

Listening

Evaluate each statement as you are, rather than as you think you should be and don't worry if some questions seem to score in the 'wrong direction'.

Reverse scoring

Several of our tools have reverse scoring in their analysis. This is a function of how psychometric tests have been developed. Reverse scoring is necessary when research instrument developers have purposefully written a group of items with some items in a different direction than others. One common validation technique for survey items is to rephrase a "positive" item in a "negative" way. When done correctly, this can be used to check if respondents give consistent answers. This also helps prevent the biased approach to answering surveys.

NB** Please remember to reverse the scores on the following questions: 1 4,5,8,9,10,11,13,14.

(i.e., 1 = 5, 2 = 4, 3 = 3, 4 = 2, 5 = 1)

1	2	3	4	5
NOT AT ALL	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	VERY OFTEN

1.**	To be more productive, I respond to emails and instant messages when speaking on the phone	
2.	I repeat points back during a conversation to clarify my understanding of what the other person is saying	
3.	When people speak to me about sensitive subjects, I make an effort to put them at ease	
4.**	I feel uncomfortable with silence during conversations	
5.**	As I listen, I compare the other person's viewpoint with my own	
6.	To get people to elaborate on their point, I ask open questions (ones that can't be answered with "yes" or "no")	
7.	When someone is speaking to me, I nod and say things like "ok" and "uh-huh" occasionally	
8.**	I play devil's advocate to prompt responses from the other person	
9.**	I catch myself asking leading questions to encourage the other person to agree to my viewpoint	
10.**	I interrupt people	

11.** When people speak to me, I stay completely still so that I don't distract them



12. I try to read the other person's body language as I listen



13.** If the other person is struggling to explain something, I help with my own suggestions



14.** If I'm busy, I let others talk to me as long as they are quick



YOUR RESULT

Scoring your results

CONSTRUCT (SUBSCALE) • TOTAL

Preparing to Listen (Questions 1,3,14)



Empathic Listening (Questions 2,4,6,13)



Active Listening (Questions 5,7,8,9,10,11,12)



Total



Score / Comment

14- 29

You need to improve your listening skills. The people around you probably feel that you don't pay attention to them when they talk to you, and they may feel that you don't understand them.

30- 49

Your listening skills are OK, but there's definitely room for improvement. Use the tools that we suggest below to develop your listening skills. Pay special attention to the advice on empathic listening – this is great for taking your listening skills to the next level.

50-70

You have good listening skills. People feel that they are able to approach you if they need someone to listen to them, and they trust that you'll give them your full attention. They also know that you'll give them space to talk freely, without interrupting or talking too much about yourself. But that doesn't mean you have to stop here. Read our guidance below to see if you can develop your skills even further. You could also help others to develop their listening skills through coaching or mentoring .

01 Preparing to listen

(Questions 1,3,14) Good preparation is essential for effective listening. Without it, it's hard to listen to people successfully. Before you have an important conversation, remove anything that may distract you so that you can focus and give the other person your full attention. Switch off your cell phone, turn off instant messaging and email alerts, put your work away, close your meeting room door, and do what you can to ensure you won't be interrupted. If you know you won't be able to offer the other person your full attention – for example, if you're working on an urgent task – schedule a better time to speak. However, ensuring the other person knows the conversation is essential to you.

Also, do what you can to make the other person feel at ease. Use open body language and a friendly tone. If they indicate that they want to speak about a sensitive subject, and if this is appropriate, remind them that the conversation is confidential and that they can be honest with you. (If you're a manager, there may be some things that you cannot keep confidential, such as harassment or negligent behaviour.) If your conversation is beginning to encroach on these, clarify this to the other person.)

02 Empathic Listening

(Questions 2,4,6,13) When you demonstrate, you recognise other people's emotions and do what you can to understand their perspectives. As such, it can help to take active listening to the next level. To listen empathically, put yourself "in the other person's shoes," and try to see things from their point of view. Then, summarise what they say in your own words to show them that you understand their perspective. Also, ask open questions to help them articulate themselves fully, and avoid using leading questions that "put words in their mouth." This allows them to add further detail and to talk about their feelings. Importantly, don't fear moments of silence when you listen. Instead, embrace pauses to give them time to finish their point and allow them to reflect on what they have said.

03 Active listening

(Questions 5,7,8,9,10,11,12) When you listen actively, you consciously try to hear the other person's words and, more importantly, understand their whole message. To do this, learn how to read people's tones to identify "hidden" nonverbal messages. Also, avoid interrupting others or distracting yourself from your thoughts and opinions. Instead, focus entirely on what the other person is saying. Nod or say "OK" occasionally to acknowledge that you're listening. If you don't understand something, wait for the other person to finish what they're saying before asking for clarification. Above all, don't formulate a response until they have communicated the whole message, and avoid any judgement or criticism until it's your turn to speak. If you argue or "play devil's advocate" while you listen, you may discourage them from opening up to you.