



Take the Lead

Lesson 2: Communication Connection

Grade level: 6-8

Learning objectives:

Participants will learn:

- what communication is
- ways in which we communicate
- to develop good listening skills

Codes for TEKS:

English
Fine Arts

Codes for 40

Developmental Assets:

Creative activities
Young people are engaged in learning
Stimulating activity and homework
Interpersonal skills

National Education Standards:

Communication
Teamwork
Cooperation
Social skills

Life Skills Model:

Language Arts
Fine Arts

Time required:

60 minutes

Equipment/materials:

Scissors
Hat or box
Stop watch or hour glass (1-minute timer)
Paper
Pencils
50- to 100-foot rope

Handouts/Support Materials:

Silent Movies

There are people who, instead of listening to what is being said to them, are already listening to what they are going to say themselves.

– Albert Guinon

Read the quote and ask participants the following question:

What do you think this quote means?

Allow young people to discuss their interpretations of the quote.

This quote focuses on a very important part of communication, and that is listening. How many of you have caught yourself already forming a response, especially during a disagreement with someone, before the other person has had a chance to finish speaking? Conflicts often arise because people aren't communicating very well and listening carefully to what others are saying. Our poor listening skills can often get us in trouble, can't they?

As we continue to learn more about leadership, we are going to focus today on communication skills. Who can tell me a good definition of communication?

Allow young people to answer.

Communication is simply an exchange of information between people. All types of communication include:

- a sender – the person or group sending the message
- a message – the information being given
- a medium – the way in which the message is delivered (human voice, written word, nonverbal actions, etc.)
- a receiver – the person or group hearing or receiving the message

Which of these four do you believe is the most important part of communication?

Allow participants to discuss.

There really is no right answer to this question because all parts of communication are important.

What are some different ways that we communicate with each other?

Allow participants to answer.

There are several forms of communication. Sometimes we speak to each other. That is verbal communication. Sometimes we can send a message just by the facial and body expressions that we use when we are talking or listening to someone. That is nonverbal communication. Written communication is another form. Sign language is also a form of communication especially for the deaf.

What is meant when we say there is one-way communication?

Allow young people to answer.

One-way communication happens when one person speaks and everyone else listens. An example would be television or radio. You watch TV and listen to the radio, but you don't carry on a conversation with the TV or radio. Another example would be listening to a speaker or teacher without having an opportunity to ask questions.

What do we mean by two-way communication?

Allow young people to answer.

Two-way communication involves conversation between two or more people, where all are sending and receiving messages.

Besides words, many other factors influence communication. In fact, words account for only a small percentage of the message communicated. Does anyone have a guess what percentage of our communication is through words?

Allow participants to answer.

Only 9 percent of our communication is through words. Tone of voice accounts for 33 percent of our communication and 58 percent of the message is conveyed through body language.

We are going to try an experiment. I need a volunteer to come up and tell us a story. You can choose the topic you want to tell us about. Here are the topics to choose from: a family vacation, a special birthday, a favorite Christmas memory, or a special gift. You have 1 minute to present your story.

Select a volunteer. Instruct the other participants to listen to and observe the presentation closely. Allow the volunteer to present a 1-minute talk. Then ask the following questions:

- What was the main point of the presentation?
- What body language did the speaker use to convey the message?
- What were some key points made in the presentation?

Ask the presenter:

Do you think you would have a hard time telling us that same story without using body language when you talk?

Let's try this same experiment with a new volunteer, but this time the presentation can be only a verbal message without any body language or facial expressions. You can choose from the same topics: a family vacation, a special birthday, a favorite Christmas memory, or a special gift. Do I have a volunteer?

Select a volunteer to make a 1-minute presentation without using body language. Then ask the following questions:

- What was the main point of the presentation?
- Did the presenter have trouble getting his/her point across without using body language?

Ask the presenter:

Was it difficult for you not to use body language?

Note for instructor: Select one of the activities to use with this lesson or extend the lesson over several sessions and use all of the activities.

Activity 1: Silent Movies

This activity focuses on nonverbal communication skills using the concept of Charades for acting out movie titles.

Instructions:

1. Divide the group into two teams. With a large group you may want to have four teams and two different games going at the same time.
2. Cut apart the movie titles on the handout. Fold them and place them in a hat or box.
3. Teams will alternate having one member draw a movie title out of the hat or box and act out the title using only body language. The object is to get his/her team members to guess the movie title. No verbal communication is allowed by the person acting out the movie title.
4. Use a timer (stop watch, hour glass, etc.) to limit guessing time to 1 minute for each turn.
5. If a team does not guess the correct answer within the time limit, the other team has one chance to guess the correct answer.
6. Keep score on a chalkboard or newsprint paper by awarding one point for each correct answer.
7. The team with the highest score after all movie titles are drawn (or the instructor stops the game) is the winner.

Activity 2: Are You Listening?

This activity requires young people to use their listening skills to see how much information they can retain from statements read.

Instructions:

1. Give each person a piece of paper and a pencil. Have them number their papers from 1 to 6.
2. Read each statement and question only one time and have participants write their answers on their papers.
3. After all six statements and questions have been asked, review the correct answers with the group to see how well they listened.

