

PART II

ACQUIRING CORE SKILLS

COMMUNICATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART II: ACQUIRING CORE SKILLS

Communication

1. Understanding Nonverbal Communication 3
2. Listening 13
3. Listening Critically 22
4. Speaking Responsibly 35
5. Communicating Constructively 44

UNDERSTANDING NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION



AGENDA

- Starter
- Shh... It Goes over Here
- What Am I Trying to Tell You?
- It's in the Delivery
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will identify nonverbal cues.

Students will analyze nonverbal cues to determine the messages they convey.

Students will demonstrate and apply nonverbal communication in real-life situations.

Students will evaluate the importance of nonverbal cues to communication.

Materials Needed

- Two pictures of faces, one displaying a positive emotion and one displaying a negative emotion (Starter)
- Copies of the “Square Puzzle Set” activity sheet, cut into pieces for each group of three students (Part I)

- Five index cards, each card stating one of these emotions: happiness, sadness, anger, fear, or worry (Part II)
- Student- or teacher-developed scenarios from real life that lend themselves to obvious nonverbal messages (e.g., a disappointing test score, reaction to a rumor) (Part III)
- One copy of the “Critique Sheet” activity sheet for each group (Part III)

Starter (3 minutes)

Show students the pictures of the faces. Ask students to determine what emotion each image is showing. Have students explain their answers. Students should mention nonverbal cues evident in the facial expressions.

Explain to students that they will learn in this lesson how to interpret and use nonverbal communication.

Part I Shh... It Goes over Here (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students explore the concept of nonverbal communication by working on a puzzle with a small group.

1. Students work in groups of three to silently put together a square puzzle.

Organize students into groups of three. Give each group a cut-up copy of the “Square Puzzle Set” activity sheet. Read the following rules aloud to the class:

- Each team has seven minutes to put the puzzle together without speaking to each other.
- Any team that is talking or writing notes will be disqualified.
- When teams complete the puzzle, they should cover the solution and raise their hands. I will come to check the solution.

Suggest that as students work to solve the puzzle, they pay attention to the interaction within their group. Time the activity.

2. Students identify the nonverbal cues they used.

Ask teams to list what they observed as they were solving the puzzle.

Inquire how the team members communicated. Have students identify the positive and negative nonverbal messages that they saw during this activity and how these messages were conveyed. Student responses should include eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, and body language. Write student responses where everyone can see. You will refer to this list in Part III.

3. Students discuss the difficulty of the task.

Ask students if the task was easy or difficult. Have students explain their answers.

Ask students what they felt as they first tried to solve the puzzle. Inquire if their feelings changed and if the nonverbal communication became easier as time passed.

4. Students analyze their experience.

Tell students that the puzzle would have been easier to solve if they had been allowed to speak, but you wanted them to experience nonverbal communication. Explain that there are many forms of communication other than speaking.

Have teams summarize their experience for each other and explain any insights that occurred to them during the game and the class discussion. Circulate the room and write down some of the insights that you overhear. Be sure to share at least one from each group with the entire class.

Ask students to name forms of communication that do not require speaking. Call on a volunteer to review the list of forms of communication nonverbally.

Part II What Am I Trying to Tell You? (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students experience and understand the power of nonverbal cues.

1. Students demonstrate nonverbal communication.

Ask for five volunteers. Give each volunteer an index card with an emotion written on it. Tell the volunteers to communicate to the class their assigned emotions using only nonverbal cues. Have students write down the emotions they think the volunteers were trying to convey.

As a class, have students share what they wrote down. Have the volunteers identify the emotion they each attempted to communicate.

2. Students explain why recognizing nonverbal cues can help them understand others.

Tell students that the volunteers communicated the emotions through gestures, facial expressions, and body language. Ask students to identify the gestures, facial expressions, and body language that the volunteers used to communicate the emotions. List the responses where everyone can see.

Inquire how recognizing the messages of nonverbal communication might be helpful. Direct students to the understanding that knowledge of nonverbal communication can help them recognize what an individual is really feeling and thinking.

3. Students explain how using nonverbal cues can help them communicate with others.

Have students identify how they want others to see them. Have them identify what image they might wish to project when interviewing for a job, when talking to a new student, or in other real-life situations. (Students might respond: friendly, confident, powerful, etc.) Ask students to model or explain how they might communicate these traits nonverbally.

Ask students to explain why effective nonverbal communication can be a valuable tool to use. Help them understand that effective nonverbal communication can strengthen the message that they wish to communicate.

4. Students summarize what they have learned.

Have students summarize what they have learned about nonverbal communication. If students need a jump-start, explain the following:

- We all experience nonverbal communication every day.
- We use it to understand what people are communicating to us.
- We send nonverbal messages through our facial expressions, body language, gestures, and eye contact.
- Effective nonverbal communication can make our messages stronger and clearer.

Part III It's in the Delivery (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students practice what they have learned about nonverbal communication by role-playing everyday situations.

1. Students prepare to role-play effective nonverbal communication.

Explain to students that they will role-play different scenarios in which nonverbal communication is an important method of getting a point across. Their goal in these role plays is to use their nonverbal communication skills to make the point effectively. Tell students that the class will evaluate each performance.

Have students return to their groups from Part I of this lesson. Provide each group with one of the real-life scenarios and have them prepare their role plays.

2. Students present their role plays.

Ask each group to present its role play to the class. Have students carefully observe the nonverbal communication that takes place. During a few of the role plays, tell the performers to freeze. Explain that when students hear this, they are to freeze in their current poses. Quietly tell one student in the role play to alter their nonverbal messages so that they conflict with the verbal messages that they are sending. After each scenario is presented, give the groups a minute or two to critique the performances. (See step 3 below.)

3. Students critique the performances.

After the first performance, distribute a copy of the “Critique Sheet” activity sheet to each group. Have the groups identify the nonverbal communication techniques used in each performance and evaluate their effectiveness. Clarify for students that they are not judging the acting performance, but weighing the appropriateness of the nonverbal communication used in the role play.

4. Students identify examples of good nonverbal communication.

After students have finished the performances and the evaluations, ask each group for an example from the scenarios of powerful and effective nonverbal communication.

5. Students discuss and analyze conflicting messages.

Ask students to recall the conflicting messages that were portrayed when you stopped some of the role plays. Ask students whether the verbal or nonverbal cues were stronger.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to name examples of nonverbal communication that occur in their daily lives. Ask them how using nonverbal communication effectively can be a powerful tool. Elicit from students the following key points that were taught in this lesson:

- People communicate their thoughts and feelings nonverbally.
- Paying attention to facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and body language enables us to understand nonverbal messages.
- People send nonverbal messages constantly; we can learn to recognize and interpret others' nonverbal messages.
- People have the ability to control the nonverbal messages they send.

Student Assessment

1. Describe three situations in the last week in which you communicated something nonverbally.
2. Describe a situation in which someone's words say one thing and their nonverbal communication says something different.
3. Describe appropriate ways to communicate nonverbally with your friends, in class, and on a job interview.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn’t being said.”

Have students write about the meaning of this quote. Ask them to relate an experience that might support this quote.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Ask students to observe other people and note the nonverbal communication they witness for a day.

