

Active Listening with the S.T.A.R. Strategy

Lesson Objective: Students will learn the importance of active listening and practice using the S.T.A.R. strategy (Stop, Think, Act, Reflect) to listen more carefully to each other and improve communication.

Materials Needed:



- Copy of Chapter 14: "Listening With More Than Just Your Ears"
- Pencils and markers
- S.T.A.R. Strategy Poster
- Active Listening Game Cards
- 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, everyone! Today, we're going to talk about a really important skill—listening. Sometimes, we think we're listening to someone, but we're actually just waiting for our turn to speak. Have you ever been in a conversation where you felt like the other person wasn't really hearing you? How did that feel?"
- (Allow a few students to share their thoughts.)

2. Discussion Starter

- "Well, today, we'll be reading a chapter from *Ollie's Superpower Squad* where the friends learn how to practice *active listening*. We'll also use the S.T.A.R. strategy to help us stop, think, and act in a way that makes sure everyone feels heard."

Read the Chapter (15 minutes)

Story Time Outline:



- Read Chapter 14 aloud. Pause at key moments to engage students and make sure they are following the story.
- Ask questions during key parts of the story.

Story Time Teacher Script:

1. Prepare the Students for the Story:

- "Now, let's read Chapter 14: *Listening with More Than Just Your Ears.* In this chapter, the friends realize they've been talking over each other and not really listening to what others are saying. Let's see how they use active listening to solve their problem."
- (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 was the group having trouble deciding which movie to watch?
 - How did Harriet's excitement affect the conversation?
 - What did Sammy say that was overlooked by the group?
 - How did Ollie recognize that they weren't really listening to each other?
 - What is *active listening* according to Grandma?
 - How did Buzz describe active listening after hearing Grandma's explanation?
 - What did Harriet realize after Ollie pointed out that no one was really listening?
 - Why do you think Sammy didn't speak up more when no one was listening to him?
 - How did Buzz and Bennie use their strengths to suggest a solution?
 - How did the friends feel after practicing active listening?

Chapter 14: Listening With More Than Just Your Ears

The winter break had officially begun, and Ollie, Harriet, Bennie, Sammy, Buzz, and Betty were enjoying the time off from school. The streets were dusted with snow, and holiday lights twinkled in every window. The friends had been spending time together sledding, building snow forts, and drinking hot chocolate. But in the middle of their winter fun, a new lesson was about to emerge.

One cold afternoon, the group gathered at Ollie's house, where Grandma had invited them for cookies and a movie. As they settled in with their hot cocoa, a friendly debate broke out about which movie they should watch.

"I want to watch *Snow Day*!" Harriet exclaimed, bouncing on the couch. "It's so funny, and we can all relate to it."

Buzz, always full of ideas, shook his head. "No way, let's watch *Space Adventure*! It's more exciting and creative!"

Betty, ever the problem-solver, tried to chime in. "What if we,"

But she was interrupted by Sammy, who was quietly sitting in the corner. "I don't really care which movie we watch."

Harriet, still focused on her movie pick, barely heard Sammy and kept talking. "Come on, *Snow Day* is perfect for winter break! Who's with me?"

Ollie, sensing that things were getting a little chaotic, looked over at Sammy. "Wait, I don't think we really heard what Sammy said."

The group fell quiet for a moment. Sammy looked up and shrugged. "It's no big deal. I just said I don't really care what we watch."

Ollie frowned, realizing that no one had been actively listening to each other. They were all so busy trying to push their own ideas that they hadn't really heard what the others were saying, or what they weren't saying.

"I think we need to practice *active listening*," Ollie said thoughtfully. "We've been talking over each other and not really listening."

Harriet, now noticing that she might have been too excited to hear Sammy, tilted her head. "What's active listening again?"

Grandma, who had been quietly watching the conversation unfold, smiled and joined in. "Active listening means really focusing on the person who's speaking, not just waiting for your turn to talk. It's about making sure you understand what the other person is saying, and sometimes, paraphrasing what they've said to show that you really heard them."

