# Social Emotional Learning Lesson 5

"You Can’t Handle the Truth"

7th – 12th Grade

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<td>• I will recognize and analyze nonverbal cues when communicating with others.</td>
<td>• Students will identify and analyze nonverbal cues to communication.</td>
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<td>• I will use active listening skills when someone is communicating with me.</td>
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## Why this Lesson Matters:

“Knowing when and how to express yourself, recognizing nonverbal cues, and being able to discern what is important when someone speaks can be key factors in building interpersonal relationships. Communication is what we do to gain mutual understanding; it is the process of sending and receiving messages. Successful communication occurs when there is understanding. Communication can be verbal, using oral language to convey a message, or nonverbal, including facial expressions, body language, text or written based language. Teaching young people how to communicate effectively helps them maintain healthy relationships, resolve conflicts peacefully, excel in school, and eventually get and keep jobs.”


## Materials:

| Community circle centerpiece and talking piece |
| Post-It Notes |
| Flip Chart Paper |
| Markers |
| Computer for videos |
| Pantomime Handout |
| Guess Who I Am Handout |

| Session Length and Pacing: |
| Community Circle – 15 minutes |
| Part 1 of Lesson – 35 minutes |
| Part 2 of Lesson - 30 minutes |
| Part 3 of Lesson – 30 minutes |
| Activity – 20 minutes |
| **Total** - 110-130 minutes |

## Community Circle Question:

This lesson has three parts, so there is a community question for each part.

- **Part 1**: Describe someone who is a responsible speaker and someone who is not a responsible speaker (no names). Which one do you trust more? Why?
- **Part 2**: How can things like tone of voice, facial expressions, or body language, change the meaning of the words we are saying?
- **Part 3**: When we are listening to someone, what should we do to make sure they know we are listening to them?

## Community Circle COVID-19 Question Consideration:

- What has been communicated to you about Covid-19?
- What questions do you have about Covid-19?
- Without using words, how would you express your feelings about Covid-19?

## LESSON

### Need for Skill

The purpose of this lesson is to help students with their verbal and nonverbal communication and active listening skills. Teaching young people how to communicate effectively helps them
maintain healthy relationships, resolve conflicts peacefully, excel in school, and eventually get and keep jobs.

**Teacher Preparation:** Before class, write on the board “speaker + listen = communication.” Then set up the clip of the famous courtroom confrontation scene from *A Few Good Men* between Tom Cruise and Jack Nicholson.

- *A Few Good Men*, “You can’t handle the truth!”
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7RH8kSkXlY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7RH8kSkXlY)

**Part 1:** Students will learn verbal and nonverbal communication to help them be more effective in school and maintain healthy relationships. This lesson is from Overcoming Obstacles [https://www.overcomingobstacles.org/portal/curriculum/highschool](https://www.overcomingobstacles.org/portal/curriculum/highschool) and StudentPaths [https://studentpaths.com/stpa/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Comm-Non-Verbal.pdf](https://studentpaths.com/stpa/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Comm-Non-Verbal.pdf)

- Begin class today by circling the word “speaker” in the equation on the board: “responsible speaker + active listener = communication.” Tell the students they will be focusing on this part of the equation and its importance to communication.
- Say, “Human communications are generally divided into three parts: speaking, listening, and nonverbal. A study at UCLA of human interpersonal communication once offered that the nonverbal parts of our communication make up 93% of our overall effectiveness as communicators. Broken down further, the study suggests that, for effective communicative performance: 7% of the impact came from the words used, 38% from the voice quality, and 55% from other nonverbal cues. Nonverbal cues are facial expressions, eye contact, posture, and hand movements. Throughout this lesson we will address verbal expression, nonverbal communication, and active listening.
- Tell students that they are going to watch a video clip of the famous courtroom confrontation scene from *A Few Good Men* between Tom Cruise, playing a lawyer sent to investigate the death of a marine, and Jack Nicholson, playing the head of the military base where the marine died.
- Give students the background by explaining that at this point in the film, Cruise suspects that there has been a cover-up in the death of the marine. He suspects that Nicholson’s character gave an order that resulted in the death.
- After viewing the clip, discuss the power of words.
  - Ask questions such as the following:
    - What power do words have for Cruise in this movie? (Words will provide information that can help him determine whether a cover-up has taken place.)
    - How did Nicholson and his staff use words in this movie? (They used them to lie and cover up what really happened.)
    - What was the “truth” that Nicholson thought a civilian could not handle? (In his mind, the military must toughen up its soldiers to face the horrors of war by any means necessary. He views these methods as needed, and says that the death, though tragic, was beneficial.)
      - Say, “we have the ability to control what we say and how we say it, so we need to be responsible speakers. Words have consequences. I have some more questions for us to discuss related to the movie *A Few Good Men*.
        - How did Nicholson use words in the courtroom scene in this speech? (He used them to rationalize, or justify, his unjustifiable behavior.)
        - Is this an example of speaking responsibly? (Absolutely not; covering up the truth is a manipulation of words to deceive someone.)
Does Nicholson take responsibility for his use of words? (Yes; he believes he is doing a great service to his country by “toughening up” the military. He has thought things through and believes that what he is doing is right.)