Have the class discuss the nature of their observations (e.g., situations in which nonverbal communication was most evident, what was communicated).

Writing in Your Journal

Ask students to write about an incident in which nonverbal communication was an important part of a message they gave or received.

Have volunteers share what they wrote with the class or have students read each others’ journals and write brief responses.

Using Technology

Have students watch a clip of the first segment of a popular sitcom. Play this clip with the sound turned off.

Ask students to predict the plot and describe the nonverbal communication that supports their guesses. Replay the clip with the sound on to allow them to determine the accuracy of their guesses.

Homework

Have students research appropriate nonverbal behavior in other countries.

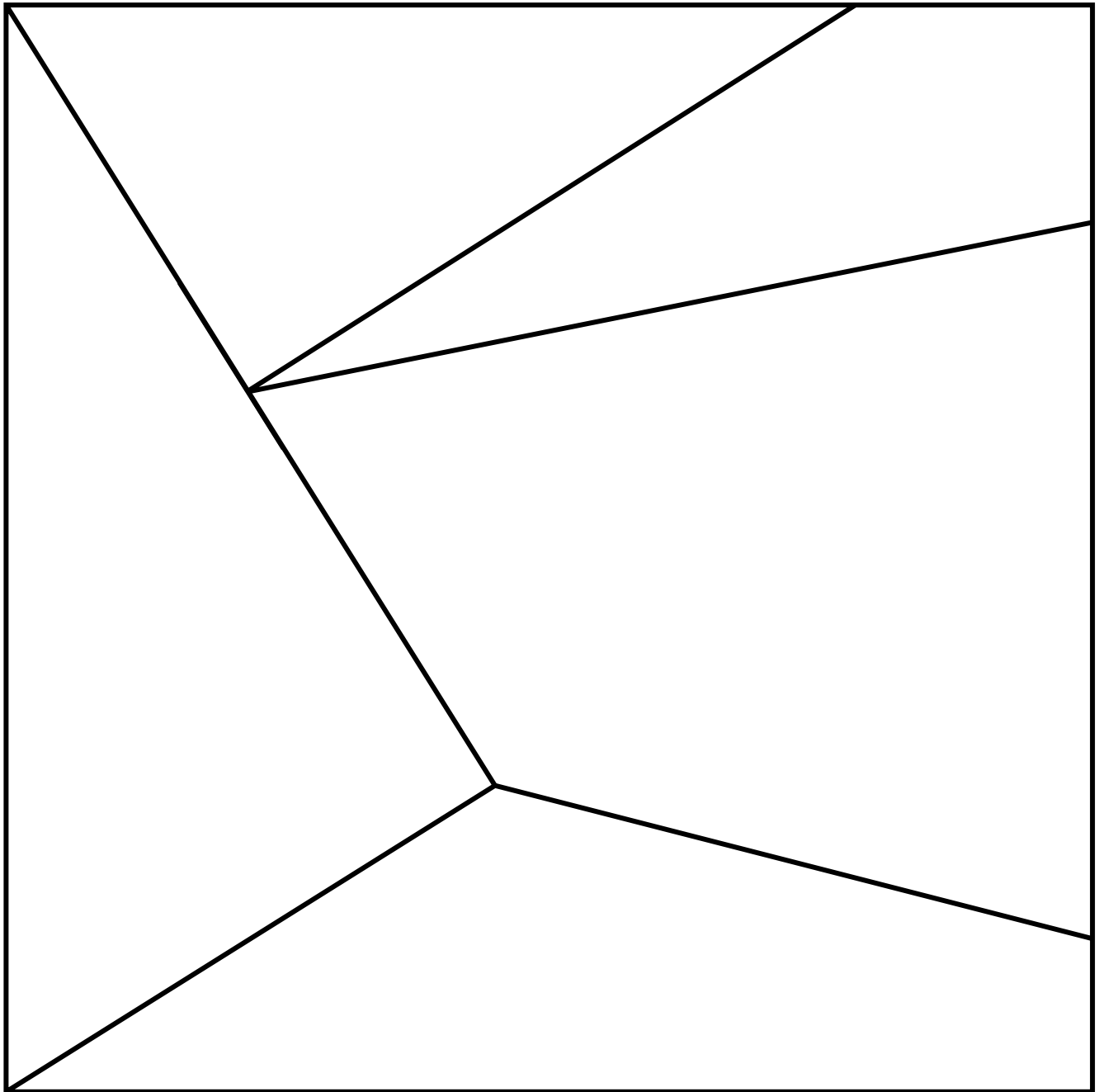
Have students demonstrate and explain proper nonverbal etiquette in other parts of the world.

Additional Resources

Invite a trial lawyer to talk about nonverbal communication in jury selection, the presentation of the defendant, and interactions with the judge and jury.

Have students take notes and write a summary.

SQUARE PUZZLE SET



CRITIQUE SHEET

DIRECTIONS:

1. Write a brief description of the situation in each “scenario” box.
2. Describe the nonverbal messages that each actor sent during their role play.
3. Identify if the nonverbal messages in each scenario were effective, and why.

	Nonverbal messages sent	Effective or ineffective? Why?
Scenario 1:		
Scenario 2:		
Scenario 3:		
Scenario 4:		

LISTENING



AGENDA

- Starter
- Listening Dos and Don'ts
- Picking Up the Signals
- Telephone
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will identify characteristics of active listening.

Students will identify and familiarize themselves with the verbal and nonverbal signals that are important to good listening.

Students will practice listening techniques and skills.

Materials Needed

- One copy of the “Listening Signals” activity sheet for each student (Part II)

Starter (3 minutes)

Explain to students that you will begin the lesson with a riddle. Tell them not to say the answer if they have heard the riddle, because they will spoil it for those who have not heard it.

Tell students the following riddle: “A man walks into a museum, sees a portrait on the wall, and says, ‘That man’s father is my father’s son.’ Who is the person in the picture?” (Answer: the first man’s son or nephew)

Allow students one minute to quietly figure out the answer. Tell students that you will tell them the answer at the end of the period.

Explain that the reason you began the class with a riddle is to illustrate that a person must do more than just hear what is being said—they must also listen very carefully. Point out that good listening means both hearing and understanding.

Explain to students that in this lesson they will discuss techniques that help people listen effectively.

Part I Listening Dos and Don'ts (5 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify characteristics of active listening by observing role plays and discussing their observations.

1. Students observe a demonstration of poor listening habits.

Note: Before beginning this activity, select a student volunteer. In order to prevent hurt feelings, explain to them that you will be demonstrating what bad listening looks like while they tell you a story.

Ask the student to tell you about a favorite movie, plans for the weekend, or a special sport or hobby. Once the student begins speaking, act as though you are not paying attention by looking for your grade book, doodling, slouching, snoring, asking unrelated questions, or repeating what the student says imprecisely.

2. Students identify poor listening habits.

Stop and ask students if they think that you were a good listener. Have them critique your listening. List the poor behaviors they observed where everyone can see.

Suggest that another poor listening habit is thinking about a response instead of listening to the speaker.

3. Students identify good listening techniques.

Have students suggest ways in which you could have been a better listener. Refer students to the list of poor listening habits to stimulate their thinking. (Student responses should include the following: making eye contact, attentive posture, nodding or performing other gestures that acknowledge understanding, asking relevant questions, and repeating ideas in your own words.)

