

Chapter 8

Listening Skills for Professional Teachers

10/9/2026
Thursday



CONTENT

- Hearing and Listening
- Active Listening
- Empathetic listening
- Strategies for listening
- Barriers
- Collaborative practice



Hearing and Listening,



Kline (1996) states that knowing the difference between hearing and listening is an important feature

“Hearing is the reception of sound; Listening is the attachment of meaning to the sound. Hearing is passive, listening is active.”





The skill of listening is important in learning any language



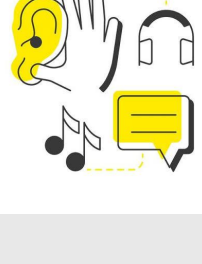
**can be observed in little babies
“How do they learn to communicate?”**

**spent their entire first 1.5 to 2 years
of their lives listening to their
parents, listening to others, and
trying to make sense of their
surroundings.**

**can barely talk at that age but that
does not mean communication is
not taking place.**

most powerful indicator

**skill of listening influence on
learning a language
although children cannot
necessarily speak at a young age,
they understand many things asked
of them**



Hearing is automatic; listening is intentional

HEARING

- receives sound
- may happen without attention
- does not guarantee understanding

LISTENING

- focuses attention
- interprets meaning and emotion
- checks understanding before responding



developing the ability to listen well can develop students'
ability to become more independent learners,

hearing
accurately

able to
reproduce
accurately

**refine their understanding of grammar
and develop their own vocabulary.**

Notice learners' needs

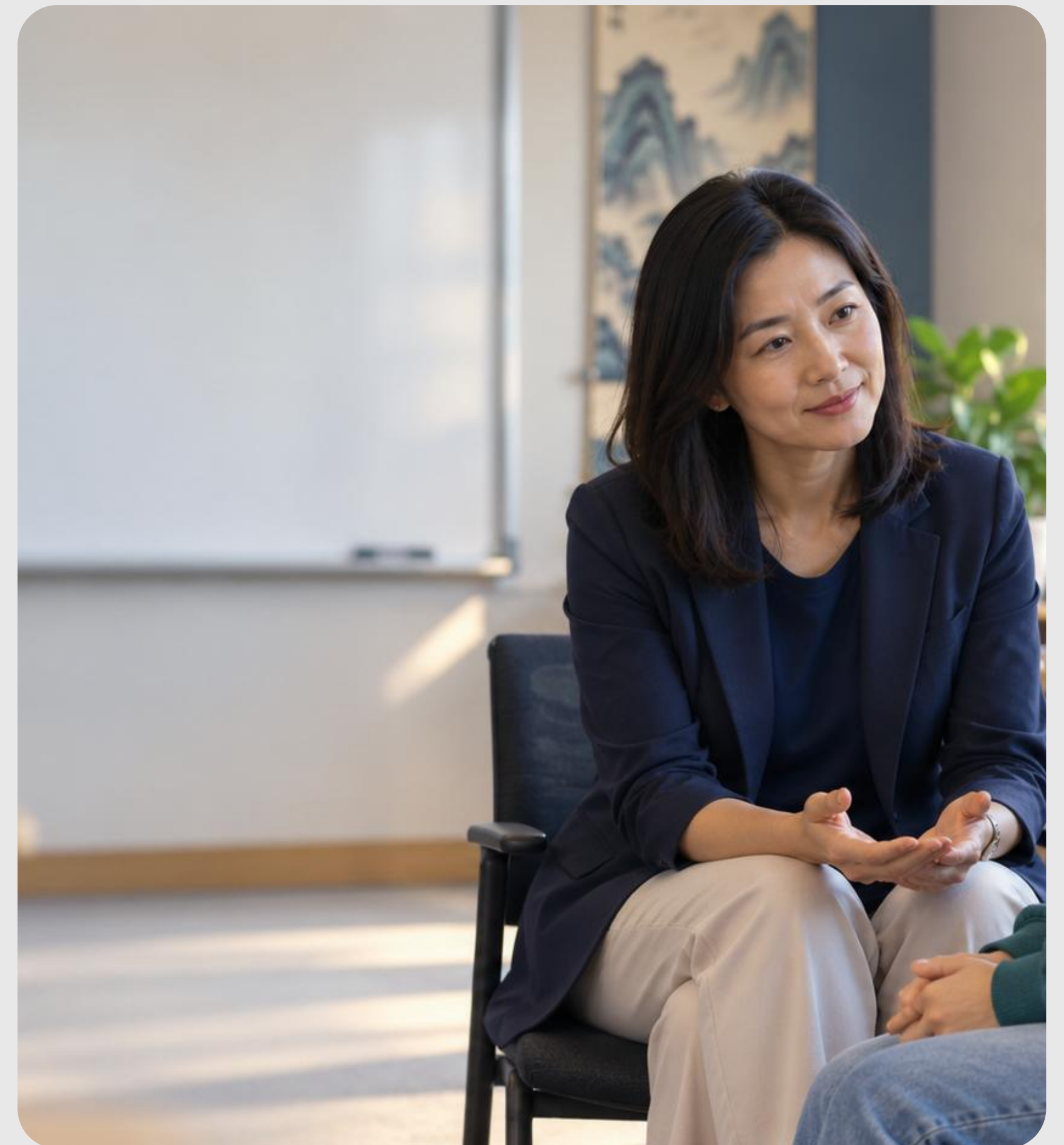
Listen for academic difficulties, emotions, and the support the learner needs.