What are the consequences of his words? (He has now been exposed.)

What will be the consequences of his actions? (He will likely receive a dishonorable discharge from the military, face a court martial, and go to jail.) Conclude the discussion by saying, “Words are powerful, so be careful and think about the consequences of your words, since you must take responsibility for them. Remember, if the words come out of your mouth, they are yours.”

Group Activity:

*Teacher Preparation:* Print the handout “Tell Me About Yourself.” You will need 5 copies.

- Tell students that our words create an impression, so it is important to use words in ways that show respect for ourselves and for the people around us. In a job interview, for example, a prospective employer can learn a lot about you based on what you say and how you say it.
- Ask for two volunteers to read the interview cases from the handout labeled “Tell Me About Yourself.” Have volunteers act out the roles of the interviewer, candidate 1, and candidate 2, improvising actions as they speak.
- Ask students in the audience to listen carefully to these interviews, thinking about what the candidates say and how they say it. Have students list the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate.
- Write their responses on the board.
  - (Candidate 1 is fast, strong, and athletic, but is boastful and has no related experience. He treats the job lightly and makes promises he may not be able to keep, such as, using his bike for deliveries.)
  - Candidate 2 is a problem solver—he’s already figured out how to fit the job into his schedule. He also provides examples of comparable work he has done and skills/knowledge that would make him successful. However, candidate 2 has no direct experience.)
- Ask students to tell, by a show of hands, which candidate they would hire for the job. Have a student who supports candidate 2 summarize how this person was able to use words responsibly.
  - Candidate 2 used words to make a good impression, showing respect for himself and the position. He communicated his interest and showed that he is qualified for the job.
- Underline the words “responsible speaker” on the board from the equation that you wrote at the beginning of class.
  - Ask, “What else does it mean to be a responsible speaker?” Elicit from students that responsible speakers speak not only truthfully, but also respectfully. They use words to make a positive impression.
  - Ask how using words responsibly might benefit candidate 2. (He will probably get the job.)
- End this session by referring to the equation that you wrote on the board to begin class.
  - Ask, “Who do you think has the most power in this equation—the speaker or the listener?”
- Elicit from students the following key points that were taught in this lesson:
  - Words are powerful, so use them wisely.
  - You must take responsibility for your words because they belong to you.
  - Using words responsibly is part of being an effective communicator.
  - Speak responsibly for persuasion, clarity, and diplomacy.
Part 2: Nonverbal Communication


**Teacher Preparation:** Print the handout “Pantomime” and cut out each scenario. Write the following two phrases on the board: “Good communication is ...” and “A good communicator ...”

- Allow students 5 minutes and instruct students to use notebook paper to brainstorm every thought they must define effective communication and communicators. This list will focus our attention on how we learn the skills of communication.”
- Have students share. Facilitate the discussion to create lists for the two definitions: an act of good communication, and a person with skills for quality communication. Work to capture skills, examples, and other student responses that define the full spectrum of effective communication, including speaking, listening, and the nonverbal cues people use to convey messages.
- Spend a minute making notes on the board to find a few themes or ways to organize the ideas in the brainstorm. Ask students which ideas would count as examples of nonverbal communication. Use the analysis to focus on nonverbal and segue into the next instructional section of activity.

