

# Communications Curriculum

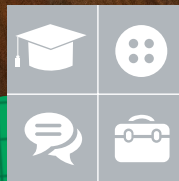


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**Skill Level**  
Advanced

**Module 3**





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## Acknowledgments

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# Time Travels

**Time Needed**  
45 minutes

What are some things you think of when someone says communication? In what ways has communication changed from the past?

**Materials List**  
Note cards, paper, and  
research material  
**Additional Resources:** books,  
magazines, computers



## Introduction

When you hear the words writing, speaking, signaling and transmitting what do you think of? If you said communication, you noticed the connection! These are all ways of relaying a message or idea and are all important in their own way. Writing, speaking and signaling are important to consider when communicating a message. It is important to consider the number of people in the audience to whom the aspects of the message are being presented, and the best way to communicate it.

Forms of communication have evolved dramatically over time. From non-verbal gestures to highly specialized communication, such as social media, that has recently become a large part of everyday life. All of these forms vary and are better suited for one situation over another.

In this lesson youth will learn about the history of communication and how different methods have evolved over time.

## Learner Outcomes

Understand the changes in ways we communicate

## Education Standard(s)

Common Core Standard. Writing 6-12. Conduct short research demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

## Success Indicator

Identifying modes of communication

## Life Skill(s)

Communicating in a variety of modes





## Experience / What to Do

**To prepare for the activity:** Place a number of different modes of communication on a table, making sure to include historical modes. A label will work, but use a picture if available.

Here are some examples:

- Telephone
- Type Writer
- Fax Machine
- Braille
- Postal System
- Newspapers
- Radio
- Sign Language
- Computers
- Social Media
- Television
- Cell Phone

### Experience 1:

1. Have youth each draw one card from the collection. Depending on your group size, you might have them draw two. Have each person write down the one(s) they choose.
2. Youth should start by working as a team to place these forms of communication in chronological order of their creation. They should only use their current knowledge for this step.
3. Using any available tool, give each person time to learn about one piece of communication of their choice. Tools used may range from texting, computers, magazines or conversations.
4. After youth have investigated each of their types of communication, have them present to the rest of the group about the history and uses.
5. Discuss as a group about the changes in communication related to each of the presentations.

### References

Activity adapted by: Rachael Emig, Iowa 4-H Youth Development Intern;

Reviewed by Judith Levings, Associate Director, Iowa 4-H Youth Development and Mitchell Hoyer, Iowa 4-H Youth Development Program Specialist

### Did You Know?



Social media has recently become so popular that an estimated two thirds of the entire Internet population visits social networking sites on a daily basis. Source: nielsen.com

### Glossary Words

Social media, message, signaling

### Related Activities

First Impressions  
Communications and Me







## Talk It Over...

### Share. . .

How did using good communication skills help you in this activity?

What was the most challenging part of this activity?

What differences did you notice about the advancements in communication as time progressed?



### Reflect. . .

What did you observe about others during this activity?

Why do you feel it is important to understand and be able to use a variety of methods to communicate?

What is important about the historical changes in communication?

### Generalize. . .

In what ways can people help each other to learn new things?

What did you learn from this activity that is now going to be helpful to you?

### Apply. . .

What types of communication do you believe are most useful to you on a daily basis?

How would you teach someone about the different modes of communication?









# Who's Listening

How does it make you feel when you are telling a story or talking to someone and they are not fully recognizing what you are saying? How does it feel when they are trying to take over the conversation?

Material List  
Paper and writing  
utensil

## Introduction

People express themselves in a variety of ways: facial expressions, body language, gestures and intonation which means using different pitch in voice. The same is true for how people listen. Most people do not usually receive instruction in how to listen effectively or even realize that there are different ways to listen. Not all listening types are created equal, here are some examples:

A **passive listener** creates a one-way conversation for the speaker because the listener does not make an effort to connect to the other person's message.

A **selective listener** may not get the full message intended by the speaker because they only hear what they want to hear; they hear the things they find particularly interesting to them. This creates barriers in communication.

An **attentive listener** is more productive than the two previous styles by engaging with the speaker, but they still do not give their full attention. This listener is less judgmental about what the speaker has to say.

An **active listener** receives the speaker's message with care and respect and works to fully understand the speaker's message (both the verbal and nonverbal message). An active listener gets two messages in one—the facts and the feelings.

## Learner Outcomes

Understand types of listening behaviors and how they affect messages

## Education Standard(s)

Common Core Standard. Language 6-12. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, & to comprehend more fully when listening.

