

ACTIVE LISTENING AND NOTE TAKING

Active listening involves processes and strategies similar to effective reading: predicting, associating, and using contextual cues. A lecture, like a test, can be better understood by asking questions such as those below. Developing the habit of asking questions helps you to listen more effectively and to take better notes.

1. PREDICTING: Formulating and following the 'big picture' by trying to **predict**

- What's next
- What major point will be elaborated on
- The sequence of the lecture

2. ASSOCIATING: Connecting different pieces of **related** information

- What has already been said, and how does it fit with new information?
- Which details support which main ideas?
- How does lecture material relate to the textbook and other readings?
- How does the lecture material relate to other course information/ideas?
- What does the lecture indicate about how do the syllabus topics relate to each other?

3. FINDING CUES

Listen for words and phrases that signify **importance**

- "A vital point is ..."
- "An important concept..."
- "The significance of..."

Look for numbered/unnumbered **series**:

- "The steps are..."
- "Five causes are..."
- "There are several reasons..."

Listen for **concluding/synthesizing** phrases

- "Finally..."
- "In conclusion..."
- "In summary..."

4. GETTING BACK ON TRACK

If you find yourself mentally wandering, try asking some focusing questions

- What was the last statement made?
- What are the main points recently mentioned?
- How does the current statement fit in with previous comments?

Try to think of your own focusing questions.

5. FOLLOW UP

Shortly after lectures, ask yourself

- Are my notes legible?
- Do they make sense?
- Are there any gaps that can be filled by course reading?
- Do I have any questions for the instructor?