

You Can Overcome Listening Difficulties

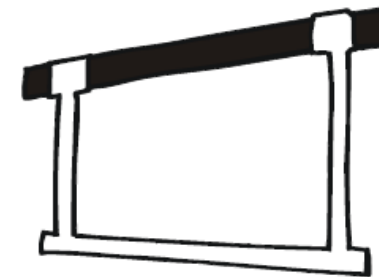
5. Try to reduce noises and avoid echoes

When talking to other people, try to reduce ambient noises (such as turn down the TV volume or turn off noisy machines) or keep away from the source of noises. A soft voice will be overwhelmed by noises. Even a person with good hearing can only hear up to 85% of other people's words in a noisy environment, and this is even more difficult for a foreign language. In a spacious room with smooth walls, echoes are more prominent. A voice may become unclear if it overlaps with echoes. Try to avoid talking to people in a place with more echoing effect. If this cannot be avoided, try to sit close to the speaker or a loudspeaker.



6. Pay attention to current affairs and increase your general knowledge

Learning more about current affairs and up-to-date information can help you to understand the topics and content of other people's talks. Even if you may not be able to hear clearly, you can guess the general idea of the talk. If you want to improve your listening skills for a certain language, you should watch/listen more to the news and information programmes conducted in that language, so as to strengthen your knowledge of vocabularies and phrases in daily use. Phonetic training may help improve your spelling and dictation ability. This is also helpful to listening and language learning.



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If you cannot hear others clearly, try using the following methods to overcome your hearing problem and improve your communication.

1. Keep calm and relax

No one can hear every word that other people say in all circumstances. When you are in noisy places or extremely tired, it is normal to miss some words. Tension and impatience may reduce your listening and comprehension ability. Slow down and handle the situation calmly.



2. Use your eyes and ears simultaneously and guess while you listen

If there are some words that you cannot hear clearly, try to guess them by considering the lip movements, facial expressions, gestures, tone of the speaker, the circumstances and the context of the speech. That is why you should face the speaker directly during conversation, so that you can clearly see his/her facial expressions and lip movements.



3. Shorten the distance with the speaker and avoid obstacles

Try to move near the person who is talking to you. Sit in the front row or close to the loudspeaker when you are in a classroom or a hall to ensure you can hear louder and clearer voices. The farther you are from the source of sound, the smaller the volume of sound becomes, and the speaker's voice will become weaker, or even overwhelmed by noises and echoes. You should avoid talking with people through an obstacle (such as a door, wall or thick curtain) because the loudness and clarity of speech will be greatly reduced.



4. Raise questions to clarify misunderstanding

Do not pretend you understand every word of the speaker. If you are not sure whether you have misunderstood or made a wrong guess, you should take the initiative to clarify and repeat what you have heard: "Did you mean...?" If you have missed something, you may ask in this way: "You have said that... (repeating what you have heard), what have you said after that? Is it... (saying what you have guessed based on the context and the lip movements of the speaker)..." Do not just ask "What? What did you say?" habitually because people may mistakenly think that you have not paid attention. Inform people you have a hearing loss and tell them how they can help you. For example, you may ask them to rephrase the sentence. Most people will be happy to help if they understand your needs.