Build trust and psychological safety

Students participate more confidently when they feel heard, respected, and safe.

Diagnose misunderstanding accurately

Ask, paraphrase, and check understanding to identify the exact learning gap.



Active listening



Active listening means working to understand

ATTEND

**Give full attention.
Reduce distractions.
Use appropriate eye
contact.**

PROCESS

**Identify the main idea.
Notice emotion and detail.
Connect ideas.**

RESPOND

Paraphrase • clarify • summarize • check

What active listeners do

- face the speaker and show attention
- listen for the main message and important details
- avoid interrupting or planning an early reply
- paraphrase: “So you mean...”
- clarify: “Could you explain...?”
- summarize before offering advice
- check: “Have I understood correctly?”



**the idea that listening actually takes active work and
it is not just a passive skill**

Halt



[to] free your mind to pay attention to the person speaking”

Engage



“Focus on the speaker” by some sort of physical movement towards his/her direction

Anticipate



Actively think about what the speaker might share next

Replay

Replay–Review what the speaker is saying and try to make sense of commonalities, either independently or with peers

Listening is an activity absorbing of the meanings of words and sentences by the brain.

leads to the understanding of facts and ideas, but listening takes attention, or sticking to the task at hand in spite of distractions.

requires concentration, which is the focusing of our thoughts upon one particular problem

listening with concentration is active listening

Active listening is a method of responding to another that encourages communication.

Notice the evidence

Study the two listening behaviors in the image.

1. What observable actions show attention or distraction?
2. How might each listener make the speaker feel?
3. Which behaviour would support student learning? Why?



Empathetic listening



What is empathetic listening?

Empathetic listening—

often called empathic listening in academic literature—is listening with the intention of understanding another person's:

- spoken message;
- feelings and concerns;
- point of view;
- experiences and circumstances;
- meaning that may not be stated directly.



Response	Main purpose	Example
Hearing	Receiving sound	The teacher hears the student's words.
Active listening	Understanding and checking the message	"Do you mean that the deadline was unclear?"
Empathetic listening	Understanding the message, feelings, and perspective	"It sounds as if you felt worried because you did not understand the deadline."

What empathetic listening does not mean

Empathetic listening does **not** mean that the teacher must:

- agree with everything the student says;
- accept inappropriate behavior;
- remove fair consequences;
- solve every problem immediately;
- act as the student's therapist;

A teacher can understand a student's feelings while still maintaining rules and professional boundaries.

For example:

“I understand that you were frustrated. However, shouting at your classmate was not acceptable. Let us discuss a more appropriate way to respond.”

It assists with conflict resolution

- When students, colleagues, or parents disagree, empathetic listening can reduce defensiveness. Each person has an opportunity to explain their experience before solutions are proposed.
- Useful language includes:
 - “Let me check that I understand your concern.”
 - “From your perspective, the problem began when...”
 - “What would you like the other person to understand?”
 - “What solution would feel fair to everyone involved?”

Strategies for listening with purpose

How to teach LISTENING



'WE HAVE TWO EARS AND ONE MOUTH SO THAT WE CAN LISTEN TWICE AS MUCH AS WE SPEAK'
EPICTETUS



Percentage of daily communication...

