



INTRODUCING COMMUNICATION

Students have the opportunity to share and respond to big questions about communication.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will examine their own ideas on communication
- Students will consider other's perspectives on communication
- Students will compare their ideas to other peoples' or the world's ideas

MATERIALS

- Chart paper
- Colored writing utensils, one per student
- Sticky Notes (optional)
- **Handouts:** Handout 1, Handout 2, Handout 3

TIME

30 min

LESSON INTRO

Communication. A big and complex topic. And a skill that we learn over the course of our entire lives. This introductory session serves to give each student a voice in shaping and sharing how they find this topic relevant, interesting, or challenging. The facilitator can use this information to intentionally shape how you move through the entire communication block.

INTRODUCING COMMUNICATION STEP BY STEP

1. Formulate one or more important, open-ended questions that will provoke comments and responses on the topic of communication such as:
 - Three words that come to mind when you think of communication?

- What is the most important concept/skill in good communication?
 - Why is good communication such a challenge for people?
 - What social issues do you connect with positive or poor communication?
2. Write the questions or topics on separate pieces of chart paper in bold marker. Post the charts on the wall or on desks so that all students have ready access to them.
 3. Give each student a different-colored pencil or marker (or a set of sticky notes).
 4. Explain that students will silently read, write, and respond to the posted questions about communication. Review and post the group agreements:
 - Everyone is writing and responding throughout the designated time period and remains silent the entire time.
 - Everyone is responsible for 1) writing a comment, 2) reading others' comments, and 3) writing a response to at least two comments on every chart paper.
 - No one should sit down until the time period is over. If you have moved through all the questions, go back to read and comment on the ideas you missed.
 - Opinions must be freely expressed and honored. No personal attacks are allowed.
 - Comments should be thoughtful and further the discussion.
 5. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for the rotations. It's helpful to walk around, read, and gently point students to interesting comments. All writing and responding is done in silence.
 6. After the time has elapsed, form students into pairs to work on finding patterns.
 7. Assign students pairs to a poster. Most likely, there will be several pairs at each poster. Students should read through all the postings, search for patterns and themes, and record those patterns on a piece of paper. This part takes about 5 minutes and is not silent.

VARIATIONS

1. Have students write on sticky notes instead of responding directly on the chart paper so that it can be reused for multiple classes if needed.
2. Adding an element of optional text coding (e.g., students placing a star next to comments they agree with or a question mark on comments they don't understand) can deepen the written discussion.

FACILITATOR TIPS AND NOTES

1. This session uses the "Chalk Talk" protocol. A Chalk Talk is a written protocol in which students respond in writing, in a central place (such as a piece of chart paper), to an important, open-ended question—silently. It is a way to promote discussion and awareness of issues, perspectives, or academic challenges. Chalk Talks bypass the social roadblocks that often impede classroom communication, and ensure that all voices are heard. A Chalk Talk is also an excellent way to promote awareness of patterns and problems, as students reflect on the information they have shared.

Check out Chalk Talk in action here: <https://vimeo.com/101254151>

REFLECTION & WRAP UP

1. Conduct a whole-group share. Pairs should report out patterns and themes, round-robin style, until all perceptions are shared.

2. Keep a record of the themes and topics that come up during this session. Use these as a guide for where to take students next on their communication journey. Reference these student ideas as you move through the communication lessons.
-

NOTES

- **Source:** Expeditionary Learning Protocols and Strategies; Chalk Talk.
- **Educational Standards:** Standard 1, Standard 2, Standard 3