaper if the baby is crying, or the reaction can be to do nothing. Doing nothing is still a reaction. These four steps can take place in less than a second.