

A Parent's Guide to Effective Study Habits

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Strong listening skills are essential for students to become productive and independent learners. The ability to listen effectively and carefully allows students to better understand what is expected of them, build rapport with teachers, answer questions and play an active role in their learning process. “Students will spend more time listening in our classrooms than speaking, reading and writing combined” (Dodge). The student’s ability to listen for detail, follow directions and evaluate what they have heard is critical to their academic and future success.

Topic 3: Listening Skills Strategies



Focusing:

Good listening skills start when students give full attention to the teacher. Students need to put aside all distracting thoughts and environmental factors. Students should set aside all other thoughts and behaviors so that they can concentrate on the teacher’s message and truly hear what the teacher is saying. Maintaining eye contact with the teacher will help keep listeners focused and keep them on task.

HELPFUL TIP # 1: When you tell your child to do something, ask him/her to repeat your instructions this will increase listening skills.

Listen for Main Ideas:

Main ideas are the most important points that teachers are trying to convey. Students should take note of all points that teachers claim will be on future tests or Regents exams. It is important to concentrate on the *content* from the teacher, *not the delivery* of the content. Students need to learn to concentrate on what the teacher says so that they can process the information for good note-taking skills.



HELPFUL TIP # 2: Students should check Blackboard each night because many teachers post their classroom notes on their websites highlighting key points.

Go to www.jerichoschools.org/hs, go to the Login menu and choose Blackboard to log in.



Ask Questions:

While listening, a student should ask mental questions, including:

What is the key point the teacher is trying to convey?

How does the information fit into what I previously learned?

This will enable the students to listen actively and remain engaged in the learning process by challenging their minds with mental questions. If a student does not understand what the teacher is saying or is confused by a certain topic, he/she must make sure to ask the teacher to either repeat the information or explain the idea in more detail.

Show that you are listening:

A student should use body language and gestures to convey his/her attention. For example, a student may nod occasionally, smile and use various facial expressions. Posture should be open and inviting at all times. In addition, students will encourage the speaker to continue by making short, verbal comments, such as “yes” and “good point.” If a student is engaged, this will be acknowledged not only by listening attentively, but also with facial expressions. Smiling, frowning, or laughing are effective ways in which a student may let instructors know he/she is truly listening to the subject matter.

HELPFUL TIP # 3: Like all skills, listening takes practice.

This month’s strategy devoted to listening skills is an essential tool for high school students to succeed in becoming independent, efficient, and motivated learners. The way to become a better listener is to practice active listening. This takes place when a student makes a conscious effort to hear not only the words that another person is saying, but even more importantly, to try to understand the total message being sent.

Resources:

Davis, L. and & Sirotowitz, S. (1996). *Study Strategies Made Easy: A Practical Plan for School Success*. Florida: Specialty Press Inc.

Dodge, J. (1995). *The Study Skills Handbook*. New York: Scholastic Inc.