Write student suggestions next to the list of poor listening habits to make a list of dos and don'ts for listening.

4. Students observe a demonstration of good listening techniques.

Repeat the conversation with the volunteer, this time using good listening skills. If time allows, let other students take over your role.

5. Students discuss listening skills.

Explain that it is often easy to tell when someone is not listening to you. It is frustrating for a speaker when others are not being good, active listeners.

Explain to students that as listeners, they can use the techniques just discussed to show the speaker that they are listening actively. These techniques can be summarized as focus on the speaker, confirm what they are saying, and respond with your own thoughts.

Refer to each suggestion on the listening dos list and ask students to classify them as techniques for focusing, confirming, or responding. Write the appropriate word next to each suggestion on the list.

Part II Picking Up the Signals (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify and familiarize themselves with signals that are important to good listening.

1. Students understand the difference between listening and hearing.

Review with students that listening and hearing are not the same thing. People hear simply because sound reaches their ears—hearing is passive. Listening, on the other hand, is an active thinking skill that requires focus in order to understand, integrate, and evaluate/interpret what is heard.

2. Students learn verbal signals that can help them focus on important ideas.

Explain that focusing is the key to listening. Tell students that they can develop the important skill of focusing by learning to interpret signals. Explain that speakers often use signal words and phrases to alert listeners to important ideas. Recognizing a speaker's signals helps a listener to focus on the message.

Distribute the “Listening Signals” activity sheet to students. Ask if any of these phrases seem familiar. Have students identify who might use them (e.g., parents, teachers, bosses, friends). Have students add other signal words and phrases to the sheet. Tell students that these verbal signals are important to remember as they listen to others.

3. Students identify nonverbal signals.

Explain that speakers may guide listeners at certain points with movements and gestures to reinforce verbal signals. Ask students to generate a list of these nonverbal signals. (Student responses may include moving arms, standing up, moving closer to listeners, etc.) Have them add their responses to their activity sheets.

Tell students that watching the speaker’s eyes and actions can help them to further understand what is being said.

4. Students work in pairs to practice using verbal and nonverbal signals.

Divide students into pairs. Have one student in each pair speak to their partner about an important topic (e.g., homework policy, plans for the future). The rest of the students should listen to their partners and observe their verbal and nonverbal signals.

After one minute, ask students to switch roles.

5. Students discuss their observations.

As a class, discuss student observations. Ask them how being sensitive to signals improved their listening.

Part III Telephone (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students play a game of “Telephone” to practice their listening skills.

1. Students prepare to play “Telephone.”

Divide the class into groups of six. Have each group stand in a circle. Ask one volunteer from each group to join you at the front of the class.

Give the volunteers the following directions:

- I am going to tell you a story. Your job is to listen carefully, and then to whisper the story to one other member of your group, using the exact words that I used.
- Don't let the other members of the group hear you.
- Each person passes the story word for word to the next person.
- Use verbal and nonverbal signals to make sure your listener understands what you say.

Tell volunteers the following story:

Let's begin with some facts. There are 15 passengers on a bus. At the first stop, four people get off the bus. Two are women, one is a man, and one is a baby. Next, two men get on and four children get off. That is the end of the story.

2. Students apply listening skills to a game of "Telephone."

Explain that students are going to play a version of the game "Telephone." Tell students that they will be practicing the "focus and confirm" techniques that they have been developing during this lesson:

- The listener focuses while listening. (Remind students of the techniques for focusing.)
- The listener then confirms what has been heard by repeating it to the next listener.

Have the volunteers return to their groups and tell the story to the person on their right, who will then pass the story to the next person, and so on, until everyone in the group has heard the story.

3. Students analyze the effectiveness of their listening skills.

When all groups have completed the activity, ask the last person in each group to repeat to the class what they heard.

Ask students if they know the driver's name. Tell them that they can't know the name because it was never said. Explain that good listening also means identifying what information isn't being conveyed.

Ask students how many people are on the bus as the story ends. Allow students a few minutes to work this out. If necessary, repeat the story. (There are 10 people on the bus—nine passengers and the driver.)

Ask students to consider how effectively they think they listened and whether good listening skills helped them to remember the story better.

Conclude by reminding students that active listening skills are an important part of good communication.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students how active listening contributes to effective communication. Elicit from students the following key points that were taught in this lesson:

- Being an active listener is key to good communication and requires more than just hearing.
- To be a good listener, focus, confirm, and respond.
- Recognizing verbal and nonverbal signals enables us to focus our listening more effectively.

Student Assessment

1. What is the difference between hearing and listening?
2. What are the steps to being a good listener?
3. List three examples of bad listening techniques and three examples of good listening techniques.
4. Are you a good listener? Why or why not? What can you do to improve as a listener?

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“The opposite of talking isn’t listening. The opposite of talking is waiting.”

Ask students if they agree with this quote. Have them write captions for news photos of two people having a conversation. Tell them to include the thoughts of the “listener” to show what they are really thinking.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Have students prepare five-minute oral reports on a person in the news. (Historical figures may also be included.) Explain that the class will be taking notes, so speakers should be sure to include appropriate verbal and nonverbal signals.

Have students present their reports in small groups, with the other students providing feedback on the points covered.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students think about a time when someone was definitely not listening to them. Tell them to write about how they could tell the person wasn’t listening and what that felt like.

Have students share their writing in small groups and compile a class list of signs that someone isn’t listening.

Using Technology

Have students watch a talk or news show and evaluate the host’s listening skills during an interview.

Have each student write a review of the show, evaluating whether or not the host was an active listener.

Homework

Have students select one teacher in whose class they will practice specific listening skills for a week. Have students note how lectures begin and end, how the teacher indicates a change in topic, how they stress something of importance, and how they use the board. Ask students to list ways in which these techniques improve their listening comprehension.

Have volunteers create a transparency of their class notes and share them with the class.

Additional Resources

Divide the class into four groups: video, article, podcast, and social media. Have groups list the methods that their assigned medium uses to capture attention, organize information, and alert readers/viewers to what is important or coming soon.

Have the class compare notes on the techniques used by each medium. Ask, “Why are they trying so hard to grab your attention and keep it? How are these methods similar to the signals sent by an instructor during a lesson?”

LISTENING SIGNALS

VERBAL SIGNALS	NONVERBAL SIGNALS															
<p>Introduction Let's discuss I want to talk about Today's lecture covers First</p> <p>Main Ideas Let me repeat This is really important Make a note of Remember that</p> <p>Change in Direction Next Let's move on to On the other hand Even though</p> <p>Major Details For instance For example Namely The following reasons</p> <p>Conclusion Finally The last point In conclusion All in all</p>	<p>Speaking more loudly Speaking more emphatically Movement Moving closer to the listener Eyes rolling Finger wagging</p>															
<p style="text-align: center;">Additional Signals</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Verbal</td> <td style="width: 34%;"></td> <td style="width: 33%; text-align: center;">Nonverbal</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td></td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td></td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td></td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td></td> <td>_____</td> </tr> </table>		Verbal		Nonverbal	_____		_____	_____		_____	_____		_____	_____		_____
Verbal		Nonverbal														
_____		_____														
_____		_____														
_____		_____														
_____		_____														

LISTENING CRITICALLY



AGENDA

- SESSION 1
 - Starter
 - It's Not What They Said, But How They Said It
 - You Don't Say!
- SESSION 2
 - One More Time
 - Critically Listening to the Media
 - Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will learn that critical listening means recognizing and filtering imprecise communication.

