

If you do not have a hearing loss you can learn:

- How to make your speech and conversation more accessible to a lipreader

### **Is there anything else that you might gain from attending a lipreading class ?**

Yes, lipreading classes can give people with a hearing loss the opportunity to meet new people. They can provide a meeting place where people can exchange ideas and information and gain support from people who share similar experiences. Learning to lipread can increase your independence as well as your confidence.

### **Will it matter if I make a mistake in a lipreading class ?**

People with a hearing loss can often feel embarrassed when they misunderstand a conversation in a social setting or at work. However, in the lipreading class everyone makes mistakes – and some of them are very funny ! We learn to share the mistakes to understand how the mistakes were made in the first place.

### **How might I manage in a more formal setting, such as a conference, lecture or theatre ?**

In some situations there may be some technical aids to assist you if you use a hearing aid with a telecoil or T-setting. These are called loop systems and are also available for use in the home, and may be in use in some public places. Alternatively, a personal loop that is worn around the neck may allow the wearer to zoom in on one voice in noisy situations. There may also be text information available, such as a palantype or speech-to-text, where an operator types the text onto a screen or overhead projector.

As a 'Human Aid to Communication', a qualified lipspeaker may sometimes be available, who repeats what the speaker is saying in clear speech but without sound for the benefit of lipreaders. A lipspeaker can also offer communication support for you at a tutorial, job interview or other one-to-one situations. For more information contact the Association of Lipspeakers (ALS) (see Contacts). Notetakers may also be available for students attending lectures or meetings in educational settings

### **Where is my nearest class ?**

Information about local daytime or evening lipreading classes may be available from your local education centre or library. Alternatively, you can contact the Association of Teachers of Lipreading to Adults (ATLA) (see Contacts).

### **Contacts**

Association of Teachers of Lipreading to Adults  
– ATLA  
c/o Hearing LINK  
27-28 The Waterfront, Eastbourne  
East Sussex, BN23 5UZ

URL: [www.atlalipreading.org.uk](http://www.atlalipreading.org.uk)  
Email: [atla@atalipreading.org.uk](mailto:atla@atalipreading.org.uk)

Association of Lipspeakers - ALS  
URL: [www.lipspeaking.co.uk](http://www.lipspeaking.co.uk)  
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## **Lipreading: an aid to communication**

### ***Lipreading can help deaf and hard of hearing people to understand speech***

### **What is lipreading ?**

Lipreading is reading the visual information of the spoken word. This includes how the lips, tongue and jaw move, as well as facial expressions. When someone is speaking their facial movements, gestures and body language give us clues to help us follow what they are saying. Many hard of hearing people find lipreading helps them to understand more of a conversation; and it may be essential for people with profound deafness.

### **Will learning lipreading help me ?**

Yes, learning to lipread can dramatically improve how much you understand, especially when used with a hearing aid. Lipreading can fill in the gaps in noisy social situations with friends and family. It can give you much more confidence at work, in education, or in making use of public services. Lipreading skills can also increase your independence and feelings of self-esteem.

### **How easy is lipreading to learn ?**

Most of us have been lipreading for years without knowing it – in noisy pubs, clubs, and places or work or wherever there is background noise. So, in most cases, the lipreading teacher will be helping you to develop a skill that you already have.

Lipreading needs continuous concentration and can be very tiring, and regular practice is important. This will help you to maintain your level of lipreading skill.

### **If I cannot lipread someone, should I persevere ?**

Yes, initially, if you are having problems lipreading someone, don't worry. They are probably not aware that they do not speak clearly. Most people will be happy to speak more slowly and clearly if you ask them to. If you still have problems, it might help to ask a friend or relative to help relay the key information or ask the speaker to write things down. The important thing is not to be discouraged; it's not your fault.

### **Are there any limitations to lipreading?**

Yes, some things make lipreading much more difficult: poor lighting, poor speech, fast speech and hidden speech. To lipread you need to be able to see the speaker's face clearly, so good lighting is very important. Some people do not speak clearly, speak with an accent, or speak very quickly and this can cause difficulties. Other people may turn their face away, hide their mouth, or have an untrimmed beard or moustache. Some words may be fairly visible, others may be very hard to see and some look similar (like: post, boast, most). All these things make lipreading more difficult, so it is important that the lipreader knows the subject of the conversation. This makes it easier to follow what is being said and gives the individual words a context.

## ***Ten tips that will help you to lipread***

### **1 Position**

Ask the speaker to face the light, and sit at the same eye level as you, so that you can see their face clearly.

### **2 Relax**

Lipreading takes concentration and you will find this easier if you are relaxed, so find a quiet place away from distractions.

### **3 Subject Matter**

Make sure you know the subject of the conversation. You can then use your own knowledge about the subject and speaker to support your lipreading and listening.

### **4 Repeat and Re-word**

It is easier to lipread a whole sentence than a single word, so don't be afraid to ask for a sentence to be repeated or re-worded.

### **5 Speech Movements**

Watch how the lips, tongue, jaw and facial muscles move as the person speaks. These will help you to recognise sounds that you no longer hear clearly.

### **6 Recall Speech Sounds**

If you are severely deafened, it may help if you try to recall the sound of voices as you watch the speaker's face. Recalling the memory of sounds helps many people understand conversation more clearly.

### **7 Facial Expressions**

Looking at these can tell you a lot about the subject matter, mood and feelings of the speaker.

### **8 Gestures and Body Language**

Watching the speaker's movements can give you extra information about the conversation. It can help explain what the speaker is telling you as well as their mood, for example whether they are feeling happy, relaxed, worried or in a hurry.

### **9 Looking, Listening and Thinking**

For most hard of hearing people, lipreading is a combination of all three of these at the same time. For deafened people, visible information and knowing the subject matter is even more important.

### **10 Fatigue**

Don't be surprised if you get tired. Lipreading requires intense concentration and you may need to give yourself frequent breaks and rest your eyes. If you can relax it will help.

## ***What can you learn in your lipreading class?***

If you have a hearing loss you can learn:

- To lipread people who speak clearly
- How to make the most of your hearing aid
- How to cope when it is difficult to hear
- How you can receive and use 'listening' and 'alerting' equipment that might help you at home
- All about special telephones and how to get them
- How the ear works and some of the causes of hearing loss
- To understand tinnitus and how it might be controlled
- How and where you can access local support services