Reading



Speaking



Listening



Writing

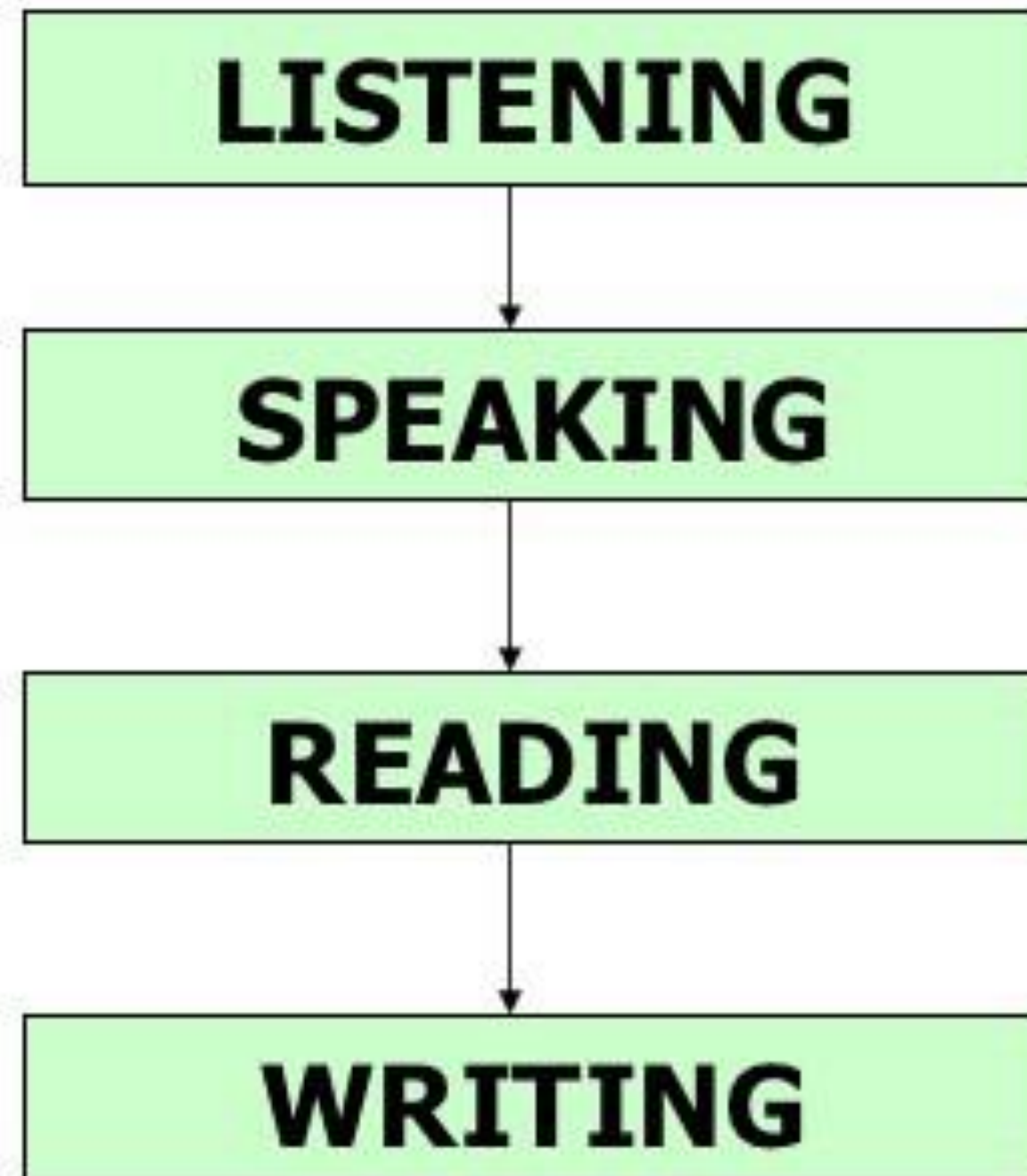


(Burely-Allen, 1995)



Listening Comes First

The First and the foremost communication skill that we learn in our lives is nothing but "LISTENING"



When we achieve a very good level of listening in a particular language, we often forget how sophisticated this skill really is!