Students will practice critical listening and analyzing ambiguous messages.

Students will apply critical listening techniques to evaluate the media.

Materials Needed

- Session 1: One copy of the “Critical Listening: Misleading Communication” activity sheet for each student (Part I)
- Session 1: One copy of the “Critical Listening: Analysis” activity sheet for each group (Part II)

- Session 2: A clip of a news program, political speech, or “talking heads” program that contains misleading information, approximately 30 minutes in length (Part II)
- Session 2: One copy of the “Critical Listening: Analysis” activity sheet for each student (Part II)
- Session 2: A/V equipment

SESSION 1

Starter (3 minutes)

Tell students that you are going to test their listening skills. Ask students to listen carefully as you read the following paragraph. State that they will be asked to give a one-sentence summary of what you read.

Read the following paragraph:

I hereby give and convey to you, all and singular, my estate and interest, right, title, claim, and advantages of and in said orange, together with its rind, skin, juice, and pulp, and all rights and advantages therein and full power to bite, chew, or otherwise eat the same or give the same away with or without the rind, skin, juice, and pulp, anything hereinbefore or hereinafter or in any other means of whatever nature or kind to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding.

After you have finished reading, ask students what just happened in the paragraph you read. Direct students to the understanding that, in the paragraph, a person is giving another person an orange. Tell them that the paragraph was difficult to understand because it was written in legal jargon that obscures the simple meaning of the paragraph.

Explain to students that in this lesson they will be learning about techniques speakers or writers sometimes use to hide the meaning of what they are saying. Understanding the techniques and how they can be used or misused can help students listen more critically.

Part I It's Not What They Said, But How They Said It (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize the techniques that speakers and writers sometimes use to mislead their audience.

1. Students learn the importance of listening critically by discussing incidents of miscommunication.

Share with students an anecdote from your own experience—preferably humorous—in which a miscommunication between two people caused a misunderstanding. Have students share similar experiences.

Ask students what caused the misunderstandings. (Student responses should include incomprehensible/vague vocabulary and misinterpretation of meaning.) Point out that what is said by one person is not always what is heard by another. Explain that critical listening can help people avoid such problems.

Explain to students that listening critically often means filtering out the tone, or the way things are said, in order to understand the information being conveyed. Critical listening means judging the validity of a speaker's words and message. Say, "You listen critically in order to analyze and evaluate a speaker's words."

2. Students identify several techniques of misleading communication.

Elicit from students a definition of the word "ambiguous." Lead students to the understanding that when something is ambiguous, its meaning is difficult to understand. Explain that speakers and writers often want to either soften the reality of what they are saying or make the information appropriate for a particular audience. Sometimes, they choose to use ambiguous words or phrases that may result in misleading communication. Discuss the difference between ambiguous messages, misleading communication, and lying.

Distribute a copy of the "Critical Listening: Misleading Communication" activity sheet to each student. Ask volunteers to read the definitions of the techniques. Discuss the definitions with the class and answer any questions students may have about them.

3. Students offer examples of misleading communication.

Have students recall the experiences class members shared at the beginning of this activity. Have students use the activity sheet to identify and share what caused each misunderstanding.

4. Students recognize the reasons why people might intentionally use misleading messages.

As a class, brainstorm when and why people might knowingly apply one of these techniques. Ask:

- Who might try to use an opinion as a fact? (Possible responses: a politician trying to convince people to support a policy, a teen asking for permission to stay out later than usual, television and podcast ads.)
- When might someone use negative or positive connotations? (Students may respond: when a person is trying to persuade through appeals to emotion rather than logic.)
- Why might someone use euphemisms? (Students may say: to avoid a negative reaction that a more accurate word might cause; for example, using "collateral damage" instead of "civilian deaths.")
- When might a person use inflated language? (Students may respond: to fit in with a style of language from a certain profession or discipline, to try to sound impressive.)

5. Students briefly review the definitions of the four techniques.

Call on volunteers to name and define the four techniques of misleading communication in their own words.

Part II You Don't Say! (25 minutes)

Purpose: Through role play, students understand the techniques of misleading communication and improve their critical listening skills.

1. Students prepare short speeches and dialogues for role-playing.

Form groups of three to four students. Explain that each group will present a short, one-minute sketch or speech that incorporates the techniques of misleading communication. Have each group select a situation for which they will create a dialogue or short sketch. Tell students that they are to use at least one of the techniques of misleading communication in their performances.

Allow students to choose from the following situations:

- Reporters on a television news program
- A politician giving a speech to an audience
- A lecture given in a history, science, or math class
- A discussion about school policy that includes the principal and/or vice principal
- A community forum held to discuss a pollution issue
- Closing arguments in a murder trial
- A rally for the high school football team
- Teens asking a parent for a coed sleepover or permission to stay out late

Allow students 10 minutes to prepare. Suggest that they use part of that time to rehearse quietly.

2. Students perform dialogues and speeches.

Before students perform, remind the rest of the class that they are to listen critically so that they can analyze and evaluate the way that the speakers are conveying information. Pass out the “Critical Listening: Analysis” activity sheet to each group. Tell the class that the groups are to identify misleading messages in each sketch/speech and analyze the motivations of the individuals using the misleading communication techniques.

Have the groups perform their sketches/speeches.

3. Students discuss the techniques of misleading communication portrayed in the sketches/speeches and the reasons they were used.

When all groups have performed and have been evaluated, discuss the techniques and motivations portrayed in each short speech/dialogue. For each performance, ask questions such as the following:

- What techniques did the group use in their performance?
- How did you identify those techniques?
- What was the purpose for using the techniques?
- If you had actually been involved in this situation, what questions could you have asked or what actions could you have taken to find out what the facts really were?

4. Students recognize the value of critical listening.

Ask students to review what they have learned about critical listening. Have them write one or two sentences describing critical listening at the bottom of the activity sheet.

SESSION 2

Part I One More Time (5 minutes)

Purpose: Students revisit what they learned about critical listening in the previous session.

1. Students describe critical listening.

Have volunteers read the sentences that they wrote in the previous session that describe critical listening.

2. Students reexamine the techniques of misleading communication.

Write in a place where everyone can see the four techniques of misleading communication: opinion disguised as fact, deceptive connotation, questionable euphemisms, and inflated language. Call on students to explain and give an example of each.

Part II Critically Listening to the Media (40 minutes)

Purpose: Students apply critical listening techniques to the evaluation of a media program.

1. Students watch and critically listen to an actual media program.

Tell students that they are now going to practice applying critical listening skills to an actual media program. Set up the video you have previously chosen to show to the class. Pass out the “Critical Listening: Analysis” activity sheet to each student. Instruct students to use the activity sheet to take notes on the techniques of misleading communication evident in the program. Remind them to be specific in pointing out ambiguous words and phrases. Suggest that they note any nonverbal communication as well.

Play the program for students.

