

# Getting the Most out of Lecture and Discussions

Poor Listening Habits	Good Listening Habits
1. <b>Calling a subject boring.</b> It's easy to label someone else's ideas as "boring". Poor listeners are quick to call a subject boring and use this as an excuse to tune out in class and discussion.	An effective listener listens closely for information that is appealing to his or her interests in one form or another. Keep in mind that acting interested in something that doesn't immediately interest you can sometimes lead to genuine interest.
2. <b>Criticizing the speaker.</b> A poor listener finds fault with the speaker (what they look like, wear, how they speak etc.) Keep in mind that great thinkers are always wonderful writers or public speakers.	An effective listener realizes that trivial details—such as looks—are not important and will listen for the substance of ideas rather than how it is expressed.
3. <b>Overreacting.</b> Poor listeners disagree so strongly with the speaker that they miss the rest of the message.	An effective listener holds fire to be sure to fully grasp the differing viewpoint. Understand all of the argument before rebutting.
4. <b>Listening for the facts only.</b> Poor listeners don't think about the "big picture" or main ideas that go along with the facts.	A good listener wants to see how the facts explain the ideas and the evidence supports arguments and realizes facts are important only in relation to principles, ideas, and arguments.
5. <b>Faking attention.</b> Poor listeners lock eyes onto the speaker and then relax and daydream.	An effective listener realizes each talk is a chance to get facts and ideas that the speaker took hours to prepare.
6. <b>Giving into distractions.</b> Poor listeners will use distractions (footsteps, coughs, door closing) as an excuse to stop listening.	An effective listener shuts out distractions and concentrates on the speaker's message.
7. <b>Choosing only the easy stuff.</b> Poor listeners want to be entertained and don't want to take the trouble to figure out complex ideas.	An effective listener is intellectually curious and wants to see how the speaker proves his or her points. A good listener is not afraid of new and/or complex ideas.
8. <b>Wasting thought speed by daydreaming.</b> Poor listeners (because thought speed is fast than speech) will use thought speed to think about personal problems or distractions, thus falling behind the speaker.	An effective listener uses thought speed and any pauses to figure out main ideas, summarizing the high points and looking forward to the rest of the talk.

Adapted from Walter Pauk & Ross Owens', *How to Study in College*, Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974 and Oregon State University's Academic Center for Success



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