

Let's Talk!

Social-Emotional Learning Objective: Clear Verbal Communication

Knowing how to have a conversation comes naturally, doesn't it? For some students, it does. But for many, clear communication is a skill that requires practice. That practice can yield lifelong benefits.



Why It Matters

Teaching students how to communicate clearly is an important step in preparing them for success. Not only is the ability to listen, talk and understand necessary for relationships, it's also how teachers teach and children learn. Here are a few other reasons why knowing how to communicate well matters:

- Children with good communication skills are better able to express themselves clearly and confidently.
- Having good communication skills helps a child feel more comfortable in social settings. That confidence will help a child start conversations with peers and make new friends.
- Children who struggle with communication are more likely to have problems with reading, writing and spelling. They are also at a higher risk of having problems with behavior.

- All children want to make and keep friends. A child with poor communication skills can have problems with both.
- Communication helps kids resolve conflicts, an important skill for children and adults alike.
- Children who struggle with communication skills often feel less confident and believe they are less popular than their peers.
- In a recent study, employers said that clear verbal communication is the No. 1 skill they seek in new hires.

Bottom line: Knowing how to have a productive conversation is a life skill every student needs. Here's how to get started.

Goal for the lesson: Show your class how to carry on a conversation that yields new information and insights.

Grade levels: Kindergarten–Grade 5

Suggested time needed: 45 minutes

Materials for each student: copies of the printables, colored pencils, large sticky note

Additional materials: copy of each printable (for display), chart paper and marker, class supply of small index cards

Teacher Directions

Bell-Ringer Activity

1. Write the information below on the board.

communicate: to share or exchange information, news or ideas

2. As students enter the room, ask each child to read the definition on the board and make a list of all of the ways he or she has communicated since waking up.
3. If time allows, have each student share his or her list with a classmate.

Whole-Group Activity

1. Below the definition you wrote on the board for the Bell-Ringer activity, write the following sentence: "Communication requires talking."
2. Ask students if they think the statement on the board is true. If some answer "yes," smile and wave hello. Ask students if you just communicated, and, if so, what your message was. Point out that communication can be verbal or nonverbal, as in your smile and wave. Explain that in this activity students will talk about how to communicate verbally in a conversation.
3. Ask students to brainstorm a list of situations that might require them to have a conversation (working on a group project, playing a game at recess, meeting someone new, etc.). Then display the "Let's Talk! How to Have a Conversation" mini-poster and discuss it with the class.
4. Ask a student volunteer to come to the front of the room. Model a short conversation with the student about

your favorite way to exercise. At the end of the conversation, ask the class to comment on how you and the student followed the guidelines on the poster. If time allows, repeat with a different student and topic.

5. Give each student a copy of the poster. Instruct students to use colored pencils to fill in each box with a picture or symbol that will help them remember the step. **For younger students:** Talk about each step together and choose a symbol or picture for everyone to draw in each box.

Whole-Group and Partner Activity

1. Ask students to name the topics you and the student volunteers talked about in Step 4 of the previous activity.
2. Write soccer (or another game students have played in PE recently) on the board. Ask students to raise their hands if they have had an experience with soccer. Point out that it's easier to have a conversation with someone if the topic is one of which both people have knowledge.
3. Label a large sheet of chart paper "Terrific Talk Topics." Divide the class into pairs and give each duo two large sticky notes. Instruct students to label each of their notes with a different topic that would be good for a conversation with a classmate. Direct twosomes to place their notes on the class chart. Discuss the conversation topics on the class chart. **For younger students:** Give each twosome one note to label with a drawing that represents a favorite animal, sport, color or toy.
4. Revisit the "Let's Talk! How to Have a Conversation" mini-poster and

reread together the step about asking questions. Then display a copy of the “Let’s Talk!” graphic organizer. Have students help you complete the organizer with questions about one of the topics listed on the “Terrific Talk Topics” chart.

5. Provide time for each twosome to use the completed organizer to have a short conversation about its topic. (You may wish to select one student in each pair to start the conversation.)
6. If time allows, give each twosome a copy of the graphic organizer to fill out with a different topic. Then have students use the organizer to help them have a conversation about the topic.

Exit Activity

1. Ask each student to tell one thing he or she will do the next time he or she has a conversation with another person. Then ask the student to label an index card with a topic in which he or she is interested.
2. Store students’ cards in an envelope. Periodically, pull a card from the envelope and announce its topic. Then have each student turn to a partner and have a short conversation about the topic.

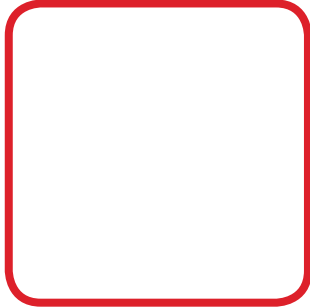
Take-Home Task: Send each student home with a copy of the Take-Home Task assignment. Remind students that they don’t have to sit still to have a good conversation; they can converse while walking the dog or weeding the garden. They’ll find that talking while being active can help spur thoughts and ideas. The next day have students pair up and have a conversation about the assignment.

Teacher Notes



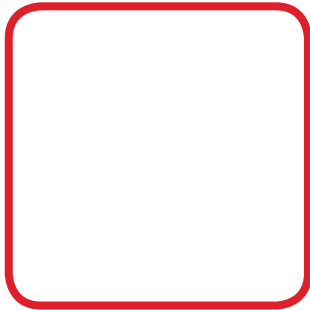
Let's Talk!

How To Have a Conversation

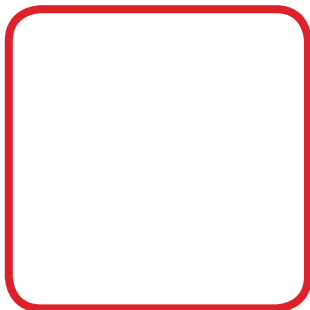


Start with a greeting:

- "How's it going?"
- "Hey, what's new?"
- "Hi there!"

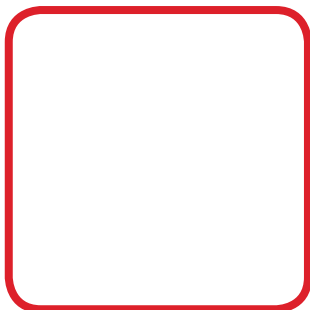


Ask a question or make a statement about a topic.



Take turns listening, asking questions and making comments.

- 4 Ask questions that include *who*, *what*, *where*, *when* or *how*?
- 4 Look the other person in the face when you talk or listen.
- 4 Occasionally smile or nod your head to let the



End the conversation with a short farewell, such as "I had better go now. See you later!"

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Question

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Question

Let's Talk!
Conversation Topic:

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Question

?

Question

Let's Talk!

Have a short conversation with a family member.

Then fill in the blanks.



I had a conversation with _____
family member

We talked about _____
conversation topic

This is how I started the conversation: _____

This is how I ended the conversation: _____

This is what we were doing during the conversation:

I drew a star (★) beside every step I remembered to do.

____ I started the conversation with a greeting.

____ I asked questions or made a statement about the topic.

____ I took turns talking and listening.

____ I looked the other person in the face when I talked and listened.

____ I ended the conversation with a short farewell.

Quick Tip

You don't have to sit still to have a conversation. Take a walk together and get your thoughts flowing.