

LISTENING FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION VS GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING

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Annotation: *Listening for specific information and in contrast global understanding in listening.*

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Specific information is often factual in nature for example a name, an object, an number or a quantity. When you listen for specific information, you need to have some idea of what you're listening for before you listen and while you're listening. In an example situation, predict and anticipate the kind of information that will answer the question, being aware that the idea you're listening for could be expressed in the recording in a number of different ways.

As you listen you need to recognise when the information is about to be given and pay particularly close attention at that point. Sometimes listening for information. Also involves listening to determine whether information is stated or not. Listening for specific information is particularly relevant to listening Part 1 and Part 2 .

Be clear about what information you are listening for. Look for that specific kind of information. Disregard irrelevant details. Narrow down important details to get the specific information.

Most people, most of the time, take listening for granted, it's something that just happens. It is only when you stop to think about listening and what it entails that you begin to realise that listening is in fact an important skill that needs to be nurtured and developed.

General Listening Types:

The two main types of listening - the foundations of all listening sub-types are:

- **Discriminative Listening**
- **Comprehensive Listening**

Discriminative listening is first developed at a very early age – perhaps even before birth, in the womb. This is the most basic form of listening and does not involve the understanding of the meaning of words or phrases but merely the different sounds that are produced. In early childhood, for example, a distinction is made between the sounds of the voices of the parents – the voice of the father sounds different to that of the mother.

Example

Imagine yourself surrounded by people who are speaking a language that you cannot understand. Perhaps passing through an airport in another country. You can probably distinguish between different voices, male and female, young and old and also gain some understanding about what is going on around you based on the tone of voice, mannerisms and body language of the other people.

You are not understanding what is being said but using discriminative listening to gain some level of comprehension of your surroundings.

Comprehensive Listening

Comprehensive listening involves understanding the message or messages that are being communicated. Like discriminative listening, comprehensive listening is fundamental to all listening sub-types.

In order to be able use comprehensive listening and therefore gain understanding the listener first needs appropriate vocabulary and language skills. Using overly complicated language or technical jargon, therefore, can be a barrier to comprehensive listening. Comprehensive listening is further complicated by the fact that two different people listening to the same thing may understand the message in two different ways. This problem can be multiplied in a group setting, like a classroom or business meeting where numerous different meanings can be derived from what has been said.

Specific Listening Types

Discriminative and comprehensive listening are prerequisites for specific listening types.

Listening types can be defined by the goal of the listening.

The three main types of listening most common in interpersonal communication are:

- **Informational Listening** (Listening to Learn)
- **Critical Listening** (Listening to Evaluate and Analyse)
- **Therapeutic or Empathetic Listening** (Listening to Understand Feeling and Emotion)

In reality you may have more than one goal for listening at any given time – for example, you may be listening to learn whilst also attempting to be empathetic.

Informational Listening

Whenever you listen to learn something, you are engaged in informational listening. This is true in many day-to-day situations, in education and at work, when you listen to the news, watch a documentary, when a friend tells you a recipe or when you are talked-through a technical problem with a computer – there are many other examples of informational listening too.

Critical Listening We can be said to be engaged in **critical listening** when the goal is to evaluate or scrutinise what is being said. Critical listening is a much more active behaviour than informational listening and usually involves some sort of problem solving or decision making.

Empathic listening involves attempting to understand the feelings and emotions of the speaker—to put yourself into the speaker's shoes and share their thoughts. Empathy is a way of deeply connecting with another person and therapeutic or empathic listening can be particularly challenging

Although usually less important or useful in interpersonal relationships there are other types of listening, these include:

- Appreciative Listening

Appreciative listening is listening for enjoyment. A good example is listening to music, especially as a way to relax.

- Selective Listening.

This is a more negative type of listening, it implies that the listener is somehow biased to what they are hearing. Bias can be based on preconceived ideas or emotionally difficult communications. Selective listening is a sign of failing communication – you cannot hope to understand if you have filtered out some of the message and may reinforce or strengthen your bias for future communications.

Global comprehension means understanding the general meaning of what you are listening to or reading. It can be compared to selective comprehension, which means understanding specific information in the text, and detailed comprehension, which means understanding everything. Global, selective and detailed comprehensions have parallels with the three reading skills of skimming, scanning and intensive reading.

Example The learners have listened to a story and now try to recreate it by putting jumbled sentences into the correct order. In the classroom various activity types can test global comprehension. Learners can be asked to sort out jumbled versions of a text, as in the example, produce or complete summaries, answer comprehension questions that test general understanding, such as 'true or false statements, and suggest titles.

Conculison.

Final Conclusion: Both listening strategies are important and can be used in different situations. Listening for specific information is useful for short-term purposes, such as completing assignments or answering specific questions. Global understanding, on the other hand, helps you deal with complex texts or conversations, understand the overall context, and form deeper understandings. By combining both strategies, you can become an effective and successful listener.

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