The terms we use to describe the processes of listening are called **sub-skills** and they include:

Sub-skill	Definition	Example from everyday life
Predicting	Thinking about what you are going to hear, based on what you know about the speaker, the topic and the context.	You are listening to your parents planning a family trip. You think about where you have been before and what your family like to do. You begin to imagine where you think the next trip will be!
Listening for gist	Understanding just the general topic of what you hear.	You are walking in a park and you overhear friends talking. One of them is talking about a recent family event. You don't notice or remember all the details or words , but it sounded like it was a very happy event.
Listening for key information	Identifying <u>specific words or phrases</u> in what you hear.	You are waiting at the train station, listening to the announcement with information about which platform to go to. You listen carefully because you don't want to go to the wrong platform and miss your train.
Listening for detailed understanding	Understanding the content of what you hear in depth, especially the opinions and attitudes of the speaker(s).	It's your birthday soon and you want to go to the cinema with your friends. You ask your friends which films they would like to see and listen carefully to what they say before you decide.

Bottom-up versus top-down approaches to listening



The **bottom-up** model emphasises the decoding of the smallest units- phonemes and syllables- to lead us towards meaning.



The **top-down** model emphasises the use of background knowledge to predict content.

Our ability to match the sounds to the word is called **bottom-up processing**.

To understand what the speaker means when they use the word, we need to listen for more information, we need to know the context and co-text. This is called **top-down processing**.

Process	Definition	Example from everyday life
<p>Bottom-up processing</p> <p>= recognising what you hear</p>	<p>Recognising small units (sounds), building them up into bigger units (words) and then bigger ones (phrases). Sometimes called 'decoding'.</p>	<p>You ask someone for an address and they tell you it's number 60. You accurately identify the sounds and stress of the word <i>sixty</i> and don't mishear it as <i>sixteen</i>.</p>
<p>Top-down processing</p> <p>= understanding what it means</p>	<p>Using context (knowledge of the world) and co-text (what the speaker has said so far) to help you understand words that are not clear.</p>	<p>You're watching a fashion programme on TV. You think you hear someone talking about <i>string</i>, <i>summer</i>, <i>autumn</i> and <i>winter</i>. You doubt that you heard the first word correctly – you're not sure if <i>string</i> is a word in English, but you know that <i>spring</i> is a word. And you know that it makes sense when talking about other seasons. You also know that in the world of fashion, clothing is often categorised by season. You use this knowledge to make an educated guess: the person probably said <i>spring</i>, not <i>string</i>.</p>

LISTENING

- Listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary, and grasping his meaning (Howatt and Dakin). An able listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously.





Types of Listening

ATTENTIVE LISTENING – It involves paying attention to the words that are being spoken.

PRETENCE LISTENING – It involves more hearing than listening. It means pretending through facial expressions that one is listening when actually one is not.

SELECTIVE LISTENING – It involves selecting the desired part of the message and ignoring the undesired part of the message.

INTUITIVE LISTENING – It means listening through the intuitive mind by silencing the other forms of internal dialogues going on simultaneously.



