



A national charity since 1911

Learning to lipread



Formerly
RNID •)))

“My lipreading class is fun and extremely well-planned. It has given me the confidence to manage day-to-day communication problems.

We learn about all aspects of lipreading, including vowel and consonant sounds and how they are formed through lip shapes. We also share our experiences and offer each other support. We're given information about organisations, such as Action on Hearing Loss, and equipment that can help. We're also given advice on how to minimise the impact of hearing loss in many everyday situations.

Attending the lipreading class has helped me face my situation more positively. It's both a form of therapy and a tool to improve communication. It demands commitment, but it's so rewarding.”

Sylvia, Hertfordshire



You'll find this leaflet useful if you have hearing loss and want to know more about learning to lipread and how it can help. It explains what lipreading classes involve, how to find a class, and what can help you to practise your lipreading skills at home.

Contents

- What is lipreading? 4
- Can learning to lipread help me? 4
- What are lipreading classes like? 5
- How can I find a lipreading class? 5
- How can I practise at home? 6
- Are there any useful tips? 6
- Where can I get more information and support? 7

Please let our Information Line know if you'd like this leaflet in large print, braille or audio (see back page for contact details).

What is lipreading?

Lipreading is a vital communication skill for many people with hearing loss. It's the ability to recognise the lip shapes, gestures and facial movements of a person when they are speaking, in order to gain a better understanding of what they are saying.

We all lipread and watch a person's facial expressions without realising it, especially in noisy situations. Becoming a good lipreader, however, requires skill and concentration, and a great deal of practice, as many words look similar on the lips. For example, it's easy to mistake 'biscuits' for 'big kiss'. A good lipreading teacher will help you to tell the differences between words.

Can learning to lipread help me?

Yes! Even if you use hearing aids, there will still be times when you can't follow everything that's being said – that's when lipreading can really help. It'll benefit you whether you've had hearing loss for years or are newly diagnosed.

You can learn to 'see speech' by practising at home with a mirror or a friend. But you'll develop your lipreading skills more quickly, and learn a lot more about managing hearing loss, if you go to a lipreading class that's run by a qualified teacher of lipreading to adults. Our research has found that attending a lipreading class can give you greater:

- **confidence** to communicate with others
- **control** over your hearing loss, as you develop new communication skills
- **independence**, as you're less reliant on others to help you follow conversation.

What are lipreading classes like?

Lipreading classes are very informal and friendly – it's not like going back to school. You can go at your own pace and the teacher will encourage you to relax.

The teacher will demonstrate the different shapes that sounds make on the lips so you learn to identify them. They will also help you to get the gist of what is said, so you can join in the conversation.

Most classes will also cover other communication tactics that will both support lipreading and help you to manage your hearing loss effectively. For example, you'll be taught the best place to position yourself in a group so that you can lipread everyone, and how to be more assertive, so you feel comfortable asking people to repeat themselves or turn to face you. It's likely that the classes will also include group discussions, and look at equipment and organisations that can help with hearing loss.

How can I find a lipreading class?

Visit the website of the Association of Teachers of Lipreading to Adults (ATLA) – atllipreading.org.uk – to find your nearest lipreading class, or contact our Information Line ([see back page](#) for contact details).

Access to lipreading classes

If you don't have a lipreading class in your area, we've produced a campaign guide to help you try to change this. The guide also explains what steps you can take if your class is closing down or increasing its fees. Visit actiononhearingloss.org.uk/lipreadingcampaignguide

How can I practise at home?

ATLA has produced a DVD, *Look Hear: Introduction to Lipreading*, which you can use at home for practice. To find out more, email shop@atlalipreading.org.uk

The website lipreadingpractice.co.uk is particularly useful if you are unable to join a lipreading class. It provides information about lipreading and video lessons to help you develop and practise your lipreading skills.

The website storiesforlipreading.org.uk provides videos of stories being read aloud – another fun way to practise your lipreading.

Are there any useful tips?

The following tips can help – you'll do these things naturally once you get used to lipreading:

- Before you start a conversation, explain that you lipread.
- Ask the speaker to face the light, so you can see their lips clearly.
- Sit or stand at the same level as the speaker.
- Clarify the subject of the conversation first.
- If you don't catch what the speaker says, don't worry – just ask them to repeat it or to say it again in a different way.



For more tips to make communicating easier, visit actiononhearingloss.org.uk/communicationtips or order a free **Communication tips** card from our Information Line (see last page for contact details).

Where can I get more information and support?

Action on Hearing Loss has a wide range of information on all aspects of deafness, tinnitus and hearing loss. We have the latest information on hearing aids and cochlear implants, assistive technology and products, communication support, rights and benefits.

You can also find out about services in your area, becoming a member and receiving our magazine, the latest research developments, and getting involved as a volunteer or supporter.

Visit our website – actiononhearingloss.org.uk – or contact our free, confidential Information Line: call **0808 808 0123**, send a text message to **0780 000 0360** or email information@hearingloss.org.uk

You can also find our full range of leaflets and factsheets at actiononhearingloss.org.uk/publications

Information you can trust

The Information Standard certifies us as producers of high-quality, evidence-based information. For a list of references for this leaflet, please email references@hearingloss.org.uk

Did you find this information helpful?

Please tell us what you think of this leaflet – did you find it useful? Could we improve it? Please share your feedback by emailing reviewpanel@hearingloss.org.uk. And if you'd like to join our Readers' Panel, to help us create and review information for our website and publications, please let us know.

Action on Hearing Loss (formerly RNID) is the largest UK charity helping people who are confronting deafness, tinnitus and hearing loss.

We give support and care, develop technology and treatments, and campaign for equality. We rely on donations to continue our vital work.

To find out more, visit actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Questions about deafness, tinnitus or hearing loss?

Contact our free, confidential Information Line:

Telephone 0808 808 0123

Textphone 0808 808 9000

SMS 0780 000 0360
(standard text message rates apply)

Email information@hearingloss.org.uk

Join us

 Action on Hearing Loss

 @ActionOnHearing



Published: **May 2018. Version 1.** Review date: **May 2020.**

Action on Hearing Loss is the trading name of The Royal National Institute for Deaf People.

A registered charity in England and Wales (207720) and Scotland (SC038926). A1456/0618