

List of Words to Describe What We Hear

The “language” that follows is a preliminary attempt at developing categories of useful words to help hearing aid wearers listen in a focused way, and accurately communicate with their audiologist. The goal is to improve the tuning process. This is just a beginning. Please help expand the list

Descriptive Words

Enjoyable	Not enjoyable
Comfortable	Uncomfortable
Sounds good	Sounds bad
Normal	Abnormal
Pleasant	Unpleasant
Neutral	Something’s wrong

These general words are useful for getting started.

Volume

Dynamic level/range	Graduations in volume
Extremely Loud	Even/uneven
Very loud	Continuous
Loud	Discontinuous
Comfortable/neutral	Variable
Soft	Intermittent
Very Soft	Jerky
Faint	Spiky

High Frequency Sounds

Brilliant	Shrill
Bright	Over-Bright
Glittering	Tinny
Luminous	Sharp
Transcendent	Metallic
Clear	Harsh
Present	Strident
Natural	Hard

Low Frequency Sounds

Rich	Boomy
Full	Heavy
Dark	Dark
Sonorous	Bottom-heavy
Warm	Over-bassy
Fundamental Present	Thumpy
Bass sounds are “true”	Thuddy
	Murky

Music + Natural Sounds

Full	Distinctive character
Rich	Balanced
Warm	Blended
Melodic	Rhythmic
Singing tone	Identifiable
Brilliant	Natural
Clear	True
Distinct	Integrity

Interference

Misty	Closed
Blurry	Dead
Unclear	Foggy
Blocked	Uneven
Obscured	Jumpy
Chocked	Overlaid
Covered	Unbalanced
Thick	Solid

Unevenness

Broken
Interrupted
Intermittent
Jerky
Surging
Clattery
Sudden Shifts
Changeable

Weakness

Thin
Weak
Dry
Shallow
Dull
Damped
Hollow
Diffuse

Tonal Distortion

Hard
Nasal
Flat
Distorted
Too high
Too low
Too much middle
Specific tones jump out

Voices—Including Yours

Natural	Your voice
Individual	▪ Where is it Located?
Clear	In your head, mouth, throat?
Echoey	
Distant	▪ Sing! It helps your voice move up
Present	Into your head and sound more
Thin	natural
Blurred	

Direction/Localization

▪ Direction (sound comes from)	▪ Varies with situation or source
▪ Accuracy (of identifying source)	e.g. sirens, train, cars
▪ Misplaced	▪ Sources at home
▪ Moveable	▪ With eyes closed, you can place
▪ Moveable	Sources on stage (instruments,
▪ Volume changes	Singers, Actors)
▪ Missed sounds	▪ Your instrument

Noise in the Hearing Aid

Hiss	Sizzle
Whoosh	Vibration
Ping	Squawk
Ring	Gurgle
Pop	Wobble
Click	Crackle
Scratch	

Background Noise

Rumble	Air movement
Whoosh	Motor noise
Whirr	Bump
Vibration	Thump
Knock	Pulse
Blur	Wobble
Ring	Gurgle
Rotation	Hum/Buzz

Difficult Situations

- Noisy environments
- Public Announcements/audio systems
- Distant sources
- Sounds behind you/in front of you
- Whispers
- Across the orchestra/choir
- The telephone
- Meeting rooms
- Library
- Rooms designed for High Noise—Musical Auditoriums, Arenas,
- Rooms designed for Low Noise—Library, Conference rooms,