

Improving Listening Skills

a skill-building activity designed to supplement classroom lesson plans

Skill/Subject

Communication

Teacher Preparation

- Photocopy the activity for your students.

Resources/Supplies

- pen or pencil

Activity

Read the following directions to the class so that they can complete Part 1 of the activity.

- Box 1: Place a dot on the letter “i.”
- Box 2: Print the letters of the word “xerox” in the blank spaces.
- Box 3: I saw a papa bull (PB), a mama bull (MB), and a baby bull (BB) in the barnyard. Circle the one that does not belong.
- Four words are in a box. Circle the one that belongs.
- Answers are “i,” X E R O X, MB, cake.

After discussing the answers as a class, have students complete Part 2 of the activity.

NOTES:

To complete Part 3:

- Divide the students into two groups.
- Have one small group form an inner circle with the second group becoming an outer circle.
- Ask the students in the inner circle to discuss examples from their experiences of when “actions spoke louder than words.”
- While the inner group is discussing, have the outer group observe the listening skills of inner-circle members.
- Using the rating scale in Part 3 of the activity, have outer-circle members rate at least three inner-circle members. (This rating can be done by name or anonymously, depending on your evaluation of the group's maturity.)

Assessment

Students should be assessed on their answers to Part One. Part Two is for discussion purposes only. There are no right or wrong answers. Part Three is also for discussion purposes. Assess students on their involvement in the discussion.

NOTES:

Improving Listening Skills

Name: _____

Listening is probably our most important communication skill, yet most of us do it very badly. Active listening requires concentration and mental participation.

Part 1

Directions: Use the following diagram to practice active listening. As the instructor reads the directions orally, respond accordingly on the diagram. Notice that the boxes are numbered.

1	2
<i>L</i>	— — — — —
3	4
PB MB BB	Drum Cake Plate Box

Part 2

Directions: After discussing the answers as a class, reply to the following questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

1. Why did you respond incorrectly?

May be photocopied for student use.

2. What lesson does your response teach you about becoming a better communicator?

3. Does your response prove that directions may be ambiguous and need greater clarity? How?

4. How would you have done better if you had asked for clarification of any unclear portion of the message?

Part 3

Directions: Follow your instructor's directions, and use this scale to rate the listening skills of inner-circle members. Use the back of this sheet to record your ratings.

Rating

- 1 — Does not listen to the speaker; is absorbed in own thoughts
- 2 — Contributes to the discussion but gives no indication of having heard others' comments
- 3 — Sends nonverbal messages, such as eye contact or a head nod, to show that what was being said was being heard
- 4 — Accurately refers to other speaker's comments in making his or her own statements
- 5 — Shows by comments that he or she understands the feelings behind others' comments; responds without judging the others



Stranded: Coming to Consensus

a skill-building activity designed to supplement classroom lesson plans

Skill/Subject

Communication

Teacher Preparation

- Photocopy the activity for your students.
- You may want to write the list of supplies on the board.

Resources/Supplies

- pen or pencil

Activity

Have students read the scenario below and rank the items they think are most important to carry. After the class has finished making their choices, divide them into groups of three for Part 3. After the groups have had time to come to a consensus, break up the groups for Part 4. Facilitate a large group discussion about how each of the smaller groups functioned.

Assessment

This activity is for student awareness only, and there are no right or wrong answers. However, you may want to collect papers to ensure participation.

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Stranded: Coming to Consensus

Name: _____

Directions: Read the scenario below and rank the items you think are most important to carry with you.

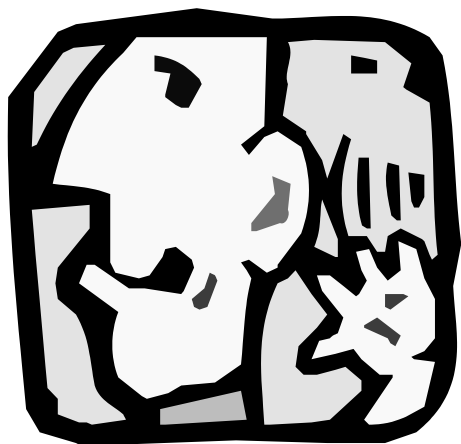
Part 1

It is late in the evening when you and two companions are in your pickup following the chapter van to the state fair. You suddenly find that you are lost. Somehow you made a wrong turn off the main route and onto a dirt road. Instead of turning around, you drive toward what you think are freeway lights. Within minutes, you realize you are not only lost, you also have no sense of direction and your pickup is losing power. It slows to a stop. Nothing you or your companions do restarts the engine. You decide to get out and walk. First you look to see what you can take, and you find the following items. Rank each item as:

- 1 — Most Important
- 2 — Somewhat Important
- 3 — Nice to Have

- _____ Bag of potato chips
- _____ Bottled water, a four-pack
- _____ CDs
- _____ Camera
- _____ Can of gasoline
- _____ Compass
- _____ Flares
- _____ Hand tools: hammer, screwdriver, wrench
- _____ Horse blanket
- _____ Horse grooming equipment: brush, comb
- _____ Matches
- _____ Pocket knife
- _____ Portable boombox
- _____ Ropes: one 15 feet long and one 25 feet long
- _____ State map

May be photocopied for student use.



How Well Can You Follow Directions?

a skill-building activity designed to supplement classroom lesson plans

Skill/Subject

Communication

Teacher Preparation

- No preparation is necessary for this activity.

Resources/Supplies

- pen or pencil
- paper

Activity

Make sure that each student has plenty of paper to use to manipulate the letters. Read each direction slowly, pausing between each step. Some students may have difficulty following along, but do not give them hints as you go. The lessons learned come from careful listening.

Assessment

Collect papers at the end of the exercise to ensure that all students participated.

Answers

Holland

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How Well Can You Follow Directions?

Name: _____

Directions: Start in the United States and follow the directions to see where you end up.

1. Write down: **THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**
2. Take out all of the E's.
3. Take out every fifth letter.
4. Change the F to an A.
5. Move the S's to the front of the word.
6. Take out all of the T's.
7. Take out the first vowel and the last consonant.
8. Move the fourth and fifth letter to the end of the word.
9. Replace the S's with L's.
10. Remove the sixth, seventh, and eighth letters.
11. Move the double L's to be the third and fourth letters.
12. Where did you end up? _____

May be photocopied for student use.