Being able to listen effectively and actively is more than simply hearing someone speak. It involves hearing and understanding what a speaker is saying and how it applies to you, then remembering it for future use during an evaluation. Even if you don’t find the topic particularly interesting, there are still ways to improve your listening abilities, as well as how well you recall the information later! Give these tactics a try in your next lecture:

### The Ineffective Listener vs. The Effective Listener

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Ineffective Listener</th>
<th>The Effective Listener</th>
<th>What You Can Do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The subject is boring and doesn’t apply to me.</td>
<td>Pays attention by asking “What’s in it for me?”</td>
<td>Find areas of interest even in a boring topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Judges how the speaker presents information – gets hung up on errors.</td>
<td>Judges the content of the presentation and ignores errors.</td>
<td>Evaluate the content, not the delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tends to make judgments before comprehending all information.</td>
<td>Waits to assess content until they have complete comprehension.</td>
<td>Hold your fire – wait for the speaker to present their entire point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Listens for facts.</td>
<td>Listens for central ideas and concepts.</td>
<td>Listen for main points and patterns of organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Takes excessive notes.</td>
<td>Records only important information.</td>
<td>Focus on relevant material and screen out unnecessary anecdotes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Easily distracted.</td>
<td>Fights distractions and knows how to concentrate.</td>
<td>Sit closer to the speaker and away from doors or outside noise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Screen Distractions
- Sit as close to the front as possible.
- Try to ignore unusual accents and habits of the speaker.
- Screen out background noise and your own inner voice.

### Get Active
- Maintain an upright posture.
- Keep eye contact with the speaker.
- Speak up during discussions.
- Ask questions.

### Recognize Organization
- Listen and look for a thesis statement.
- Main points should be followed by supporting information.
- An outline format may be helpful.

### Find Relevance
- Ignore irrelevant information.
- Connect what the speaker is saying to what you’ve already learned.
- Remember that not all information is important.

### General Tips
- Maintain an upright posture.
- Keep eye contact with the speaker.
- Speak up during discussions.
- Ask questions.

### Find the Relevance
- Ignore irrelevant information.
- Connect what the speaker is saying to what you’ve already learned.
- Remember that not all information is important.
| Passive – shows little interest and acts bored. | Active – stays involved with the speaker throughout the lecture. | Work on active listening. |