## Success Indicator

Identifying a preferred listening style for effective communication

## Life Skill(s)

Communicating with others; analyzes responses

## Learn More

Listening can be really difficult in certain situations. Read this article to further understand your job as a listener:  
<http://www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/ActiveListening.htm>





## Experience / What to Do

### Experience 1:

1. Have youth brainstorm ideas and think of three times they observed different listening situations. For example, a classroom discussion, a conversation on a television show, youth at a play or a lecture all provide opportunities to help determine the listening styles involved.
2. After the youth have listed the places or activities where they have observed different listening styles, have them explain with a partner the behaviors, listening styles and outcomes of the situation for each example they observed.
3. Have each pair share one example with the entire group and have them explain how the outcome would have differed if the listening style would have been different.

### Experience 2:

1. Direct youth to meet up with a partner and assign them either youth A or youth B.
2. Create a number of different situations and have youth A draw a topic.
  - A. These might include describe when you learned how to ride a bike or describe an embarrassing moment. The goal is for them to tell a story.
3. While youth A mentally prepares their “story” youth B should be prepared to listen and interpret the story told by youth A.
4. After Youth A has delivered their experience, give a piece of paper and pen or pencil to youth B.
5. Instruct youth B to rewrite the story just told on their paper. When finished they should explain the story to youth A in the way they interpreted.
6. Then switch roles and repeat the activity so each member has the chance to experience each role of listening.



### Did You Know?


The Chinese written language is made up of symbols called characters. The characters that make up the words “to listen” are a combination of characters for ear, eyes, heart and undivided attention.

### Glossary Words

Intonation, judgmental, passive listener, selective listener, attentive listener, active listener

### Related Activities

Follow My Lead  
Now Hear This!  
Between You and Me



### References

Activity adapted by Rachel Norby, Iowa 4-H Intern. Reviewed by Judith Levings, Associate Director, Iowa 4-H Youth Development and Mitchell Hoyer, Iowa 4-H Program Specialist. From the activity “Who’s Listening” In Picking Up The Pieces: Communication Activities for Youth produced by The National 4-H Cooperative Curriculum System, Inc. (2005)





## Talk It Over...

### Share. . .

What were the most difficult parts of this activity?

What kind of listener were you in this activity (be honest, it's okay)?

### Reflect. . .

What makes listening skills an important part of effective communication?

What did you discover about your own listening style by doing this activity?

What kind of listener do you want to be?

### Generalize. . .


How will learning about your listening skills help you?

How can you tell when another person is actively listening to you?

### Apply. . .

Name several situations in which listening skills would be critical.

What steps will you make to improve your listening skills?









# Bridging the Gap

**Time Needed**  
1 hour plus time  
outside of the activity  
for each youth

**Materials List**  
Paper, pencils

What do you know about what it means to have a communication gap? What role do you believe age, ethnicity, gender, or profession plays in that gap?

## Introduction

Many people believe there is a communication gap between genders, races, age groups, and a variety of other categories in which people are separated according to certain differences. To you, it is probably easiest to communicate with peers. People similar in ages and interests tend to share vocabulary and phrasing—a verbal form of shorthand. It is also easier to communicate with siblings because they share many of the same experiences and situations. In fact, twins often share a unique language they create themselves!

Many youth may find it difficult to communicate with older people or members of the opposite gender. They might also have trouble talking with teachers, neighbors, or people they have just met.

Some keys to “Bridging the Gap” can make conversations easier:

- Smiling and being friendly
- Offering a polite, firm handshake
- Showing interest in the other person by asking questions
- Listening!

This activity allows youth to discuss and learn about the communication gap between them and adults from different backgrounds.

## Learner Outcomes

Understand differences in choosing communication methods

## Education Standard(s)

Common Core Standards. Speaking & Listening 6-12. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks. Participate effectively in a range of conversations with diverse partners.

## Success Indicator

Conducting interviews with community members about communication gaps between various audiences

## Life Skill(s)

Communicating with others—posing critical questions

## Learn More

One group that youth often have a hard time communicating with is their parents. Communicating with parents may be difficult because emotions such as anxiety, anger, sadness, and even joy can interfere. It is important to remember that parents have your safety and best interests at heart and it is important to work through problems with good communication.

Try the game below with your parents to improve communication about a difficult topic for older students. [http://www.education.com/activity/article/College\\_Board\\_Game/](http://www.education.com/activity/article/College_Board_Game/)



## Experience / What to Do

The goal of this activity is to allow youth to learn about the communication gap. They will interview people from varying groups and learn about their beliefs regarding communication gaps. Youth should be able to get an idea about how they originate, and learn about ways to open up communication.

