



REFEREES

NSW COUNTRY RUGBY UNION REFEREES ASSOCIATION

MATCH OFFICIAL DEVELOPER RESOURCES

LISTENING SKILLS

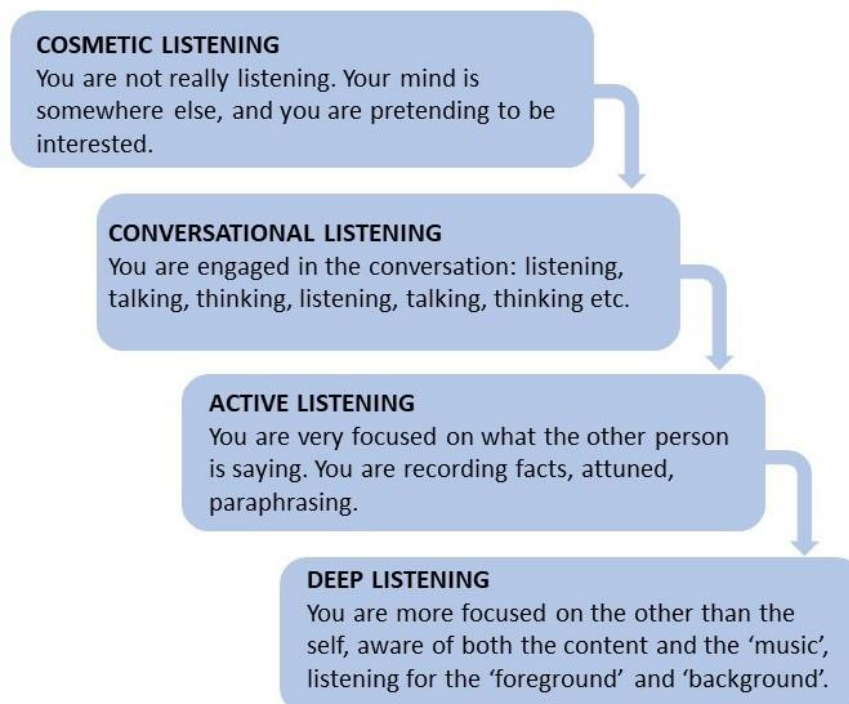
Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process. This is vital for referee coaches as they work with their referees.

Listening is key to all effective communication. Without the ability to listen effectively, messages are easily misunderstood. As a result, communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated.

If there is one communication skill you should aim to master, then listening is it.

Listening is so important that many top employers provide listening skills training for their employees. This is not surprising when you consider that good listening skills can lead to better relationship, and hence satisfaction, fewer mistakes, and increasing sharing of information that in turn can lead to more creative and innovative outcomes.

There are a number of models that are used to describe the various 'levels' of listening. I believe, that the one shown in the diagram below is a succinct summary of the various models.



Listening is Not the Same as Hearing

Hearing refers to the sounds that enter your ears. It is a physical process that, provided you do not have any hearing problems, happens automatically.

Listening, however, requires more than that: it requires focus and concentrated effort, both mental and sometimes physical as well.

Listening means paying attention not only to the story, but how it is told, the use of language and voice, and how the other person uses his or her body. In other words, it means being aware of both verbal and non-verbal messages. Your ability to listen effectively depends on the degree to which you perceive and understand these messages.

Listening is not a passive process. In fact, the listener can, and should, be at least as engaged in the process as the speaker. The phrase '*active listening*' is used to describe this process of being fully involved.

The Purpose of Listening

There is no doubt that effective listening is an extremely important life skill. Why is listening so important?

Listening serves a number of possible purposes, and the purpose of listening will depend on the situation and the nature of the communication.

- To specifically focus on the messages being communicated, avoiding distractions and preconceptions.
- To gain a full and accurate understanding into the speaker's point of view and ideas.
- To critically assess what is being said.
- To observe the **non-verbal signals** accompanying what is being said to enhance understanding.
- To show interest, concern and concentration.
- To encourage the speaker to communicate fully, openly and honestly.
- To develop a selflessness approach, putting the speaker first.
- To arrive at a shared and agreed understanding and acceptance of both sides' views.

Often our main concern while listening is to formulate ways to respond. This is not a function of listening. We should try to focus fully on what is being said and how it's being said in order to more fully understand the speaker.

When listening to our referees, keep in mind the various types of questions that you might ask to further develop understanding of what has been said. When the referee has finished 'telling their story' it is often good practice to repeat what they've presented in summary: "So, what I heard you saying was ..." This often provides further opportunity for the referee to clarify what they've said and especially the context that it was said in.

Also, there is nothing wrong with taking brief notes about the story the referee is telling you. This shows the referee that you are serious about recalling their conversation at a later time. With brief notes, they are not seen as a 'record of interview' to be held against the referee later, but a tool for understanding and clarity.

Read more at: <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/listening-skills.html>