

Listener's block happens when we can't understand anything a speaker says.

How to deal with it?



Listener's Block

We meet someone. He sits across us at the table but the moment he starts speaking we understand nothing. We get nervous, which makes the situation worse. He asks a question but we can't catch what he's saying. A bad dream? No, a case of listener's block.

Why do we sometimes get blocked? Most often because the speakers' accent, tone and speed make listening almost impossible. We are used to our teacher's English but we get lost when faced with different pronunciations.

We can solve this problem by paying special attention to these aspects:

Vocabulary. Think about the expressions people are likely to use and learn their pronunciation. Watch documentaries or listen to podcasts on the subjects you will discuss.

Place. Noisy locations make listening harder. Choose a quiet spot where you can be close to the speaker.

Accent. Find out where speakers come from and watch videos or listen to audios by people from those regions.

Situation. Role play the situations you'll encounter to anticipate what people will say. If it's an interview have your teacher question you; if it's a dinner meeting invite a foreign friend to a restaurant this evening.

Easy words. If listener's block hits you in the middle of a speech breathe deeply and immediately lower your expectations. Try to understand only *part* of the message. A good strategy is to concentrate on easy words and forget the rest. Something is much better than nothing.

Lastly, do not feel badly. You are student and students don't know everything. One day you will reach the advanced level and listener's block will be part of the past. Think of that day!

Would you like to read more about listening? Click here to learn how cultural aspects can affect listening and what to do about that: <http://www.englishfb.com/better-listening-and-culture/>



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