

Thinking With My Friends and Family **Video: The Active Listening Scavenger Hunt Part 1**

Recently, Samantha was hired at a retail store in her hometown. The job consists of working after school three nights per week and every other weekend. Samantha is very excited about this new job, and she wants to demonstrate that she is a good employee. During the interview, the owner of the store said the two most important skills needed for the job are to be able to carefully listen to the customers in order to help meet their needs, and to be able to listen to the manager in order to follow directions and meet expectations. In order to prepare for this new job, Samantha's dad advised her to practice by using a few strategies designed to improve listening skills.

Now it's your turn to **FOCUS** and **THINK** about what the speaker is saying. Try one, or more, of the following strategies to improve your ability as a listener:

1. Invite one of your parents or friends out for ice cream. While you are at the shop, practice establishing and maintaining eye contact as you are having a conversation. Think about focusing only on the speaker and ignoring distractions. Before talking, turn off your cell phone and other electronic devices.
2. Play the game, "Stop Listening." To play this game you will need two other people. Have one of these people step outside of the room for a few minutes. Next, have the other person that remains think about one of their favorite subjects (movies, sports, vacations, etc.) and prepare to talk about this subject with the other person when he/she comes back into the room. After a few minutes, go outside and tell the person to come back into the room and listen to the speaker for about 30 seconds, but then gradually "stop listening." This means the person will stop giving direct eye contact and focused attention. Maybe the person will keep looking at his/her watch, tie his/her shoes, or flip through a magazine instead of listening. As this happens, watch for the speaker's reaction. Does not paying attention have an impact on the speaker? After this exercise, talk about the experience with the speaker and listener. See what you can learn about the impact that focusing (or not focusing) on the speaker has on both the speaker and the listener.
3. With a family member, listen to a news story or item online without looking at the pictures. Work to hear and understand what the speaker is communicating. After the story is finished, write down what you believe are the main ideas. Check your work by asking your family member to look over your notes to see if you were able to paraphrase the main ideas.
4. When someone gives you directions at home or in school, challenge yourself to ask at least two questions that help to make their message clearer. Practice restating their directions so that you know that you have the right information.