

# Social and Emotional Learning

## Lesson Title: **Accountable Talk**

### Grade Level: **Middle School**

#### Project and Purpose

Students use accountable talk sentence stems in a “ridiculous debate” and translate commonly used phrases into accountable talk.

#### Essential Question

Why should we use accountable talk?

#### Materials

- Accountable Talk Sentence Stems — use as a slide or make copies
- Unaccountable Sentences — Cut into strips before class
- Ridiculous Debate Topics — Cut into strips or announce to each group

#### Teacher

1. Discuss: What does accountable mean? What is accountable talk?
  - **Accountable** means being responsible for actions and/or words and one’s behavior, but it also means that something is explainable.
  - **Accountable talk** is a way of speaking, usually in debate, where each person is held accountable for their opinions.
  - **Accountable talk** has the speaker share their idea or opinion, and then support it with evidence.
  - **Accountable talk** is polite, sophisticated, and makes the classroom a safe speaking environment.
2. Accountable talk is academic talk, but more importantly, it is social and emotional talk. It keeps us accountable to social norms and appropriate behaviors so our minds can process better. Social skills are very important to learn and practice every day.
3. Introduce the Accountable Talk Sentence Stems and point out how there are two parts in the practice of accountable talk:
  - A sentence starter
  - Evidence
4. Have students work with a partner and give each pair at least one of the “Unaccountable Sentences.” Tell students that they have 5 minutes to work with their partners to translate the unaccountable sentence into Accountable Talk sentences. They should write their Accountable Talk Sentence on the back of the paper. Direct students to use the Accountable Talk Sentence Starters to help.
5. Have pairs share their Unaccountable/Accountable sentences with the whole group. Ask the group what they noticed about each of the Accountable Talk sentences: how does it support appropriate social behavior? How does it help steer the conversation in an academic direction?
6. Have each pair join with another pair to create groups of four and have them turn their chairs in to face each other OR stand facing each other. Tell students that they will practice using Accountable



# Accountable Talk Sentence Starters

## Agreement:

I agree with \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_  
I like what \_\_\_\_\_ said because \_\_\_\_\_  
My thought is similar to \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

## Disagreement:

I disagree with \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_  
I'm not sure I agree with what \_\_\_\_\_ said because \_\_\_\_\_  
I can see that \_\_\_\_\_; however, I disagree with (can't see) because \_\_\_\_\_  
I have a different idea because \_\_\_\_\_  
I don't know what you mean by \_\_\_\_\_

## Extension

I was thinking about what \_\_\_\_\_ said, and I was wondering what if \_\_\_\_\_  
This makes me think \_\_\_\_\_  
I want to know more about \_\_\_\_\_  
Now I am wondering \_\_\_\_\_  
I want to add that \_\_\_\_\_  
To expand on what \_\_\_\_\_ said, \_\_\_\_\_  
Can you tell me more about \_\_\_\_\_?

## Clarifying Contributions

I don't quite understand what you mean by \_\_\_\_\_  
I have a question about \_\_\_\_\_  
Will you explain what you meant by \_\_\_\_\_?  
What makes you think that?

## Connection

This reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_  
This is like \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_  
This is like \_\_\_\_\_, but it is different because \_\_\_\_\_  
Your evidence is the same/different because \_\_\_\_\_

## Asking a Question

What did you mean when you said \_\_\_\_\_?  
Do you think that \_\_\_\_\_?  
Why do you think that \_\_\_\_\_?  
What led you to that conclusion?

## Review

I want to go back to what \_\_\_\_\_ said.

# Unaccountable Talk Sentence Starters

**Note to teachers:** Cut the strips apart to distribute to pairs or small groups of students.

1. "You're wrong! That never happened in the book!"
2. "I don't agree."
3. "Man, you play too much—you don't ever help our group."
4. "What a dumb idea."
5. "Wait! Go back! Go back! Go back to what she said!"
6. "Oh, yeah, that's the stuff!"
7. "What is that supposed to mean?"
8. "Everybody knows that."
9. "How the heck did you come up with that idea?"
10. "Listen up while I tell how it really happened."
11. "That's how it went down."
12. "That's like that time in the other place! The one we read about last time!"
13. "That idea works."
14. "I just don't see it."
15. "Are you going to say anything or what?"
16. "You gotta tell me more."
17. "Are you trying to tell me this is true?"
18. "You don't really believe that, do you?"
19. "Duh."
20. "There's no way that's right."

## Ridiculous Premises

**Note to teachers:** Cut the strips apart to distribute to each group of four.

1. Every household in America should be given free ice cream and chocolate every day.
2. The egg came before the chicken.
3. Students should be required to wear blue shoes to school.
4. Tap dancing should be required to graduate.
5. People behave better when there is royalty in the room.
6. Every kid should get a haircut in June and in December — and only then.
7. All teachers should sing their instructions.
8. Soon we will each own our own rocket ship.
9. Every human is born with a need to do yoga.
10. True musicians can inhale a piano into their lungs.
11. Chocolate is a vegetable.
12. Birds have been plotting against us for years.
13. Comic books will soon replace text books in classrooms.
14. Hugging a cactus every day makes you healthier.
15. Late at night, fish talk.
16. Small, wrapped, hard candies can be used as change in vending machines.
17. There really are pots of gold at the end of rainbows.
18. Invisible unicorns live among us.