



Listening in different situations

Face to face

When we talk to someone face to face we pick up a lot of information. As well as listening to what they say we also pick up clues from their:

- body language
- gestures
- tone of voice
- the words they use

These are called **non-verbal cues**.

How well we know the person we are talking to can influence the way we listen.

We also listen differently to the same person depending on the situation. We might listen more intently to a colleague or supervisor when they are explaining something to do with work than when they are telling us about their weekend.

In a large group

It's more difficult to notice non-verbal cues when we're talking in a large group. We don't have the opportunity to take in all the details when lots of people are talking at once or when there's more than one conversation going on.

In a group situation we might only **get the gist** of what's being said and not hear everything that everyone contributes.

On the telephone

Listening on the telephone is also difficult because **we can't see the other person**. We rely on them to make responses so that we know they're listening to us. There are no non-verbal cues on the phone.

Try staying silent during a phone call and see how long it takes the other person to ask if you're still there!

Because there are no non-verbal signs we have to concentrate more when listening on the phone. This is because if we miss what's being said, there are no other clues to help us pick up information.