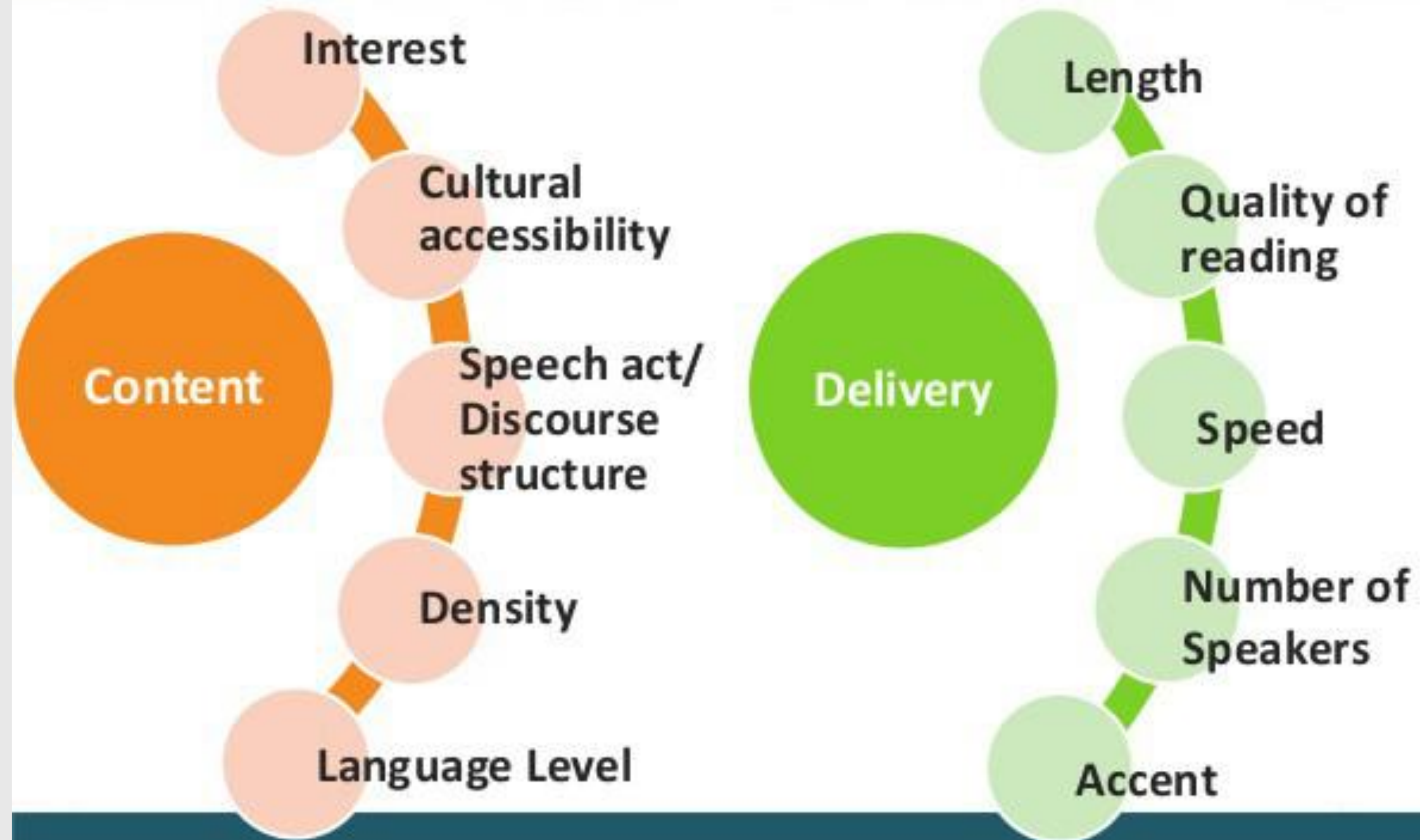
Types of Listening

DISCRIMINATIVE LISTENING – It involves identifying the difference between various sounds. It also enables one to differentiate between familiar and unfamiliar language.

COMPREHENSION LISTENING – It involves attaching meaning to what is being listened to. It may also include comprehending the non verbal messages being conveyed by the speaker.

EVALUATIVE LISTENING – It involves evaluating and analyzing the message being received. It involves judging the acceptability of what is said depending on how logical one finds it to be.

What makes a good **Listening Text**?



Content

FEATURE	QUESTIONS TO ASK
Interest	Will this be interesting for my students?
Cultural accessibility	Will my students understand the context and ideas?
Speech act/ Discourse structure	Does it discuss abstract concepts or is it based on everyday transactions?
Density	Does the information come thick and fast or are there moments in which the listener can relax?
Language level	Is the majority of the vocabulary and grammar appropriate for my students?



Delivery

FEATURE	QUESTIONS TO ASK
1. Length	Will I need to cut part of the recording because it is too long? Is it long enough?
1. Quality of recording	Is the recording clear? Will background noise affect comprehension?
1. Speed	Do the speakers talk too fast for my students?
1. Number of speakers	Are there many voices, potentially causing confusion?
1. Accent	Is the accent familiar? Is comprehensible?



NOTICE AND PREDICT

Key words

Listen for words that carry the main message.

Nonverbal cues

Notice facial expressions, gestures, and tone.

Speaker's purpose

Use context to predict why the person is speaking.

Background knowledge

INFER AND VERIFY

05

Meaning from context

Use nearby words to infer unfamiliar meanings.

06

Clarification

Ask a focused question when meaning is unclear.

07

General gist

Identify the main idea before focusing on details.

08

Test-taking strategies



TEACHING LISTENING SKILLS

Main Types of Listening Activities

- **Pre listening activities**
- **While-listening activities**
- **Post-listening activities.**

PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITIES

Activating Schemata/Predicting

Establishing reasons for listening

Generating Questions

Pre- teaching Vocabulary

Activating Schemata/Predicting



Brainstorming



Visuals



Realia



Texts and words



Opinions, ideas and facts

Establishing reasons for listening



Make the purpose
realistic



Make the goal
achievable



Get the students
involved

Generating Questions



Higher-order
Questions



Lower-order
Questions



Display Questions

Generating questions

Higher-order questions: Do you play touches on any contemporary issues?

