**Why Students Don’t Listen**

1. Message Overload

The average person spends 5 or more hours a day listening to people talk. Our students probably spend more. It’s very difficult to listen actively for that many hours.

2. Preoccupation

3. Rapid Thought

The average person talks at rates between 100-200 words per minute. We are capable of understanding speech at rates exceeding 600 words per minute. Students must learn to use this spare time to understand speakers better rather than to let attention wander.

4. Effort

Listening actively is hard physical work. Our heart rate quickens, respiration increases, body temperature rises.

5. External Noise

6. Hearing Problems

7. Faulty Assumptions

Students think, “I’ve heard this all before.” They may assume that a speaker’s thoughts are simple or mostly common sense, so they don’t have to listen. Or they may think the material is too complicated for them to grasp. They may assume that the topic or discussion is unimportant. Students mistake passive hearing for active listening.

8. Lack of Apparent Advantages

Because students often mistake listening for passive reception, they may assume that such a passive response has no advantage in class participation. For these students the opposite of talking is waiting. Because discussion material is often not tested, they may assume that it is not important.

9. Lack of Training

10. Media Influence

Print, broadcast, and digital content is very often organized in short segments. This trend discourages practice in sustained, focused attention.