Part One:

1. Have youth create a list of people they interact with on a regular basis. Are you being sure to include all those with who you interact with?
2. Then have youth put the people from their list into groups and answer the following questions with a guided discussion.
3. How do you communicate with those groups? What difference in communication methods or styles do you observe? What factors can cause differences in choice of styles? What challenges do you have when communicating with these different groups of people?

To learn more about how different groups use communication methods and tools, follow the next steps:

4. The next step is to have each youth make a list of questions they would like answered about the differences in communication style. Have each youth come up with at least four questions they could ask. You may want to have each youth share their questions with the group. This gives youth the chance to help each form ideas.

Example Questions: What communication gaps do you believe exist and between which groups do they exist? What causes communication gaps? What actions could people take to close these gaps?

5. Have youth choose five people from varying groups that they could interview before your next meeting.
6. Youth should conduct interviews of the people they identified in their free time before the next meeting. Make sure they know to set up appointments with each person. They should record who the person is and why they are unique from the others, as well as their answers to the identified questions.
7. Have youth give a report to the group about the most interesting things they learned at the next meeting and have the entire group discuss the outcomes of the interviews.



### Did You Know?

Most parents probably had trouble communicating with their own parents.

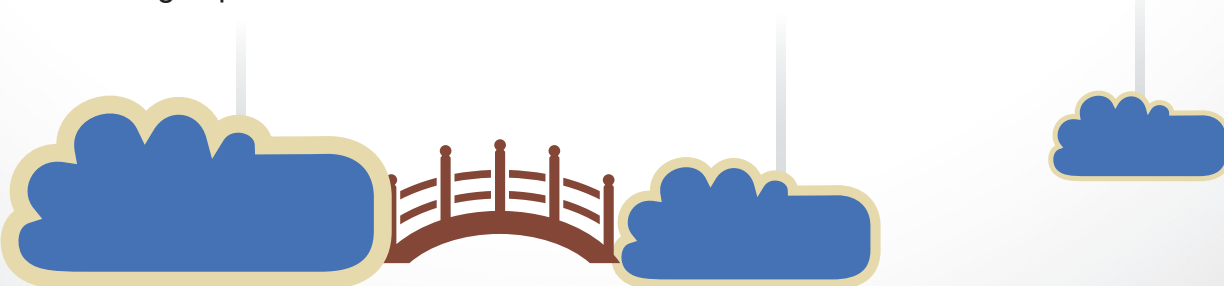
Taking a time out from talking if things get tense and trying again after cooling off can lead to more effective communication.

### Glossary Words

Communication gap

### Related Activities

Seek To Connect  
Keep It In The Family  
Let's Communicate



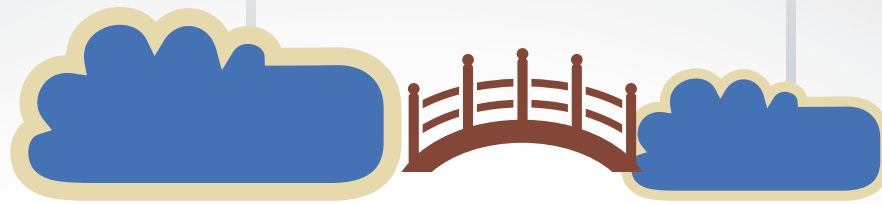
### References

Activity adapted by Amy Peyton, Iowa 4-H Intern

Reviewed by Judith Levings, Associate Director, Iowa 4-H Youth Development and Mitchell Hoyer, Iowa 4-H Program Specialist

From the activity "Bridging the Gap" In The Perfect Fit: Communication Activities for Youth produced by The National 4-H Cooperative Curriculum System, Inc. (2005)





## Talk It Over...

### Share. . .

What did you learn about communication gaps?

What things made maintaining a discussion easy with the adults you interviewed?

What things made it challenging?

How did you feel as you tried to communicate with people that are different than you?

### Reflect. . .

When is it important to be aware of possible communication gaps as you communicate with others?

How can this awareness lead to effective communication?

Why might it be important to be able to confidently communicate with others who are different than you?

### Generalize. . .

Describe a situation when you have experienced a communication gap in your own life.

What problems have you seen occur as a result of poor communication between different groups?

### Apply. . .

How can you help close a gap when you realize that there is a communication barrier between you and someone else?

What tips can you provide other youth who are struggling with gaps in communication with groups or individuals?