2. Students discuss their analyses of the program.

After viewing the program, discuss the students’ observations. Ask questions such as the following:

- What was your overall impression of the program in terms of accuracy and communication?
- What techniques of misleading communication did you observe?
- What ambiguous words and phrases were used? Can you restate the words/phrases that reveal the speakers' meaning?
- Why do you think the speakers chose to use these techniques?
- What nonverbal communication did you notice? Was it effective?
- If you were the director of the program, how would you have scripted it? What would you have done differently?

3. Students write about the importance of critical listening in their lives.

After the discussion is completed, ask students to take five minutes to write a short paragraph explaining the importance of critical listening in their lives. Suggest that they include how they may benefit from using critical listening techniques and identifying techniques of misleading communication.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to describe times when they either heard communication that was purposefully misleading or when they used such techniques. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Critical listening means analyzing and evaluating the ways in which information is communicated.
- Speakers and writers sometimes convey information in a way that makes it difficult to identify the true meaning of their words.
- Recognizing misleading communication and understanding a speaker's or writer's motivations are essential for effective critical listening.

Student Assessment

Session 1

1. Define critical listening.
2. List the four techniques of misleading communication. Write four short monologues or dialogues that show examples of each of the techniques.

Session 2

1. Describe a situation in which you were misled by one of the four misleading techniques.
2. Analyze a news article or an editorial that uses at least one of the techniques of misleading communication. Explain what is misleading about the article or editorial.
3. Why is critical listening an important skill to have?

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“The fewer the facts, the stronger the opinion.”

Have students bring in examples of persuasive writing (e.g., advertisements, editorials, campaign literature). Have students fold a piece of paper down the middle, write “Fact” as the heading on one side and write “Opinion” on the other side. Tell students to list statements from their persuasive writing examples in the appropriate columns. Have them discuss their results in small groups.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Show students a picture of a house. Have them write or draw a description of the house and its surroundings.

Have students compare their work. Point out the different interpretations of your instructions. Explain that people often interpret the same thing in different ways. Discuss the role that this plays in misunderstandings/misleading communication.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students write about appropriate and inappropriate times to use the techniques discussed in this lesson (for example, euphemisms may be appropriate when the situation calls for sensitivity).

Have students share their work with the class.

Real-World Uses

Discuss the use of euphemisms in real estate or auto ads (e.g., “handyman’s special” for a house that’s in bad shape, “executive homes” for expensive neighborhoods).

Have students read the want ads in search of euphemisms. They should create a list of the euphemisms, along with their translations.

Homework

Have students repeat Part II of Session 2 as they view or listen to a talk show on TV, a podcast, or YouTube, using the “Critical Listening: Analysis” activity sheet as a guide.

Discuss students’ observations in class. Have students write a paragraph summarizing their findings.

Additional Resources

Have students read *The 7 Powers of Questions: Secrets to Successful Communication in Life and at Work* by Dorothy Leeds.

As a class, discuss the role that questions play in listening critically.

CRITICAL LISTENING: MISLEADING COMMUNICATION

Technique	Explanation	Example	Detection Hints
Opinion disguised as fact	A <i>fact</i> is something that can be verified as true or as something that actually happened. An <i>opinion</i> is someone's feelings or judgment. If a speaker does not support information that is given as fact, then it is an opinion disguised as fact.	Fact: George Washington was the first president of the United States. Opinion disguised as fact: Historians agree that George Washington was the greatest president that the United States has ever had.	Speakers must support opinions with facts before you can accept them as valid. Ask questions to discover facts. Verify facts by checking reference sources.
Deceptive connotation	The <i>denotation</i> of a word is its literal meaning. The <i>connotation</i> is a word's suggested meaning and the associations that the word has. Connotations can make a listener feel or think a certain way.	Neutral denotation: His determination surprised us. Unfavorable connotation: His stubbornness surprised us.	If a speaker uses the connotation of a word to distort the truth and sway the listener, it is imprecise communication. Ask yourself if the connotation of any word is used to distort the truth.
Questionable euphemisms	A <i>euphemism</i> is a word or phrase that is used to avoid speaking directly about something that is unpleasant or improper.	Euphemism: The remains of the soldiers were never found. Direct word: The dead bodies of the soldiers were never found.	Euphemisms are used to soften the truth. Ask yourself why a speaker chose to use a euphemism instead of a more accurate term.
Inflated language	<i>Inflated language</i> is language that consists of scholarly, technical, or scientific words and overly long phrases. <i>Jargon</i> , the specialized vocabulary of a profession or a hobby, is an example of this.	Inflated language: No viable alternative exists for diligent commitment to an endeavor. Concise language: There is no substitute for hard work.	Jargon appears to be technical. It may present ideas you could understand more easily if they were stated clearly. Ask yourself why inflated language was used.

CRITICAL LISTENING: ANALYSIS

Program: _____		
Speaker	Statement/Action	Purpose/Motivation

SPEAKING RESPONSIBLY



AGENDA

- Starter
- Can You Handle the Truth?
- Tell Me about Yourself
- Every Word Counts
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will discover the power of words.

Students will recognize that people are responsible for what they say.

Students will discover that people have the ability to control what they say and how they say it.

Students will recognize that using words responsibly is part of being an effective communicator.

Materials Needed

- A clip of the courtroom scene from the movie *A Few Good Men*, in which Jack Nicholson explodes with the famous line, “You can’t handle the truth!” (Part I)
- One copy of the “Tell Me About Yourself” activity sheet for each student (Part II)

Starter (3 minutes)

Begin class today by writing “speaker + listener = communication” where everyone can see. Have a volunteer read the equation out loud. Then, write “responsible speaker + critical listener = effective communication” below it. Review key points from the previous lesson about being a critical listener.

Circle the word “speaker” in the first equation as you say, “Today, we are going to focus on this part of the equation and the importance it has in communication.” Leave the equation for use throughout the session.

Part I Can You Handle the Truth? (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize the power of words and learn that people are responsible for what they say.

1. Students observe a scene from a movie to consider the power of words.

Before class, set up the clip of the famous courtroom confrontation scene from *A Few Good Men* between Tom Cruise, playing a lawyer sent to investigate the death of a marine, and Jack Nicholson, playing the head of the military base where the marine died.

To give students background, explain that at this point in the film, Cruise suspects that there’s been a cover-up in the death of the marine. He suspects that Nicholson’s character gave an order that resulted in the death. In this climactic scene, Cruise—in his frustration—demands the truth, to which Nicholson replies, “You can’t handle the truth!”

After viewing the clip, discuss the power of words. Ask questions such as the following:

- What power do words have for Cruise in this movie? (Words will provide information that can help him determine whether or not a cover-up has taken place.)
- How did Nicholson and his staff use words in this movie? (They used them to lie and cover up what really happened.)
- What was the “truth” that Nicholson thought a civilian couldn’t handle? (In his mind, the military has to toughen up its soldiers to face the horrors of war by any means necessary. He views these methods as needed, and says that the death, though tragic, was beneficial.)

2. Students discuss and identify responsibility.

Circle the words “responsible speaker” in the second equation on the board. Ask, “What do you think it means to be a responsible speaker?” Elicit from students that one meaning is to speak honestly based on one’s own experience.

