

Harriet Learns About Active Listening

Lesson Objective:

Students will learn about the importance of active listening in effective communication. They will explore how active listening helps them understand others, avoid miscommunication, and build stronger friendships through practicing active listening skills.

Materials Needed:



- Copy of Chapter
- Pencils and markers
- Activity 1: Active Listening Practise
- Activity 2: Listening Challenge
- Home Connection Letter

Introduction to the Topic (10 minutes)

Greeting Outline:

- Welcome the children and have them sit in a circle (if applicable)
- Begin with a brief discussion (topic of lesson).

Greeting and Circle Time Teacher Script

1. Warm Welcome and Opening Discussion:

○ "Good morning, class! Have you ever been in a conversation where everyone is talking, but no one is really listening? It can feel confusing and frustrating, right? Today, we're going to talk about something really important called *active listening*. When we actively listen to each other, we understand what the other person is saying, and it makes our conversations much better. We're going to read a story about Harriet and her friends learning about active listening, and we'll see how it helps them work together."

2. Discussion Starter

○ "Have you ever had a time when you were trying to talk, but it seemed like no one was listening? How did that make you feel?"

○ Allow students to share their experiences.

○ "Today, we'll learn how to practice *active listening*. This means paying close attention to the person speaking, understanding their words, and showing them you care about what they're saying."



Read the Chapter (15 minutes)

Story Time Outline:



- Read Book 3 Chapter 3 aloud. Pause at key moments to engage students to ensure they are following the story.
- Ask questions during key parts of the story.

Story Time Teacher Script:

1. Prepare the Students for the Story:

- "Let's read the story *Harriet Learns About Active Listening*. As we read, think about how Harriet and her friends learn to listen to each other and how it changes their conversation."
- (Read the chapter aloud, pausing at key moments to ask questions and engage the children.)

2. Read the Chapter with Emphasis on Key Moments:

- **While reading**, pause during key moments.
- **Ask Questions:**
 - Why does Harriet feel frustrated at the beginning of the conversation? Discuss how no one is really listening to each other.
 - What does Bennie suggest about the garden, and why doesn't anyone hear him? Explore how Bennie's idea is lost in the group's excitement.
 - Why does Harriet stop the group from talking? Highlight how Harriet recognizes that they're talking over each other.
 - What does Grandma mean by active listening ? Discuss the concept of paying full attention to the speaker.
 - Why does Grandma say communication breaks down when we don't listen? Explain how not listening causes misunderstandings.
 - How does active listening help your brain make better predictions? Focus on how active listening helps your brain process information more clearly.
 - How does Bennie feel when Harriet listens to him? Highlight how being listened to makes Bennie feel valued.
 - What does Buzz say about the stone path, and how does the group respond this time? Discuss how active listening improves the flow of conversation.
 - Why does Sammy finally feel like he can share his idea?

Explore how the group's listening encourages Sammy to speak up.

- How does the group's conversation change once they start listening to each other?

Focus on how the group becomes more organized and cooperative.

Book 3 Chapter 3: Harriet Learns About Active Listening

One afternoon, Harriet and her friends gathered at their favorite spot near the big oak tree to plan a fun project—they were going to build a small garden together. Everyone was excited, and they had lots of ideas about what to plant and how to design the garden. But as the conversation got going, it became clear that something wasn't working. Everyone was talking, but no one was really listening.

"I think we should plant flowers first!" Harriet said, waving her hands excitedly.

"Yeah, but we need to focus on building the soil beds first," Bennie replied, barely listening to Harriet.

"Let's make a path with stones!" Buzz buzzed in, adding his idea quickly.

Sammy was trying to talk, too, but no one seemed to notice. "Hey, I think we should—" he started, but was cut off by Betty, who was already talking about what vegetables to plant. As more ideas piled on top of each other, the group became louder, but less organized. Harriet noticed that no one seemed to be paying attention to what anyone else was saying, and it was starting to make her feel frustrated.

"Wait, wait!" Harriet said, raising her voice. "I don't think we're really listening to each other."

Everyone stopped, realizing she was right. They had been so eager to share their ideas that they hadn't really been paying attention to what anyone else was saying.

Ollie looked thoughtful. "I guess we all have good ideas, but we're not really hearing each other. No wonder we're getting confused."

Harriet nodded. "I feel like we're just talking over each other, and it's making things more stressful."

Just then, Grandma, who had been sitting nearby reading a book, walked over and smiled at the group. "It sounds like you've discovered an important lesson about communication."

The group looked at her, curious. "What do you mean?" Buzz asked.

Grandma sat down beside them. "When we're talking with others, it's easy to get excited about our own ideas and forget to listen to what the other person is saying. This is where active listening comes in. Active listening means really focusing on the person who's speaking, paying attention to their words, and understanding what they're trying to say."

"But why does it matter so much?" Harriet asked. "Can't we all just share our ideas and figure it out later?"

Grandma smiled. "The problem is, when no one is truly listening, communication breaks down. Your brain uses concepts to understand the world, just like we've talked about before. When you don't listen carefully, your brain might make wrong predictions about what the other person is saying, and that leads to confusion. But when you listen actively, your brain gets more accurate information, and that helps you connect better with the people you're talking to."