Lower-order questions: Who does Macbeth kill first?

Display questions:

Teacher: What time is it, Denise?

Student: Two- thirty

Teacher: Very good, Denise!



The teacher is asking for a correct form rather than for any thought.



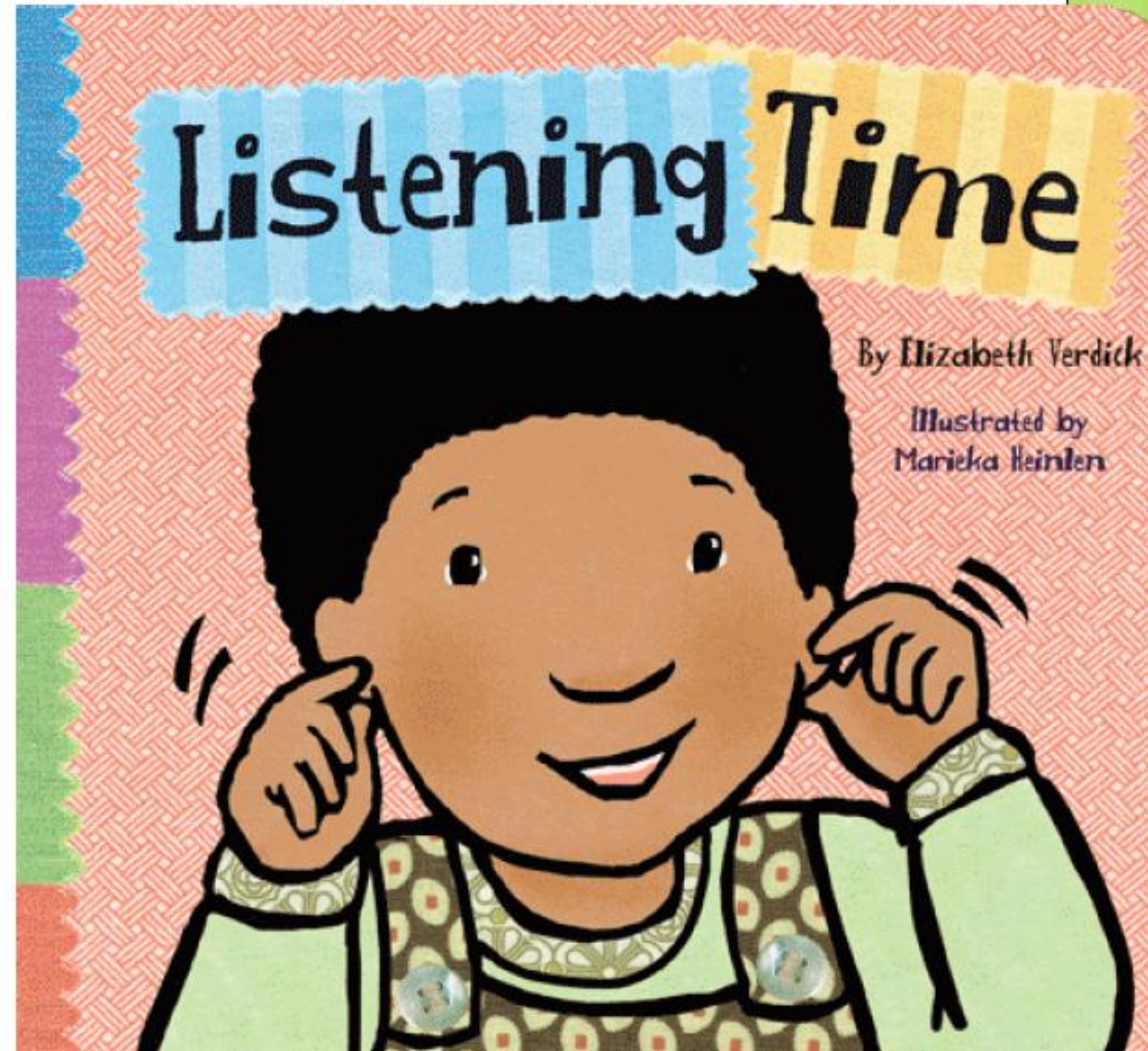
TOP TIPS

- **PRE- LISTENING:**

- Tell your students “ DON’T WORRY”
- Make sure students know what they are listening for before you start listening
- Give questions to check students comprehension
- Check for any words that your students may not know



