

When someone speaks, clues are gained not only from what is heard but also from what is seen. These clues complement and supplement each other, helping the hearing impaired person to piece together the conversation. For the hearing impaired the visual clues of speech become very important. Simple actions on your part may determine the ease with which these visual clues can be followed. The following points will help.

1. **ATTRACT THE OBSERVER'S ATTENTION BEFORE YOU START TALKING TO THEM** so that they can catch the beginning of what is said and not just the ending.
2. Avoid speaking from another room, or with your head in a cupboard.
3. Keep your face visible and ensure it is well lit.
4. Try to avoid conversation in the kitchen where there are background noises from food mixers, washing machines and dishwashers etc.
5. Do not hide your lip movements behind your hands, a cigarette or a paper.
6. Do not speak while looking into a newspaper or book.
7. Keep your head fairly still when speaking. Use natural hand gestures but do not exaggerate.
8. Do not shout – speak clearly and not too fast – shouting and over-mouthing will alter the lip pattern and speaking too slowly may destroy the natural rhythm of speech.
9. Try to make the subject of the conversation as clear as possible.
10. Try to use full sentences rather than just short phrases as they are easier to understand.
11. When you are speaking, do not distract the observer's attention with unnecessary hand movements.
12. For a hearing impaired person it is important to see the speaker's eyes to gauge how they are feeling. Therefore, if you are wearing sunglasses, remove these while speaking.
13. Repeat the sentence again if necessary and then perhaps rephrase what you want to say. You may not be aware of this, but some words are difficult to lip read than others. For example, the month of March is easier to lip read than August. In the word March the shapes making 'M' and CH' are visible on the lips, the components in August are made inside the mouth, so there is nothing to see.
14. Give the person time to process what you have said – do not walk away until you have some indication that the message has been understood.
15. Write down any important facts.
16. Be patient.
17. Remember a hearing aid may amplify background noise as well.