

Instructions for how to play the Free Listening cards

By Margarete Imhof for the International Day of Listening, Sept. 21, 2017

Basically, you are free to use the cards any way you like, but here are some ideas that I had in mind when I created the cards.

The general idea is to use the quotes on the cards as a conversation starter, and in case you use them to begin a workshop, the cards may also be good to round off a session on listening.

A. Find the colors

1. **Material:** a full deck of 32 cards each of which has a different quote on it
2. **Instruction:** Charge a team of people (2-5) with the task to group the cards into 4 categories based on how well the quotes go together
3. **Goal:** Each team has to form four lines of colors, just as you would have clubs, piques, hearts, and diamonds in a deck of playing card.
4. **Results:** You may want the teams to share their results and explain to each other the rationale behind their proposed solution.
5. **Debriefing:** there is absolutely no system behind the quotes; however, when people start thinking about the quotes they discuss a variety of interpretations in their teams and they will not only find a solution, but also get head-first into the topic of listening.

B. Trading listening cards, open game

1. **Material:** You can use a half deck of cards or adjust the number of cards – roughly to the number of participants. It is recommended that you use a few more cards than you have people to let everybody have a choice.
2. **Instruction:**
Put the cards out face up so that participants can read the quotes.
Invite participants to choose a card with a quote that appeals to them one way or another.
Ask participants to write their immediate response to the quote on the card
Encourage participants to shop around in the large group and ask about other people's quotes and responses; if they like their quotes and notes better than their own, they might want to try and trade their cards.
3. **Goal:** Everybody in the room activates their perceptions and prior knowledge about listening and has an opportunity to share these with others.
4. **Result:** Everybody in the room has begun to start thinking about listening and what it is, what it can do and how others approach the concept of listening.
5. **Debriefing:** Give an overview over the different perspectives and angles from which the authors of the quotes approach listening, how listening includes verbal and nonverbal messages, how different types of listening can be distinguished (e.g., therapeutic listening, critical listening, listening for comprehension, appreciative listening); set card on the side for further reference if you wish

C. Trading listening cards, surprise game

1. **Material:** You can use a half deck of cards or adjust the number of cards – roughly to the number of participants. It is recommended that you use a few more cards than you have people to let everybody have a choice.
2. **Instruction:**
Put the cards out back up so that participants can not read what is on them. All cards read: FREE LISTENING.
Invite participants to pick on card.
Ask participants to write their immediate response to the quote on the card
The next step is that participants go a round and trade their card at least once with another person
participants may add their own comment to their new card and either keep it or trade it again
3. **Goal:** Everybody should have a card in their hands that they really like best for now.
4. **Result:** Everybody in the room activates their perceptions and prior knowledge about listening and has an opportunity to share these with others. Everybody in the room has begun thinking about listening, what it is, what it can do, and how others approach the concept of listening.
5. **Re-use:** After your session or your workshop you might want to ask everybody to check if they are still happy with their quotes and comments
6. **Debriefing:** Give an overview over the different perspectives and angles from which the authors of the quotes approach listening, how listening includes verbal and nonverbal messages, how different types of listening can be distinguished (e.g., therapeutic listening, critical listening, listening for comprehension, appreciative listening); set card on the side for further reference if you wish

D. FREE LISTENING solitaire

1. **Material:** Use a deck of cards, find a seat in a Starbucks café or wherever passers-by would see you. Put out the deck with the back up and offer a FREE LISTENING sign.
2. **Instruction:** When people ask about what you are doing or what you are offering, invite them to draw a card and start a conversation on the quote. Or invite people to come over and offer a selection of cards and start a conversation on listening, or: invite them to share a story and listen (you might use a time limit)
3. **Goal:** Share a listening experience with a friend you had not met yet (a.k.a. a stranger).
4. **Result:** Not quite predictable; might make a friend, might plant a thought into a person's mind, might learn something about yourself; be ready and open-minded
5. **Debriefing:** You may share a story from you FREE LISTENING experience with others on the website of the International Day of Listening (IDL) Sept. 21.