Ask these questions to prompt a discussion:

- How did Nicholson use words in the courtroom scene in this particular speech? (He used them to rationalize, or justify, his unjustifiable behavior.)
- Is this an example of speaking responsibly? (Absolutely not; covering up the truth is a manipulation of words in order to deceive someone.)
- Does Nicholson take responsibility for his use of words? (Yes; he believes he is doing a great service to his country by “toughening up” the military. He has thought things through and believes that what he is doing is right.)
- What are the consequences of his words? (He’s now been exposed.)
- What will be the consequences of his actions? (He will likely receive a dishonorable discharge from the military, face a court martial, and go to jail.)

Conclude the discussion by saying, “Words are powerful, so be careful and think about the consequences of your words, since you must take responsibility for them. Remember, if the words come out of your mouth, they are yours.”

Part II Tell Me about Yourself (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students learn that people have the ability to control what they say and how they say it.

1. Students analyze two interviews.

Tell students that our words create an impression, so it is important to use words in ways that show respect for ourselves and for the people around us. In a job interview, for example, a prospective employer can learn a lot about you based on what you say and how you say it.

Distribute copies of the “Tell Me about Yourself” activity sheet to each student. Have volunteers act out the roles of the interviewer, candidate 1, and candidate 2, improvising actions as they speak. Ask students to listen carefully to these interviews, thinking about what the candidates say and how they say it.

2. Students distinguish effective speaking from ineffective speaking.

Have students list the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate. Write their responses on the board. (Candidate 1 is fast, strong, and athletic but is boastful and has no related experience. He treats the job lightly and makes promises he may not be able to keep, such as using his bike for deliveries. Candidate 2 is a problem solver—he’s already figured out how to fit the job into his schedule. He also provides examples of comparable work he’s done and skills/knowledge that would make him successful. However, candidate 2 has no direct experience.)

Ask students to tell, by a show of hands, which candidate they would hire for the job. Have a student who supports candidate 2 summarize how this person was able to use words responsibly. (Candidate 2 used words to make a good impression, showing respect for himself and the position. He communicated his interest in and showed that he is qualified for the job.)

Underline the words “responsible speaker” on the board. Ask, “What else does it mean to be a responsible speaker?” Elicit from students that responsible speakers speak not only truthfully, but also respectfully. They use words to make a positive impression. Ask how using words responsibly might benefit candidate 2. (He will probably get the job.)

3. Students recognize the connection between nonverbal communication and effective speaking.

Point out to students that the “Tell Me about Yourself” activity sheet has no stage directions except “lounging across the chair.” Ask them to reread each interview, trying to envision how each candidate might speak or behave as he says the words. Have students provide their own stage directions based on their visualizations. If time permits, allow volunteers to act out the scenes with stage directions.

Part III Every Word Counts (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students learn that using words responsibly is part of being an effective communicator.

1. Students recognize the role that effective communication plays in persuasion.

Remind students that you must choose your words carefully in an interview—not only to make a good impression, but also to persuade someone to hire you. You want to convince a prospective employer that you are the right person for the job.

Explain that one purpose of effective speaking is to persuade—to try to sway someone’s thoughts or feelings. Ask students to think of other times when words are used to persuade. (Students may respond: in advertisements, in sales, in political speeches, in fund-raising efforts.) Then, ask students to think of situations in which they have used words to try to persuade or convince someone of something. (Students may suggest that they have tried to convince a teacher to give them an extension on a paper, tried to convince their parents to allow them to stay out late, tried to convince their employer to give them a raise or a day off.)

Have volunteers act out a few of the situations above, as the class critiques the effectiveness of their words. Ask, “What kind of impression did (student’s name) make? Were their arguments compelling? If not, what might they have said to convince the other person to honor that request?”

2. Students recognize the importance of effective communication in conveying messages clearly.

Point out that clarity is another reason for using words responsibly. When you communicate simply and clearly, you are more likely to get your point across. Ask students to briefly write a set of directions from your classroom to the cafeteria. Have volunteers read their directions. Ask students which set of directions would most effectively get a new student from this classroom to the cafeteria.

3. Students recognize the role that effective communication plays in diplomacy.

Finally, explain that diplomacy is yet another reason to choose words carefully and speak responsibly. Being honest and tactful, rather than blunt, can give people a gentle push in the right direction.

Encourage discussion on how to be diplomatic in the following situations:

- A friend is planning to wear casual clothes to a formal party.
- A friend is commenting on every scene in a movie, and it's annoying.
- A friend is considering applying for a job that requires skills you know this person does not have.

Conclude that words are powerful agents of change when they are used responsibly.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

End this session by referring to the equation that you wrote on the board to begin class. Ask, "Who do you think has the most power in this equation—the speaker or the listener?" Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Words are powerful, so use them wisely.
- You must take responsibility for your words because they belong to you.
- Using words responsibly is part of being an effective communicator.
- Speak responsibly for persuasion, clarity, and diplomacy.

Student Assessment

1. List four things that you can do to be a responsible speaker.
2. Without naming them, describe someone you know who is a responsible speaker and someone who is not a responsible speaker. Which one do you trust more? Why?

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Words have a magical power. They can bring either the greatest happiness or deepest despair; they can transfer knowledge from teacher to student; words enable the orator to sway his audience and dictate its decisions. Words are capable of arousing the strongest emotions and prompting all men’s actions.”

Ask students if they agree or disagree with this quote. Discuss the quote.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Have each student write a short story in which a character must communicate a difficult truth to someone else. Students should show this character speaking without tact and include the consequences of this blunt conversation.

Have students share their stories. As a class, discuss the importance of being tactful.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students write about a time when they said something they didn’t mean to say and wanted to take it back.

Allow students to take back what they wish they had never said.

Using Technology

Have students visit www.youtube.com and search for examples of effective and ineffective communication. Tell students to share the videos they find with a partner and discuss their content.

Homework

Have students read the “My Friend is Mad at Me” activity sheet.

Have students write a reply to this letter.

Additional Resources

Time magazine has a section in each issue titled “Verbatim.” This section contains quotes and their sources. Have students analyze an issue’s quotes and determine precautions that people should take to ensure that they are being responsible with the words they choose to speak. If copies of *Time* are not readily available, access some of these quotes online.

Discuss why *Time* might include this section in its magazine.

MY FRIEND IS MAD AT ME

My friend is mad at me for saying things about her. I did say stuff when I was with other friends, but somehow she thinks it was just me and is ignoring me. I'm getting blamed for something that was part of a group conversation! How do I fix this?

C.T., 15, Hawaii

Find a way to tell your friend how sorry you are, even if you have to write a note and stick it in her locker. Even though you weren't alone, you have to take responsibility for what you said. Don't expect your other friends to confess to their part

in the conversation if they've already skated, but do enlist their help to get her to accept your apology. The next time you feel like joining the gossip session about someone you care for, remember this and stop yourself.

**Reprinted with permission from React magazine.*

TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

CANDIDATE #1:

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about yourself.

CANDIDATE: (lounging across the chair) Well, I'm probably the top athlete in my school. I'm fast as anything, and I can bench press 250 pounds.

INTERVIEWER: So, loading and unloading boxes...

CANDIDATE: ...would be a piece of cake! And I just got a new 10-speed bike that I could use to make deliveries FAST. I really don't think my twin brother would mind, even though the bike belongs to both of us.