Statements and questions:

1. Listen carefully to this list of words: may, bay, tray, stray, pray. What was the second word in the list? bay
2. Mark planned a trip to Africa to go on safari. He wanted to see the giraffes, elephants, tigers and zebras. When he got there, all he saw were the zebras, tigers and giraffes. Which animal did Mark not see on his trip? elephants
3. Listen carefully to this list of names: John, Tom, Ron, Bill and Paul. Which name begins with an R? Ron
4. Sarah moved to a new apartment located at 794 South 5th Street. She has a swimming pool and laundry facilities on site and her lease allows her to have her dog, Pistol, in her apartment. What was the three digit address of Sarah's apartment: 497, 974 or 794? 794
5. Kim was on the telephone committee of her 4-H club and was asked to call Betty, June, Don, Mike, April, Pete and Jane. She ran out of time and didn't call the last two people on the list. Who did not find out about the meeting? Pete and Jane
6. Shirley went to the store to pick up the following items on her list: two cans of corn, three cans of carrots, two cans of green beans and one can of pineapple. How many cans did she buy? Eight cans

Activity 3: Breaking News

This activity challenges listening skills and verbal skills.

Instructions:

1. Ask for four volunteers to help. Have three of the volunteers leave the room and make sure they are unable to hear what is going on with the rest of the group. One volunteer stays in the room.
2. Read the news article below to the group in the room (or substitute another news article from current events). Tell the young people to pay close attention to the details in the article. They are not allowed to ask any questions during this activity.
3. Have volunteer #1, who heard the story, stand in front of the group and bring in volunteer #2 from the hall. Ask volunteer #1 to tell volunteer #2 everything he/she can remember about the article, trying to include as many details as possible.
4. Bring in volunteer #3. Have volunteer #2 repeat the information to volunteer #3. Then have volunteer #3 do the same to volunteer #4. Finally, have volunteer #4 repeat the information he/she heard to the whole group.
5. Re-read the article to the whole group.

News article:

When young people are helping or cooking in the kitchen, there are several basic rules that should be followed to ensure a pleasant experience, said Jane Morgan, Chef at the Ritz Restaurant. Here are some of those rules.

- Prepare to cook by washing hands, tying back loose hair and protecting clothing by wearing an apron.
- Be careful. Young young people may need help from an adult in preparing and cooking some recipes. Make sure young people know how to use equipment correctly so they won't be injured.
- Be clean. It is easier to clean up as you go and avoid a large pile of dirty dishes at the end.
- Get ready in advance. Gather all ingredients and equipment before beginning.
- Measure precisely. It is important to fill measuring cups and spoons to the right mark and level them off evenly.

Age is not as important as experience when deciding when a child should be allowed to cook. "The most important thing," said Ms. Morgan, "is that young people with little or no experience need adult supervision to make their cooking experience successful."

Discussion questions:

- How much accurate information was passed from the first reading to the last volunteer?
- At which step in the process did the most information get lost?
- What are some examples of how this kind of problem can happen?

Possible answers: This is how gossip starts. When reporters do not get all of the information, the story they tell may be incorrect. People may be accused of lying if they repeat a story to others without getting all of the facts correct.

- What can we do to make sure we completely and clearly communicate all information from one person to another?

Possible answers: Write the information down. Repeat information back to the person who told you to be sure you have the facts straight. If you forget part of the information, do not pass it on until you can find out all of the facts.

Activity 4: Rope a Star

This activity focuses on communication skills within a group.

Instructions:

1. Tie the two ends of a 50- to 100-foot rope together in a knot to form a circle. Lay the circle out on the ground fully extended.
2. Have young people stand in a circle outside the rope and pick up the rope with their right hands.
3. The goal for the group is to work together to form a five-pointed star like we draw it, with all the lines being visible, not just the outline. Show the group a picture of a five-pointed star as shown here.
4. Group members may not release their right hands from the rope at any time during the activity, but they may slide their hands along the rope to move around.
5. Allow time for the group to work on solving the challenge with all forms of communication.
6. If the group is not making much progress because all group members are talking and no one is listening to any ideas, put restrictions on the group such as:
 - only girls may speak
 - only boys may speak
 - only a specific individual can give instructions for the group
 - only nonverbal communication can be used

**Discussion questions:**

- Were you successful in creating the star with the rope? Why or why not?
- What forms of communication did you use?
- What form of communication worked best? (The answer is often one-way communication, where one person gives instructions and others listen and follow directions.)
- If you were unsuccessful in solving the challenge, what could have been done to achieve the goal?
- What are other examples of challenges where, at first, everyone tries to talk at once?
- As a leader, what can you do to make sure good communication is being used when you lead a group?

Possible answers: Set a good example as a leader by using clear instructions. Allow only one person at a time to speak so that all can hear. Balance the involvement of group members by calling on different people instead of allowing the same person to talk all the time. Encourage group members to state their opinions.

Silent Movies

Copy this page and cut apart the movie titles on the lines. Fold them and place them in a hat or box. Divide the group into two teams and play Charades using only nonverbal communication!

Walk The Line	The Lion King
Big Mamma's House	Daddy Day Care
The Mighty Ducks	Glory Road
King Kong	Back to the Future
Batman Returns	Beauty and the Beast
Million Dollar Baby	Bride of Frankenstein
A Bug's Life	The Mask of Zorro
Lord of the Rings	The Jungle Book
The Elephant Man	Fiddler on the Roof
The Little Mermaid	The Monster's Ball
The Man with One Red Shoe	Ride 'em Cowboy
The Silence of the Lambs	Singin' in the Rain
Who Framed Roger Rabbit?	The Incredible Shrinking Man
Chicken Run	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
Big Fish	The Sound of Music
Dances with Wolves	Driving Miss Daisy
The Horse Whisperer	The Mummy
Rain Man	The Wizard of Oz
Finding Nemo	Shark Tales
The Great Mouse Detective	101 Dalmatians