

Social and Emotional Learning

Lesson Title: **Communication: Active Listener – Lesson 2 of 4** Grade Level: **High School**

Project and Purpose

Students participate in active listening exercises and observations.

Essential Question

What is the biggest challenge and biggest reward of active listening?

Materials

- Copies of Discussion Organizer: Top Benefits of Listening
- Copies of RASA Active/Conscious Listening Checklist
- One-minute timers (timers, cellphones, or use any app on the SmartBoard to time)
- Access to TedTalk: Julian Treasure, “Five Ways to Listen Better”
www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_5_ways_to_listen_better

Teacher

1. Sit with someone you trust.
2. Play Listening the Alphabet, a game created by Second City, the world-reknown improvisational theatre company in Chicago.
 - a. Students work with a partner and determine who will be Person A and who will be Person B in each pair. Their goal is to say each letter of the alphabet, in correct order, with the focus on listening to each other.
 - b. Instruct pairs to stand as they are able facing each other in an open body position, hands down by sides, making and maintaining eye contact.
 - c. Person A says the first letter of the alphabet, “A.”
 - d. Person B must wait until Person A has stopped speaking—all sound from A has stopped—and take a “beat” or a count of 1 before saying the next letter.
 - e. Person A waits for Person B to stop speaking, takes a beat, and says the next letter, and so on, back and forth, until the pair reaches the letter Z. Remind everyone that they should use regular speaking rates, not elongating the letters or stretching out any sounds.
3. When all pairs have finished, discuss the experience.
 - What was easiest about this exercise?
 - What was challenging about this exercise?
 - How did you determine who would be Person A and Person B? How did it involve listening?
 - What did you learn about your ability to...
 - Wait?
 - Listen?
 - Maintain eye contact?

- Maintain an open body position?
 - Stay focused on the task?
4. Explain that this is an exercise in Active Listening, one of the soft-skills that employers look for and one of the top skills that will help them succeed in school and life.
 5. Distribute the Discussion Organizer: Top Benefits of Listening worksheet and ask students to write their "Pre-viewing" response to the key question in the first box.
 6. Watch the Ted Talk video Julian Treasure, "Five Ways to Listen Better."
 7. Immediately after watching the video, have students take one minute to write their responses to the second question on the worksheet. At the end of one minute, have the group share their responses to the Pre-Viewing question and the immediate reaction. Have them record a comment they heard from the discussion in the third box.
 8. Tell students to save the final box for after they complete the next activity.
 9. Distribute the RASA Active/Conscious Listening Checklist and review each category, asking students to apply the categories to their actions in the A-Z game. Point out how the categories on the sheet expand Julian Treasure's acronym RASA: Receive, Appreciate, Summarize, and Ask Questions Afterwards. Ask for student volunteers to demonstrate each category OR demonstrate for them. NOTE: Many people chose to enact POOR examples of behaviors. While this can provide excellent comedic fodder, research tells us that it lessens the impact of learning appropriate behaviors.
 10. Have them return to their A-Z partners and join with another pair, forming groups of four, to practice their active listening skills. One pair will be the observers, and one pair will be the presenters; they will eventually swap roles.
 11. Assign roles within the first round.
 - Presenter group Person A will be the first speaker. Person A will tell a narrative story (ideas presented in step 13).
 - Presenter group Person B will be the first listener. Person B tries to use all the active listening skills well for the entire time Person A speaks.
 - Observer B will use the list to record observations about Person B.
 - Observer A is the timer who gives the start signal, a ten-second warning, and a final cut-off.
 12. At the end of the time, Observer B has one minute to share the review of listener B, being sure to be as positive as possible.
 13. Each presenter speaks about a topic for one minute while one person actively listens. Some ideas of things to talk about might include:
 - A tough decision you had to make recently
 - The most difficult conversation you've had to have with a teacher
 - An academic challenge you worked very hard on and were successful
 - How you won an award of some kind
 - A recurring dream you have
 - The best birthday or holiday event you ever celebrated
 - Why you keep certain things in your personal space (room/locker/etc.)
 - Any narrative story about yourself
 14. Swap roles within the group and repeat the process four times, giving each person an opportunity to play each role.

Conclusion

Ask students to share something about their listening experiences with their partners. Have students complete the final box on their worksheet and ask volunteers to share.

[illegible]

Discussion Organizer: **Top Benefits of Listening**

Pre-Viewing: What is the top benefit of having good listening skills? Why?

Post-Viewing: What is the most important thing you heard in the video about listening? Why?

During/Post Discussion: What is the most interesting thing you heard someone else share in the

Conclusion: As a result of today's session, how has your original idea changed or how is your original idea supported regarding the benefits of listening?

RASA Active/Conscious Listening Checklist

Person being observed:

Evaluator:

RASA: Active Listening Skills	Perfect! The whole time!	Pretty good! Quite a bit of the time!	Good news: Practice will help!	Notes
Receive: Give undivided attention to the speaker; nothing distracts from listening.				
Receive: Maintain eye contact; connects to the speaker by tracking the speaker's eyes.				
Appreciate: Demonstrate awareness with nods, appropriate facial expressions, leaning in toward the speaker, and appropriately timed vocal prompts.				
Summarize: Paraphrase what was heard before responding with statements like, "What I'm hearing is..." or "It sounds like you are saying..."				
Ask: At appropriate time, ask clarifying questions such as, "What do you mean when you say...?"				
Receive/Ask: Allow the speaker to finish speaking before responding or asking a question.				
Receive/Appreciate: Use open body language: posture relaxed (back is straight but not stiff), arms by side or hands clasped in lap, both feet on the floor				