- Check for any words that your students may not know
- Short listening
- Stop the recording



WHILE-LISTENING ACTIVITIES

Listening for GIST

Listening for DETAIL

Inferring

Participating actively

Note-taking

Dictation

Listen and Do

○ WHILE LISTENING:

- Try to play the recording once for overall comprehension and then for specific details.
- Take notes (dates, places, people)
- Repeat the recording especially in the difficult parts



While - Listening

- The aim is to help learners listen for meaning
- Attention on listening itself

Show understanding by a physical response	Information transfer
Filling in gaps/blanks	Sequencing
Detecting differences or mistakes	Information search
Ticking off items (bingo)	Matching items

Marking/checking the items in pictures

○ POST-LISTENING:

- Compare their notes in small groups.
- Encourage debates and answer questions.
- Write a summary of the main points and then compare.
- Make a list of any new vocabulary.

September 12, 2001

NEW VOCABULARY:

Ground Zero

The Pile

suicide hijackers

Missing

The Office of Homeland Security

Heightened state of alert

Security checkpoints

Anthrax

Bioterrorism

Cipro

Stockpiling supplies

Military tribunals

Sky marshals

Covert operations

Patriotic shopping

Sir Rudy Giuliani

Post - Listening

- Allow learners to reflect on the language from the passage

Answering multiple-choice or true/false questions	Jigsaw listening
Problem solving activities	Writing letters, telegrams, postcards, messages, etc
Summarizing	Debates, interviews, discussions, role-plays, etc.

JIGSAW

It is a teaching technique invented by social Psychologist

ELLIOT ARONSON in 1971. A cooperative learning method where students become experts on a specific part of a topic and then teach that information to their group members. It is a co-operative learning technique appropriate for students from 3rd to 12th grade. It is also used extensively in adult English

second language ESL classes.