Ollie's eyes lit up. "So, by really listening, we can understand each other better and avoid miscommunication?"

"Exactly," Grandma said. "Active listening helps your brain understand the emotions and ideas the other person is sharing. If you don't listen, your brain might miss important details, and you might end up misunderstanding or even hurting someone's feelings without meaning to."

Harriet thought about how frustrated she had felt when no one was really listening. "I guess that's what happened just now," she said. "We were all so busy talking that we didn't really hear each other."

"That's right," Grandma said. "And when we don't listen well, it's hard to work together or solve problems. But the good news is that we can practice active listening and get better at it."

"How do we do that?" Bennie asked.

Grandma smiled. "There are a few things you can do to be an active listener. First, make eye contact with the person who's speaking. This shows them that you're focused on what they're saying. Second, listen without interrupting. Let them finish their thought before you jump in. And third, repeat back what you heard to make sure you understood it correctly. You can say something like, 'So, what you're saying is...' to check if you've got it right."

Harriet liked the sound of this. "That sounds easy enough. Can we try it now?"

"Of course!" Grandma said. "Why don't you start, Harriet?"

Harriet turned to Bennie, who had been talking about the soil beds earlier. She made eye contact with him and said, "Okay, Bennie, I'm listening. What do you think we should do first?"

Bennie smiled, feeling like his voice was being heard. "I think we should focus on building the soil beds because the plants will grow better if we have good soil."

Harriet nodded and repeated back, "So you're saying that if we start with the soil beds, the plants will grow better?"

"Exactly," Bennie said, happy that Harriet had understood him.

Ollie chimed in next. "Okay, I think that's a good idea, Bennie. Now, let's hear what Buzz was saying about the stone path."

Buzz looked excited. "I think we should make a path with stones so we can walk through the garden without stepping on the plants."

Ollie repeated back, "So, you want to add a stone path to protect the plants while we walk through the garden?"

"Yes!" Buzz said, buzzing with excitement.

The group went around, taking turns listening carefully to each other, and it made a big difference. Suddenly, the conversation felt smoother, and they were starting to make real progress on their garden plans.

Grandma watched proudly. "See how much better things go when you listen to each other?"

Harriet smiled. "Yeah, it feels like we're actually working together now."

"And remember," Grandma said, "when you listen actively, you're not just hearing words—you're connecting with the person who's speaking. Your brain uses their words and emotions to make sense of the conversation, and that helps everyone feel understood."

Betty nodded. "I felt kind of frustrated earlier when no one was listening to me, but now that we're listening to each other, it feels a lot better."

Sammy, who had been quiet for most of the conversation, finally spoke up. "I was trying to share my idea earlier, but no one seemed to hear me. Now I can finally talk about the vegetables I wanted to plant!"

The group laughed, and Ollie turned to Sammy. "Okay, Sammy, we're all listening now. What vegetables should we plant?"

Sammy beamed, happy to finally have his moment. "I think we should plant carrots, tomatoes, and maybe some beans too!"

Harriet repeated back, "So you're thinking we should plant carrots, tomatoes, and beans? That sounds great!"

Sammy nodded happily, feeling heard.

As the group continued planning, Harriet realized just how important listening was. She had always thought communication was just about talking, but now she understood that listening was just as important—maybe even more so.

By the end of the afternoon, they had a solid plan for their garden, and everyone felt good about how they had worked together.

"Thanks, Grandma," Harriet said as they started to clean up. "I think we all learned a lot about listening today."

Grandma smiled. "You did a wonderful job. Remember, active listening isn't just a skill for solving problems—it's a way to show people you care about what they're saying. It helps build stronger friendships and better teamwork."

With their new understanding of active listening, Harriet and her friends felt ready to take on any challenge together. They knew that by listening carefully and making sure everyone's voice was heard, they could work through any problem—and have fun doing it.

And from that day on, whenever they found themselves in a tricky conversation, they remembered to pause, listen actively, and connect with each other, knowing that true communication starts with understanding.

3. Post-Chapter Teacher Script

- **Teacher:** "Today, Harriet and her friends learned something really important—not just about planting a garden, but about how we communicate with each other. When everyone was talking but no one was listening, it caused confusion and frustration. But once they started using *active listening*—making eye contact, waiting their turn to speak, and repeating back what they heard—they were able to understand each other, work as a team, and make sure everyone's ideas were valued. This story reminds us that listening is more than just being quiet while someone else talks—it's about *showing*

that you care and making a real connection. And when we do that, we build stronger friendships and solve problems more easily—together.”