**Group Activity:**

- Explain to students that we will work in groups to better understand the power of nonverbal communication.
  - Ask: Does anyone know what a “pantomime” or more commonly “mime” is? A pantomime is a theatrical performance with no words or sound; the actors use only gestures and facial expressions.
- Tell students that they will work in groups of 2-3. Have students pick a pantomime scenario from a hat or jar. Allow the group to take 5 minutes to plan a one-minute pantomime. Reminder students that they cannot use sounds or words in this performance. Everything must be communicated nonverbally.
- After each pantomime, allow performing group of students to share their topic with the rest of the class, and allow them a short period of discussion with the audience.
- Have students summarize what they have learned about nonverbal communication.
- If students need a jump-start, explain the following:
  - We all experience nonverbal communication every day.
  - We use it to understand what people are communicating to us.
  - We send nonverbal messages through our facial expressions, body language, gestures, and eye contact.
  - Effective nonverbal communication can make our messages stronger and clearer.

**Conclusion:**

- Ask students to name examples of nonverbal communication that occur in their daily lives?
- Ask them how using nonverbal communication effectively can be a powerful tool?
- Elicit from students the following key points that were taught in this lesson:
  - People communicate their thoughts and feelings nonverbally.
  - Paying attention to facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and body language enables us to understand nonverbal messages.
  - People send nonverbal messages constantly; we can learn to recognize and interpret others’ nonverbal messages.
  - People can control the nonverbal messages they send.
Part 3: Active Listening

This activity and content is from OverComing Obstacles

• Begin this lesson by presenting the class with the following riddle and allow students one minute to answer:
  o “A man walks into a museum, sees a portrait on the wall, and says ‘That man’s father is my father’s son.’ Who is the person in the picture?” (Answer: the first man’s son or nephew)

• Write this quote on the board, “Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.” -Stephen R. Covey
  o Ask students, “what does this mean?”

• Ask, “how many times have you been listening to someone talk then realize that you have no idea what they’re saying?”

• Say, “When most people talk to each other, they’re not fully listening. They are thinking about what they are going to say. They’re distracted and not focused solely on the speaker.”

• Explain how communication is a 21st century skill. But communication is not a one-way street. It is not just the job of the speaker to say something. If the listener is not a participant in the process, then communication is blocked. Good listening means both hearing and understanding. Today we’re going to find out what it takes to listen well.”

• Tell students that there are simple things they can do to become better listeners and improve their communication skills. We are going to watch a short video that reviews crucial aspects that helps improve active listening. As you are watching, take notes on how to become a more active listener.
  o Video: “Active Listening: Katie Owens at TEDxYouth@Conejo”
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WER63AY8zB8
  o Ask students, what are the three steps to becoming a better active listener?
    ▪ Remove all distractions
    ▪ Listen to the speaker’s signals and sounds (body language)
    ▪ Provide feedback stating that you understand (paraphrase or restate what you heard)

• Say, “In summary an active listener means you are fully focused on what the speaker is saying. No looking at your phone during a conversation! You are also giving nonverbal cues such as eye contact, head nodding, and smiling and verbal cues such as paraphrasing, summarizing, and asking questions. These behaviors demonstrate that you are listening.

Practice:

Students listen to each other in groups and then recall what they learned.

• Divide students into groups of three. Each group decides who is A, B, & C.
• Have A start. They have 30 seconds to talk to B about their favorite things: music, food, movie, tv show, color, subject, thing to do after school, etc.
• At the end of 30 seconds, B turns to C and tells C what they remember about A’s favorite things.
• B then talks to C for 30 seconds about their favorite things.
• At the end of 30 seconds, C turns to A and tells A what they remember about B’s favorite things.
• The cycle repeats with C talking to A, and then A telling B.

Discuss this exercise as a group.
  o How hard was it to listen to someone for 30 seconds?
  o What new thing did you learn about someone in your group?
### Activities to Practice Communication and Active Listening

Teacher Preparation: The goal is to make a seamless story among various players. Explain to students that this activity will help practice verbal and nonverbal communication and active listening. When the group is provided with a story, students begin performing the story. They can use nonverbal language and appropriate verbal language to convey the message. The audience must use active listening skills so that they can then paraphrase and/or retell the story.

- Have a group of 6 to 10 students line up in a row.
- Start by getting a suggestion from the audience. (“May I have the title of a story that’s never been written...???”)
- After receiving the suggestion (i.e. “The Best Day Ever”), repeat it back – this is to ensure that the players have heard it.
- The teacher points at one player who starts telling the story and keeps talking until the teacher points at someone else. Have the next player pick up where the last improviser left off – have them do it as seamlessly as possible (even if it’s mid-word or mid-sentence).
- Keep pointing at players and telling the story until you feel that the story is at an end.
- Repeat the activity so that all students get an opportunity to practice.

