Exceptional Expressions for Everyday Events

An everyday event in classrooms revolves around listening—listening to peers, teachers, CDs, DVDs, announcements on the school sound system, and so on. Listening is an integral part of learning.

Listen is typically used as a verb. For example, teachers may ask students to listen carefully to a guest speaker. In this instance, listen is used as “to hear attentively.” Another use of the word listen can be exemplified by a student complaining to a friend or teacher that someone isn’t listening to what is being said. In this instance, listen is used to describe the act of paying attention. This second use of listen is as a command as when someone says, “Listen! It’s important to hear the announcement.”

Although listen is commonly used as a verb, listen can also be used as a noun. A person can ask that someone give an idea or a song a listen. In this case, listen is used to describe trying something out by listening to it.

Follow-Ups

- How is listening different from hearing?
- How might vigilant listening differ from observant listening? Listening circumspectly and listening respectfully?
- What are some things we can do to help others listen to our ideas?

The Spanish Connection

Listen comes from an Old English word that was spoken in the northern region of the British Isles—lysna. The Spanish word that means to listen is escuchar. Lysna and escuchar are not cognates. None of the synonyms for listen have Spanish cognates.

Word Changes

- The idiom “lend me your ears” comes from Shakespeare’s JULIUS CAESAR. The meaning of the idiom is to ask people to listen to what is about to be said. The idea is that the speaker wants the listener’s undivided attention and is asking for the listener’s metaphorical ears.
Listen

Listen as in to pay attention
- heed
- mind
- take note

Listen as in to listen without permission
- eavesdrop
- wiretap
- bug
- tap
- overhear

Listen as in to listen with attentiveness
- hang
- focus
- rivet

IDIOMS
- Hear it out
- Lend me your ear
- Listen to reason
- Listen up/close
- Listen for (someone or something)
- I'm all ears
- Tuned in

COMMON PHRASES
- Listen in on
- Stop, look, and listen
- Listen to me
- Good listener
Listen
Listen

Inflected Endings
- listens
- listened
- listening

Derivational Suffixes
- listener
- listeners

Compound Words
Listen used as a verb
- listening device

Morphological Family for Listen

° Listen used as a verb
Listen

Morphological Family for Listen