



ACTIVE LISTENING

Students consider strategies that help with listening

OBJECTIVES

- Students will review effective active listening skills
- Students will identify active listening skills in action

MATERIALS

- Active Listening Handout

TIME

30 min

LESSON INTRO

We spend more time listening than any activity except breathing. How can we do it better?

Active listening is a process in which the listener takes active responsibility to understand the content and feeling of what is being said and then checks with the speaker to see if he/she heard what the speaker intended to communicate.

LESSON STEP BY STEP

1. Say: We spend more time listening than any activity except breathing.
2. Ask the group to briefly share out the different things they listen to throughout the day.

If students say “people talking” push them to break it out into the different things people talk about such as how to do a math problem, what’s for lunch, a friend’s weekend, another person’s memory, a boss’s instructions, etc...

3. Once you have a little list, see if you can rank the list in order of importance from what you **do** need to listen closely too, to things that you **don’t** have to listen closely too.
4. Explain that as a ‘listener’ they have an active role to take to truly hear and understand. Refer to the top portion of the brainstorm list—the important things--ask students to pair-share with this question: *What problems might arise when people don’t listen well in these scenarios?*

5. After a few minutes, ask groups to share out a main idea from their discussion.
6. Say: We're going to spend some time talking about what you can do to be a good listener. Listening is hard work! And we want to know what do to make sure we're getting the right information.

In general, listening skills fall under a few categories: (write these on the board)

- What your physical body is *doing*.
- What you are *watching* for.
- What you can *say* as a listener.

7. Say: You may already know or do some things that fall into these categories. Share out!
As students share, create lists under each category.
8. Pass out the Active Listening handout. Read aloud, or have students read silently. Ask students to mark 3 strategies that they feel comfortable doing already. Ask students to mark 2 strategies that are new to them.
9. Next, share with students that you are going to model a few of the active listening strategies. As you model, ask students to write down things that you are doing or saying that are examples of active listening skills. They should be prepared to share out these examples afterwards.
10. Students should reference the handout and student-created lists as resources while they observe...
11. Invite one student up to role model with you. This student should be comfortable speaking in front of the class. You can ask one of the prompts, or just talk about a topic of interest to them.
 - Tell me about a recent vacation or trip
 - Tell me about something that you hate doing
 - Tell me about problem you're having
 - Tell me about what it's like to be an only child/oldest child/middle child/youngest child
12. As the student speaks, model great active listening by your body positioning and eye contact, share out your observations of student's body language and tone, and model rephrasing, mirroring, emotion ID, and questioning.

Use phrases such as:

- "It sounds like what you mean is... Is that right?"
- "Are you saying that you're angry/disappointed/glad, because...?"
- "Tell me more about..."
- "Really?"
- "It seems like..."

13. Once you've wrapped up the 'conversation' ask students to share out examples of active listening that they observed.

VARIATIONS

1. Pair this lesson with the lesson on “Clarity”. These two lessons paired together can serve to help students experience the frustration of being in a ‘poor listening environment’. Missed information impacts the outcome of the activity. Try doing “Clarity” as it is written, and then again when the listeners are allowed to speak.

REFLECTION & WRAP UP

1. End this lesson with the opportunity for students to practice active listening strategies. Pair up students (or group in triads) and give students either the speaker or listener role. Allow time for students to try out a few of the skills.
2. Spend a few moments in solo reflection, students can journal their ideas to one or all of the following prompts:
 - How did it feel to be an active listener?
 - Did anything feel uncomfortable? Why?
 - What was that experience like for you when you were the speaker? Did anything surprise you?
 - What strategy can you do this week to practice being a better listener?
3. Have students create an Info Graphic for the active listening skills that student identify--such as the one here from the Center for Creative Leadership. Place these in the class or communal areas.



NOTES

Educational Standards: CASEL: Relationship Skills, CASEL: Self Awareness, CASEL: Social Awareness, P21: Communication and Collaboration, P21: Social and Cross-Cultural Skills, CCRS:SL3 Evaluate Perspective and Evidence, CCRS:SL6 Adapt Speech