**Wrap-Up Questions:**
- What are 1-2 words that describe what this activity was like for you?
- What made it easy? Difficult?
- What did you learn about communication and active listening from these activities?
- Ask students if someone has ever misread their nonverbal messages.

### Closing Circle Question:
- What are things you can do to be a better communicator?
- What are things you can do to be a better active listener?

### Digital Adaptations:

**Part 1:**
- Tell students that they are going to watch a video clip of the famous courtroom confrontation scene from *A Few Good Men* between Tom Cruise, playing a lawyer sent to investigate the death of a marine, and Jack Nicholson, playing the head of the military base where the marine died.
  - *A Few Good Men*, “You can’t handle the truth!” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7RH8kSkXlY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7RH8kSkXlY)
- Give students the background by explaining that at this point in the film, Cruise suspects that there has been a cover-up in the death of the marine. He suspects that Nicholson’s character gave an order that resulted in the death.
- After viewing the clip, have students answer the following questions?
  - What power do words have for Cruise in this movie?
  - How did Nicholson and his staff use words in this movie?
  - What was the “truth” that Nicholson thought a civilian could not handle?
  - How did Nicholson use words in the courtroom scene in this speech?
  - Is this an example of speaking responsibly?
  - Does Nicholson take responsibility for his use of words?
  - What are the consequences of his words?
  - What will be the consequences of his actions?
• Have students reflect and answer: “What else does it mean to be a responsible speaker?” and “Who do you think has the most power in this equation—the speaker or the listener?”

Part 2
• Explain to students that we also express communication through non-verbal language. For example, facial expression, hands on hips, slouching, etc.
• Explain to students that when movies were first made, they did not have any sound. The audience never heard the actors speak. Information about the story was shown in writing on the screen between scenes. If there was background music, it was provided by someone who played the piano in the movie theater as the movie was shown.
• Have students watch their favorite TV show on “mute” and record the non-verbal forms of communication that they observe. Have students send you the name of the show and some of the examples they observed.

Part 3
• Tell students that there are simple things they can do to become better listeners and improve their communication skills. We are going to watch a short video that reviews crucial aspects that help improve active listening. As you are watching take notes on how to become a more active listener.
  o Video: “Active Listening: Katie Owens at TEDxYouth@Conejo”
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  o Ask students, what are the three steps to becoming a better active listener?
    ▪ Remove all distractions
    ▪ Listen to speaker’s sign and sounds (body language)
    ▪ Feedback that you understand (paraphrase or restate what you heard)

Activity: From: Films https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/teaching-excellent-communication-skills
Have students pick a film or TV clips that can be paused and discussed. Have them write responses to share during the next class. Have students look for and write about:
• Characters who learn how to handle a crisis using clear, concise communication.
• Characters that display non-verbal communication skills to express an emotion or tell a story.
• How characters process and communicate complex emotions?
• How characters used multiple communication skills to solve problems?
• Situations that went wrong because of poor communication skills.

References/Resources:
What is Communication?
https://www.centervention.com/what-is-communication/

Communication Lesson: Nonverbal Communication

OverComing Obstacles: High School Curriculum
https://www.overcomingobstacles.org/portal/curriculum/highschool

39 Communication Games and Activities for Kids, Teens, and Students
https://positivepsychology.com/communication-activities-adults-students/

Nonverbal Communication, The Loudest Voice of All
https://studentpaths.com/stpa/lesson-plans/

Resources to build communication in every classroom, every day.
https://www.commonsense.org/education/articles/we-all-teach-sel-communication-activities-and-tools-for-students
Active Listening
https://www.morningsidecenter.org/teachable-moment/lessons/active-listening-grades-3-6

Speaking Kindness in Democratic Classrooms
https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/speaking-kindness-in-democratic-classrooms

Intonation for English Learners: When to Change It and How to Learn It
https://www.fluentu.com/blog/english/english-intonation/

StudentPaths: Connecting Students to their Future, Communications Basics Nonverbal

“What did you say?” Active Listening in the Drama Classroom”
https://www.theatrefolk.com/blog/say-active-listening-drama-classroom/

The Best Methods for Teaching Excellent Communication Skills
https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/teaching-excellent-communication-skills