4. Post-Chapter Questions

Ask these questions to help students reflect on the chapter and connect it to their own experiences:

- Why do you think listening is just as important as talking when working in a group?
Promotes reflection on balanced communication and teamwork.
- How can you tell when someone is really listening to you?
Encourages awareness of nonverbal cues like eye contact and body language.
- Have you ever felt like Sammy, like no one was hearing you? What did that feel like?
Connects personal experiences to emotional understanding.
- Why do people sometimes interrupt or talk over each other, even if they don't mean to be rude?
Explores unintentional communication habits and group dynamics.
- What does it mean to “repeat back” what someone said, and why is that helpful?
Reinforces one of the key strategies for practicing active listening.
- What changes did you notice in the group once they began using active listening?
Highlights improved collaboration and emotional tone.
- How can active listening help prevent hurt feelings or conflict in a conversation?
Promotes emotional intelligence and empathy.
- What do you think Grandma meant when she said listening helps us “connect with the person who’s speaking”?
Encourages thinking about the emotional bond created through listening.
- If someone forgets to listen during a group project, how can you kindly remind them to be an active listener?

Builds confidence in using respectful communication tools.

- How can practicing active listening make you a better friend or classmate?
Helps students see the long-term value of listening in relationships.
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Do an Activity (20 minutes)

- Students will practice using the active listening techniques

Please choose from the following 2 activities:

Activity 1: Active Listening Practice (15 minutes)

1. Introduce Activity

"Now that we've seen how Harriet and her friends used active listening, let's practice it ourselves. In this activity, we're going to pair up and take turns being the speaker and the listener."

2. Activity Instructions

Instructions:

- Pair students up. Each pair will take turns: one student will be the speaker, and the other will practice active listening.
- The speaker will talk about something they're excited about, like a favorite game or a hobby, for 2 minutes.
- The listener will practice active listening: making eye contact, not interrupting, and repeating back what they heard to make sure they understood.

In pairs, students can choose from the following topics to talk about for 2 minutes while their partner practices active listening. Each topic should allow students to share something personal and interesting to keep the conversation engaging.

- Your favorite game or sport, and why you enjoy playing it.
- A fun family vacation or trip you went on.
- A time when you felt really proud of something you did at school or at home.
- Your favorite book or movie, and why you like it so much.

- A hobby you enjoy (e.g., drawing, playing music, or building things).
- What would you do if you had a free day to do anything you wanted?
- Your favorite meal or snack, and who makes it for you.
- The best birthday party you've ever had or attended.
- If you could have any pet in the world, what would it be and why?
- Something you want to learn or try that you've never done before.

Discussion:

- After each pair finishes, ask the listeners, "How did it feel to listen carefully to your partner?"
- Ask the speakers, "How did it feel when your partner really listened to what you were saying?"

"When we listen carefully and repeat back what we heard, it helps the speaker feel understood. And it helps the listener make sure they're getting the right message!"

Activity 2: Listening Challenge (15 minutes)

1. Introduce Activity

"In this activity, we're going to practice listening even more by playing a game called the Listening Challenge. I'm going to give you instructions, and your job is to listen carefully and follow them exactly."

2. Activity Instructions

Instructions:

The teacher will give a series of instructions to the class, such as:

- Clap twice, then touch your toes.
- Stand up, turn around once, and sit back down.
- Raise your hand, then tap your desk three times.
- Clap your hands once, then touch your knees, and then smile.
- Tap your desk two times, then raise your right hand, and wave.
- Take three big steps forward, turn to your left, and hop once.
- Touch your toes, jump twice, and then put your hands on your hips.
- Stand up, do a jumping jack, and sit back down.
- Clap three times, say "hello," and point to the ceiling.
- Close your eyes, count to five silently, and open your eyes.
- Put your hands on your head, spin in a circle, and touch your nose.
- Pretend to be a tree for five seconds, then sit back down.

After each set of instructions, see who followed along closely, and discuss how they had to focus to make sure they heard everything.

The goal is to challenge their ability to listen carefully and remember each step in the sequence.

Discussion:

- "What helped you listen carefully during the Listening Challenge?"
- "What was hard about following the instructions if you weren't listening closely?"

"Active listening helps us make sure we hear everything correctly. If we don't pay attention, we might miss important details, just like in our conversations."

Wrapping it Up

Wrap Up the Lesson (5 minutes)

1. Review and Reflection Overview:

- After students complete their reflections, invite volunteers to share what they learned from their reflections.
- Encourage students to continue using the strategy in their daily lives

Review and Reflection Teacher Script



1. Gather in a Circle for Reflection:

- "Let's all come back together in a circle."

2. Closing

- Today, we learned about the importance of active listening. When we listen carefully, we can understand others better, solve problems, and work together more easily—just like Harriet and her friends!"
- "Let's each share one thing we learned about active listening today. Who would like to go first?"

Home Connection Letter

1. Sending Information Home:

- “Before you go, I have a letter for you to take home. What we learned today in class.”
- Hand out the letters as the children prepare to leave.

Parent Letter

Sending Information Home:

- Provide each child with a letter to take home to their parents explaining the lesson.

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Today in class, your child learned about active listening and how important it is in communication. We read a story called *Harriet Learns About Active Listening*, where Harriet and her friends discovered how paying attention and truly listening to each other helped them work together better.

In class, your child:

- Practiced active listening by paying close attention to their partner during conversations.
- Learned how to repeat back what they heard to make sure they understood the message.
- Played a game to strengthen their listening skills and follow instructions carefully.

We encourage you to ask your child about what they learned today and practice active listening at home during conversations. This helps build stronger communication skills and shows respect for the person speaking.

With Gratitude,