I. **Listening** is the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages.

   A. There are personal and cultural styles of listening; a *listening style* is your favored but usually unconscious approach to attending to your partner’s messages.
      1. A **content-oriented listening style** means that we prefer to focus on the facts and evidence in a message.
      2. A **people-oriented listening style** is a preference to focus on what the message tells them about our conversational partners and their feelings.
      3. An **action-oriented listening style** is a preference for focusing on the point that the speaker is trying to make with a message.
      4. A **time-oriented listening style** is a preference for brief and swift conversations.

   B. **Listening apprehension** is the anxiety we feel about listening that interferes with our ability to be effective listeners.

   C. A dual processes in listening means that we use one of two approaches to process the information that we receive—automatic or conscious.
      1. **Passive listening** is the effortless, thoughtless, and habitual process of receiving the messages we hear.
      2. **Active listening** is the skillful, intentional, deliberate, conscious process of attending to, understanding, remembering, critically evaluating, and responding to messages that we hear.
         a. **Attending** is the process of willful striving to perceive selected sounds that are being heard.
            1. Getting ready to attend means preparing physically and mentally.
            2. Though we physically register any sounds emitted within our hearing range, we can exercise psychological control over the sounds we attend to.
            3. Making the shift from speaker to listener a complete one means listening and not preparing for the next remark.
            4. Stay tuned in since you may miss something and not have all the data needed to understand the message.
         b. **Understanding** is the process of accurately decoding a message so that the meaning is shared with the speaker and understanding what is being said.
            1. To improve understanding, identify the speaker’s purpose and key points, interpret nonverbal cues, ask clarifying questions, and paraphrase what is heard.
2. To understand what a speaker means, one must be able to accurately interpret nonverbal cues.
3. Ask clarifying questions, which are designed to get further information or to remove uncertainty from information already received, in order to encourage the speaker to continue speaking, which can aid in transmitting the intended meaning.
   a. Be specific about what you need to increase your understanding.
   b. Deliver questions in a sincere tone of voice.
   c. Limit the number of questions or explain that you need to ask multiple questions.
   d. Put the “burden of ignorance” on your shoulders to minimize unplanned or unwanted reactions.
4. Another way to assure understanding is to paraphrase—an attempt to verify one’s understanding of a message by putting it into one’s own words and sharing it with the speaker.
   a. A content paraphrase conveys one’s understanding of the denotative meaning of a verbal message.
   b. A feelings paraphrase conveys one’s understanding of the emotional meaning behind the speaker’s verbal message.
   c. A combined paraphrase conveys one’s understanding of both the denotative and emotional meanings behind a speaker’s message.

c. The third part of the active listening process is remembering—the process of moving information from short-term memory to long-term memory.
   1. Primacy effect is the tendency to remember information that we heard first over what we heard in the middle.
   2. Recency effect is the tendency to remember information that we heard last over what we heard in the middle.
      a. Repetition is saying something two, three, or even four times and helps store information in long-term memory.
      b. A mnemonic device is an artificial technique used as a memory aid (e.g., take the first letter of each of the items you are trying to remember and form a word).
c. Taking notes represents a powerful tool for increasing recall of information.

d. The fourth part of the active listening process is critically evaluating, which is the process of interpreting what you have understood in order to determine how truthful, authentic, or believable you judge the meaning to be.

1. To critically evaluate something, one must be able to separate facts from inferences.
   a. Facts are statements whose accuracy can be verified or proven.
   b. Inferences are claims or assertions based on the facts presented.

2. One must also probe for information as a part of critically evaluating a message.
   a. Probing questions are used to search for more information or try to resolve perceived inconsistencies in a message.
   b. Nonverbals are especially important when using probing questions to ensure one does not appear arrogant or intimidating.

e. Responding is the process of reacting to what has been heard while listening and after listening, and there are some guidelines for responding.

1. Provide back-channel cues which are verbal and nonverbal signals demonstrating listener response to the speaker.
2. Listeners should reply when the message is complete by asking questions, paraphrasing, agreeing, challenging, or giving either advice or support.
3. Respond to the previous message before changing the subject.

IX. Digital listening skills
1. Attending and understanding refer to making an extra effort to understand messages you receive through social media.
2. Critically evaluating messages can also improve digital listening skills.
3. We should also recognize underlying motives, values, and ideologies and avoid overdependence.