INTERVIEWER: Have you ever done this kind of work before?

CANDIDATE: Nah, but it's no big deal. I can handle it.

STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES**CANDIDATE #2:**

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about yourself.

CANDIDATE: Well, I just moved here about a month ago. I'm a pretty good student. My classes don't seem too tough, so I think I can handle an after-school job.

INTERVIEWER: So, the hours won't interfere with your schedule or homework?

CANDIDATE: No. They work out fine for this semester.

INTERVIEWER: You know that the job involves lifting some heavy boxes...

CANDIDATE: ...I know. I'm stronger than I look! When we moved here, I had to lift some really heavy boxes. I did okay with them.

INTERVIEWER: Have you ever done anything else that's similar to this kind of work?

CANDIDATE: No, but I'm really well organized. And I've been to this store a lot, so I know where things are. I know the neighborhood, too. So I won't get lost making deliveries. I think I can do the job.

COMMUNICATING CONSTRUCTIVELY



AGENDA

- Starter
- Easy Talk, Tough Talk
- I-Messages
- Controlled Debate
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will explore what makes some conversations easy and others difficult.

Students will develop techniques to communicate their feelings and encourage open dialogue in difficult situations.

Students will practice communicating in a constructive manner, even when they disagree.

Materials Needed

- One copy of the “I-Messages” activity sheet and one copy of the “Vocabulary of Feelings” activity sheet for each student (Part II)
- One copy of the “Topics for a Controlled Debate” activity sheet (Part III)
- Activity rules written on the board, a transparency, or a piece of poster paper (Part III)

Starter (3 minutes)

Write the following list where everyone can see: talking on the telephone, joking with friends, conversing with an adult, quarreling with a sibling, asking to borrow money, discussing a homework assignment. Ask students what all of these conversations have in common. (All require verbal communication.)

On a scale of one to five, with five being extremely important and one being not important at all, ask students to rank the importance of verbal communication in their daily lives. (Most students will rank communication high.)

Ask for a show of hands to check the students' rankings from one to five. Write their rankings where everyone can see.

Explain that verbal communication is very important. Ask whether students believe that some types of verbal communication are more difficult than others. Explain that this lesson will help them make difficult conversations easier and more effective.

Part I Easy Talk, Tough Talk (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students explore what makes some conversations easy while others are more difficult.

1. Students classify conversations as easy, average, or difficult.

Instruct students to take out a piece of paper and fold it into three columns. Have them title the left column "Easy," the middle column "Average," and the right column "Difficult."

Explain that this activity will have them classify different conversations according to their difficulty. Ask them to list, for example, a conversation with a close friend about what to wear to a party (easy), a telephone conversation to schedule a dentist appointment (average), and a request to a boss for a raise (difficult).

Divide the class into pairs. Tell students that they have three minutes to list as many examples of verbal communication in each column as they can think of. Tell them that their goal is to have at least three examples in each column. If needed, prompt students by asking questions such as the following:

- Think about conversations you have had with your parents. Are some more comfortable than others?
- How would you rank conversations with members of the opposite sex?
- Where would you rank confrontations with peers?
- How do you feel about conversations with teachers?

While students are writing, draw the three columns in a place where everyone can see.

When the three minutes are up, ask volunteers to fill in the columns on the board. Discuss which conversations are easy, which are average, and which are difficult.

2. Students analyze what makes some conversations easy and others difficult.

Ask students to form groups of four to five. Have each group select a note taker/reporter. Tell the groups that their task is to determine what makes certain conversations easy and others difficult. Allow about three minutes for the discussion.

3. Students recognize that difficult conversations often involve strong emotions.

Call on each group to share its analysis with the rest of the class. Write important points where everyone can see. Reinforce observations that difficult conversations often involve conflict. They may arouse emotions such as fear, anger, sadness, insecurity, and hurt feelings, while easy conversations tend to evoke more positive emotions. There may also be some risk in a difficult conversation, like the possibility of rejection.

Explain that an awareness of each party's emotions can help make a difficult conversation easier.

Part II I-Messages (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students use an activity sheet to develop techniques to communicate their feelings and encourage open dialogue in difficult situations.

1. Students learn the purpose of an I-Message.

Say, "An I-Message is a technique you can use to express yourself when you are upset or angry that will lead to open discussion and will not escalate conflict. When you use an I-Message, people are more willing to listen to you and respond to your requests without becoming defensive. I-Messages encourage discussion and help reduce friction."

Explain how an I-Message works:

- Tell students that an I-Message begins with a statement of feelings (e.g., "I feel afraid, tense, worried...").
- It is followed by a statement of what the problem is (e.g., "...when you don't take out the garbage, when you are late picking me up, when you skip class...").
- An I-Message ends with your reasons for feeling the way you do. It tells how the observed behavior affects you, and it avoids using the word "you."

Provide students with a sample I-Message. Say, “I feel tense when you ditch English class because I can’t ignore your absences, and attending English class is a requirement for graduation.”

2. Students create their own I-Messages.

Distribute the “I-Messages” activity sheet and the “Vocabulary of Feelings” activity sheet to students.

Tell students that they are going to write their own I-Messages. Explain the proper format for filling out the “I-Messages” activity sheet:

- Line 1: By beginning with “I feel...” students explain their feelings and do not accuse the other person. Though students may feel mad or angry, they should not use “mad,” “angry,” or other aggressive or accusatory words on this line because such words do not encourage dialogue. Students should use the “Vocabulary of Feelings” activity sheet to find words other than “mad” or “angry” to describe how they feel. Remind them to avoid using the word “you.”
- Line 2: This line should be a description of what the other person does that upsets the student. It should describe the other person’s specific action, but not label or accuse the person. For example, students should write “when you don’t return my things” (describes the action). Students should not write “when you are inconsiderate” (broadly labels the person). Lead students to the understanding that when a person acts in a way that seems inconsiderate, it is the specific behavior that is causing the negative feeling; that person is not always inconsiderate.
- Line 3: This line should explain in detail why the student is feeling how they are feeling. For example, a student might write “because they are important to me.” This line explains the importance of the action or behavior to the other person.

Instruct students to fill out the remaining I-Messages on their activity sheets.

3. Students discuss their I-Messages.

When students have completed the activity sheet, ask them to share their I-Messages with the class.

Discuss the value of I-Messages by asking the following questions:

- Why are I-Messages a valuable tool for communication?
- When could you use an I-Message?

Remind students that when their sentences begin with “I,” they are not accusing the other person, and the other person will not become defensive. I-Messages allow students to express how they feel, encourage open discussion, and can help resolve a conflict quickly and easily.

You may wish to tell students that using I-Messages is an important skill that requires practice. It takes a while to get used to wording feelings this way. It is important to understand the technique and practice using it. Over time, using I-Messages will become natural.

Part III Controlled Debate (25 minutes)

Purpose: Students participate in a controlled debate to practice communicating in a constructive manner, even when they disagree.

1. Students prepare the classroom for the activity.

Have students arrange all of the classroom chairs in two rows that face each other. Students will be moving back and forth between the rows, so make sure that there are no obstacles to block them.

