



Listening to Learn: Summarizing Audio

Why learn to listen?

With the explosion of podcasts available on the web, sound recordings have become a much more significant source of information. Listening for information is different from regular listening--it is a skill that must be learned and practiced.

To locate podcasts, enter the key words and “podcast”. You will be presented with an array of choices that represent the same gamut of trash to treasure of any free web-based resource. Encourage your students to carefully consider the source and the validity of a resource before investing their time listening to a podcast.

Minnesota Public Radio’s [Sound Learning](#) web site offers a collection of podcasts for classroom use. Consider using one of them for listening practice. (Surprisingly, they offer a guide to teach effective reading, but none to teach effective listening.)

A Guide to Listening to Learn: Instructions for the students

Always keep your purpose in mind when listening. When you are listening to podcasts or other audio files to find information for a research project, you are listening to learn. It’s active mental work.

Listen for the main idea and supporting points

Before listening read any introductory text. Consider your background knowledge. What do you already know about the topic? What do you expect to hear? Imagine key words that you will listen for. You are listening to understand information that will either support or contradict your assumptions about a topic.

Listen for the main idea of the selection the first time through. As in written works, aural information is often structured with an introduction, main points and conclusion. Take notes as you listen, identifying each point. Listen for transitional phrases, first of all, consider, one the other hand, however, in the end, finally. If you can’t write a summary of the main idea and supporting points the first time, listen again before you more on to the next phase.

Listen again for details

Listen for specific details. You have the main ideas. Now it’s time to focus on the facts or statistics that the narrator uses to substantiate the story. Have your pen handy, but keep the other hand ready to pause and replay so that you can note details like statistics, places, dates and names.



Listening to learn: Summarizing a Podcast

Information for a Bibliographic Citation:

A bibliographic citation contains all the information another researcher needs to locate a resource.

Author/narrator/program) name:

Title:

Date of podcast creation: _____ Length of podcast: _____

Publisher of podcast:

URL of the web site (the source of the resource):

URL of the podcast (of the actual podcast or recording):

Date accessed:

Summary:

Describe the main idea of the podcast or recording. Write it in one complete sentence.

List the important supporting points made by the narrator.

Note specific facts or statistics. (Use the back of this sheet if necessary.)