



What types of listening do you use?

There are six different types of listening skills, according to many experts, and each has a different purpose or goal.

When faced with a communications challenge, consider which of the following types of listening will be helpful — and which will not.

1. **Discriminative** — identifying the emotional undertones in a person's speech. For example, recognizing when someone is dissatisfied or unhappy despite what they are saying.
2. **Comprehensive** — focused on interpreting the message.
3. **Critical** — analyzing and evaluating to determine if you are going to accept or reject the message. For example, listening to a customer who is trying to convince you that he or she has been shortchanged in some way.
4. **Appreciative** — simply enjoying the message or the sound, as when listening to a complimentary message.
5. **Therapeutic** — listening to someone talk about their problems. Here you are serving as a non-judgmental sounding board. When someone is talking about their problems, they don't want you to evaluate their situation; they just want you to listen and provide support.
6. **Relational** — this includes efforts to develop a rapport through listening and small talk. Here, you are building a relationship rather than collecting information for the official records.