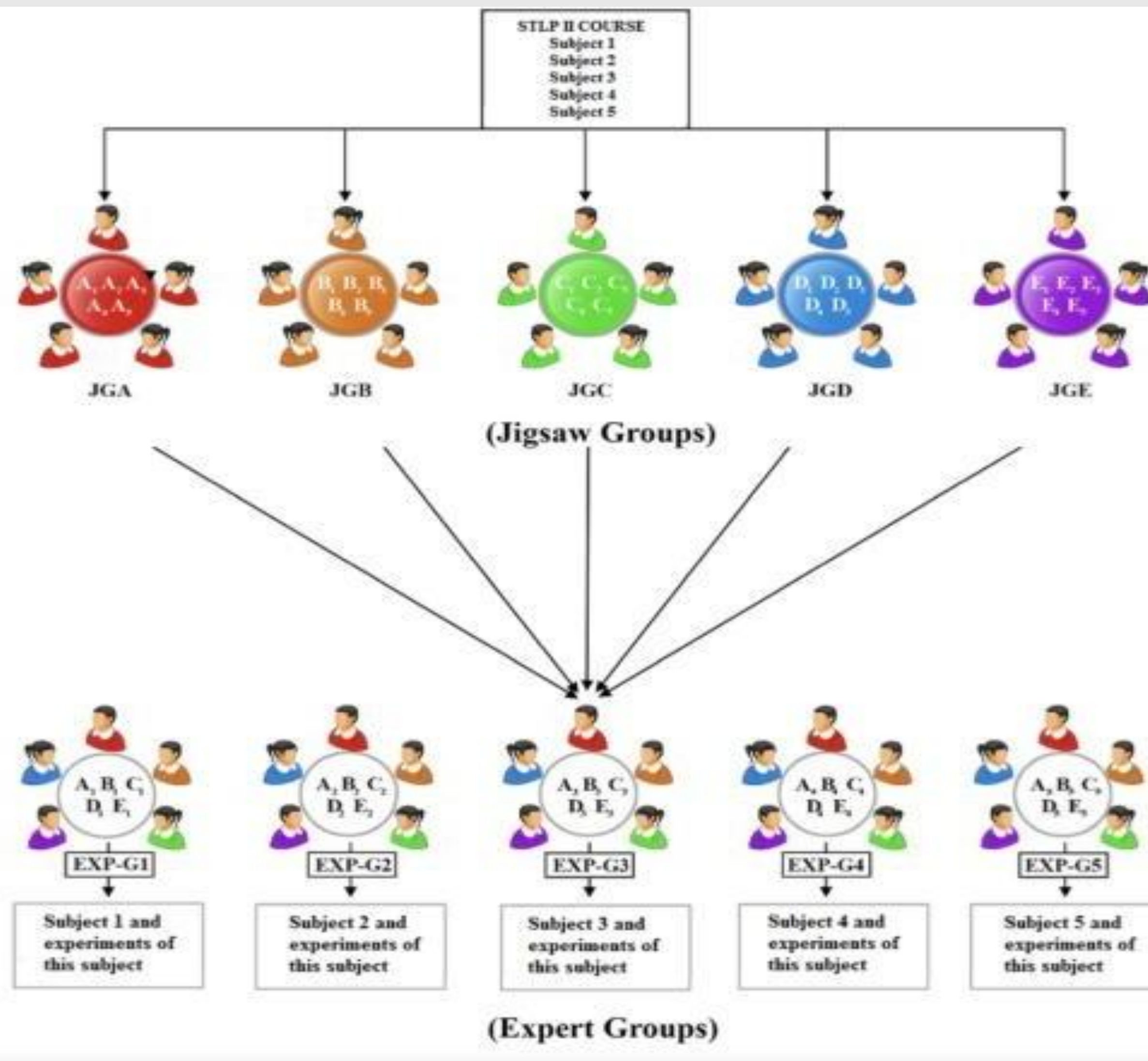
Listening

Engagement

Interaction

Peer teaching

Co-operation by giving each member of the group as essential part to play in the academic activity.



REMEMBER!!!

Try to use as many different sources of listening material as you can:

Advertisements, news programs, poetry, songs, extracts from plays, speeches, lectures, telephone conversations, informal dialogues.

Barriers to Effective Listening

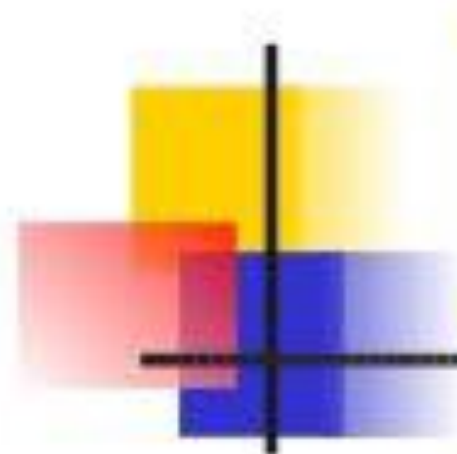
- **Physical Barriers**
- **People – Related Barriers**
 - **Physiological Barriers**
 - **Psychological Barriers**





Physical Barriers

- **Noise**
- **Poor acoustics**
- **Defective mechanical devices**
- **Frequent interruptions**
- **Uncomfortable seating arrangements**
- **Uncomfortable environment**
- **Message overload**



Physiological Barriers

- **State of Health** – State of health of the listener and the speaker affects the listening ability. Fever, pain or any other form of bodily discomfort makes it difficult for a person to listen or speak comfortably.
- **Disability** – Hearing deficiencies may lead to poor listening. Similarly, speech disorders of the speaker may make a speech incoherent to the listener. Speaker's accent may also make it difficult for the listener to comprehend.
- **Wandering attention** – Human mind can process words at the rate of about 500 per minute, whereas a speaker speaks at the rate of about 150 per minute. The difference between the two leaves the listener with sufficient time to let his mind wander.



Psychological Barriers

- **Being unsure of the speaker's ability** – Based on past experience or inputs from sources, the listener may have a preconceived notion of the speaker's ability. He may perceive the speaker to not be well informed, or to be lacking in depth and ability. Hence the listener will not listen to what the speaker has to say.
- **Personal anxiety** – Sometimes the listener is preoccupied with personal concerns and anxieties. This makes it difficult to perceive what is being said by the speaker.
- **Attitude** – The listener may be highly egocentric with a “know it all attitude” and may not listen as he feels that he already knows what the listener has to say.



Psychological Barriers

- **Impatience** – The listener may not have patience to wait for the other person to finish what he has to say. He may be intolerant or may be eager to add his own points to the discussion. As a result, his desire to speak overcomes his desire to listen, thus acting as a barrier.
- **Emotional blocks** – Our deep seated beliefs in certain ideas may make it difficult for us to listen to ideas which go against our belief. We may hear such an idea wrongly or it may get distorted in our mind to match our perception or we may completely block it off by not listening to it. Many a time, we block something off completely because of painful memories associated with it.