2. Students choose the topic for the controlled debate.

The debate topic can be an issue discussed in class, or you can choose another topic of interest to students. Consider presenting students with a choice from among four controversial topics that are relevant to their lives, using the “Topics for a Controlled Debate” activity sheet.

Write each topic as a statement where everyone can see. To the right of the statements, create two columns labeled “Agree” and “Disagree.” Write the number of students who agree and disagree with each statement. The best topic for the debate is the topic that has the most even split between those who agree and those who disagree.

3. Students prepare for the debate.

Have all students who agree with the statement sit in one row of chairs and all students who disagree sit in the other row.

Refer students to the rules of the debate that you have previously written:

- Only one person may speak at a time.
- Speakers from the two sides will alternate.
- To make a point, raise your hand.
- Do not raise your hand until the person who is speaking is finished.
- If someone on the opposing team makes a point you agree with, get out of your seat and move to the other row. This does not mean that you have changed your mind about the debate topic; it means that you agree with that one point.
- Move back to your original side when someone on your team makes a point with which you agree.

4. Students engage in the controlled debate.

Begin the debate by flipping a coin to determine which team begins. Remind students to use the techniques of effective verbal communication (including active listening) that they have learned.

Explain that the debate will last 10 minutes.

The following are some suggestions for facilitating this activity:

- It is important that you act only as a referee and avoid offering your opinion.
- If students stray from the topic, help them bring the discussion back to the debate.
- Enforce the rules, allowing only one student to talk at a time, calling only on students who wait until others finish talking before raising their hands, and encouraging students to change sides when strong points are made by the opposing team.
- Remind students that agreeing with a specific point (and therefore changing sides) does not mean that the student has completely changed their mind on the topic. It signifies that they are able to see the merit of a point made by the opposing side.
- Ensure that students remain respectful of each other's opinions.

Keep the class apprised of the time remaining in the debate.

5. Students discuss the debate experience.

When 10 minutes have passed, have students remain in the rows and ask them the following questions:

- How was this debate different from disagreements you have in everyday life?
- What was difficult about this activity?
- How did you feel when you wanted to say something but couldn't? How about when you wanted to raise your hand, but someone else was speaking?
- Did you resist switching sides? Why? Did you have all of the information on this topic before the debate? Have any of the points you heard caused you to take a closer look at the issue? Which points did you find most effective?
- How well did you and others use techniques for good listening and good communication?
- What can you apply to "real life" from this debate?

Conclusion (3 minutes)

Have students discuss recent situations that could have been improved through the use of I-Messages. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Effective communication is important in people's lives.
- An awareness of both parties' emotions in a conversation can help make communication more effective.
- An I-Message is a technique that helps people to communicate when they are upset or angry, without escalating conflict.

Student Assessment

1. Why are some conversations more difficult than others?
2. Write three angry or accusatory statements, and then rewrite them as I-Messages.
3. List three reasons why I-Messages are often a more effective communication tool than angry or accusatory statements.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Speech is power...to persuade, to convert, to compel.”

Have the class give examples of how speech might empower people in everyday situations.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Provide students with texts of historical speeches. Have small groups of students analyze the speakers' styles and messages. Possible subjects for analysis: historic events leading up to the speech, the audience, possible controversy, desired outcome, and notes on the historical accuracy of the text.

Have groups share their analyses. Discuss the role that effective, careful communication played in the speeches.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students write about a disagreement they've had. Have them write a paragraph that explains the situation and an I-Message that might have helped them get their point across.

Have students share their I-Messages (with identifying details omitted) in small groups, suggesting changes as needed.

Using Technology

Have students observe one segment of a television show (commercial to commercial) that includes a disagreement between characters.

Have students write a summary of the scene and rewrite the dialogue using I-Messages. If desired, have students role-play their scenes for the class.

Homework

Have students read “Eleven” by Sandra Cisneros (from *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*). The 11-year-old narrator of this short story is embarrassed by her teacher in front of the class.

Have students write a paragraph about how the narrator might have maintained her dignity, and strategies for using I-Messages with authority figures. Discuss students’ work as a class.

Additional Resources

Have students read *Mad: How to Deal with Your Anger and Get Respect* by James J. Crist, PhD.

As a class, discuss how anger can get in the way of constructive communication. Have students brainstorm ways to control their anger. Reiterate that I-Messages allow people to effectively share their anger without escalating conflict.

I-MESSAGES

I-Messages are a great way to explain yourself when you are upset. When you use I-Messages, people are more willing to listen to you and respond to your requests without becoming defensive. I-Messages encourage open discussion and can help resolve a conflict quickly and easily.

EXAMPLE

One of your friends often borrows things from you and doesn't return them.

I feel upset
when you don't return my things
because they are important to me.

Fill in the blanks for the following I-Messages:

1. Your closest friend is telling others about your personal life.

I feel _____
when you _____
because _____

2. You haven't been called on all week, even though you've raised your hand.

I feel _____
when you _____
because _____

3. Someone in your family keeps forgetting to give you messages.

I feel _____
when you _____
because _____

VOCABULARY OF FEELINGS

A

Afraid
Aggressive
Annoyed
Anxious
Apathetic
Apologetic
Apprehensive
Ashamed
Audacious

B

Bashful
Bold
Bored
Brave

C

Calm
Cautious
Cheerful
Comfortable
Competent
Confident
Confused
Curious
Cynical

D

Decisive
Depressed
Determined
Disappointed
Disapproving
Disgusted
Distressed

E

Ebullient
Ecstatic
Embarrassed
Energetic
Enraged
Enthusiastic
Envious
Excited
Exhausted

F

Friendly
Frightened
Frustrated

G

Grateful
Greedy
Guilty

H

Happy
Helpless
Hopeful
Horried

I

Impatient
Incompetent
Indecisive
Indifferent
Innocent
Insecure
Inspired
Insulted
Intimidated
Irritated

J

Jealous
Joyous

L

Lazy
Listless
Lonely

M

Marvelous
Mischievous
Miserable
Morose

N

Negative
Nervous

O

Oblivious
Optimistic
Overwhelmed

P

Paranoid
Peaceful
Perplexed
Petrified
Proud
Puzzled

R

Reckless
Regretful
Relaxed
Restless

S

Sad
Satisfied
Secure
Serene
Shocked
Shy
Silly
Skeptical
Sleepy
Sluggish
Smart
Stimulated
Stupefied
Subdued
Sullen
Surprised
Suspicious
Sympathetic

T

Tense
Tentative
Timid
Tranquil
Trusting

U

Uncomfortable
Undecided

W

Wary
Whimsical
Worried

Z

Zealous

TOPICS FOR A CONTROLLED DEBATE

- Students who get in trouble with the law should be expelled.
- Healthy people should become organ donors.
- People should be banned from talking on their cell phones in public places.
- Animals should live in their natural habitats, not in zoos or circuses.
- Boys and girls should be allowed to try out for and play on any high school sports team they want, including basketball and football.
- Squirt guns, laser pointers, and other toys that look like guns should be banned from schools.
- Policies banning homework should be established in school districts.
- All schools should require uniforms.
- All students should be required to learn a foreign language.
- Athletes should be required to graduate from college before playing professional sports.
- Schools and libraries should block certain websites on computers used by high school students.
- Student government should have the power to change school policy.