Buzz nodded. "So instead of just saying what we want, we have to listen and maybe even repeat back what the other person said?"

"Exactly," Grandma said. "It helps everyone feel heard, and it can make the conversation flow better. You're not just listening with your ears, you're listening with your whole attention."

The group sat up a little straighter, ready to give it a try.

"Okay, let's start with Sammy," Ollie said, turning toward him. "Sammy, how do you feel about the movie choices?"

Sammy thought for a moment. “Like I said, I don’t really care which one we watch. But I guess I’d prefer something funny, since we’ve been doing a lot of serious stuff lately.”

Harriet, practicing her active listening, repeated back what Sammy said. “So, you’d prefer a funny movie because we’ve been doing serious stuff recently?”

Sammy nodded. “Yeah, that’s it.”

Buzz jumped in, his creative mind whirring. “Okay, so maybe we can find a funny movie that we all like. What if we watch something funny that has a little bit of action too?”

Bennie, ever the steady voice of reason, spoke up. “How about we watch a mix of both? There are plenty of movies that are funny and exciting.”

Ollie smiled, feeling proud of how they were all using their strengths, Harriet’s energy to focus on listening, Buzz’s creativity to find a compromise, and Bennie’s steady reasoning to guide them.

Betty, who had been listening closely, added, “And maybe we can take turns choosing movies during the break, so everyone gets a chance to watch something they like.”

Grandma clapped her hands. “Now you’re really using your active listening skills! You’re not only hearing what the other person is saying, but you’re showing them that you understand.”

The group felt proud of how they had turned a potential argument into a solution where everyone felt heard. They realized that by listening to each other more carefully, they could avoid misunderstandings and come up with better ideas together.

As they continued their conversation, the friends reflected on how often they had jumped to conclusions in the past without really listening to each other. They realized that body language and tone of voice, like they had learned earlier, were important clues, but truly hearing the words and feelings behind them was just as important.

Bennie, always thinking deeply, added, “I think active listening can help us in more situations too, like when we’re working on projects at school. It’s not just about hearing words—it’s about understanding the person.”

Harriet grinned. “Yeah, like I should’ve really listened to Sammy earlier instead of just talking about the movie I wanted to watch.”

Buzz nodded. “And I need to listen better when people are sharing their ideas, instead of jumping in with mine.”

Ollie, ever the planner, smiled. “We can all use our strengths to help us be better listeners.

Harriet, you can keep the energy going, but maybe slow down and check in with people. And Buzz, you can still be creative, but take a moment to listen to what others are saying before you add your ideas.”

Betty, the problem-solver, added, “And we can all practice paraphrasing, like Grandma said. It’s a good way to make sure we understand before moving on.”

Grandma, watching her grandchildren and their friends grow into more thoughtful listeners, smiled warmly. “You’re all learning how powerful listening can be. It’s not just about what you say, it’s about how well you understand each other. When you practice active listening, you’re not only helping yourself, but you’re showing respect and care for the people around you.”

As the afternoon continued, the group decided to watch a funny holiday movie they all agreed on. But more than that, they felt closer and more connected, knowing that they had taken the time to really listen to each other.

And as the winter break rolled on, they carried their new skill with them, whether it was during snowball fights, sledding, or just hanging out. Active listening, they realized, was one of the most powerful tools they had for staying connected as friends.

In the snowy December days that followed, Ollie, Harriet, Bennie, Sammy, Buzz, and Betty knew they had grown not just in their ability to communicate but in their understanding of each other. They had learned that listening wasn't just about hearing, it was about understanding, caring, and connecting.

And that, they knew, was a gift that would last far beyond winter break.

3. Post-Chapter Teacher Script

- **Teacher:** “Wow! Ollie and his friends really learned how important active listening is to friendship. I bet we would also find that active listening will help with our friendships, too.”

4. Post-Chapter Questions

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

- Have you ever been in a situation where you felt like no one was listening to you?
- Why is it important to practice *active listening*?
- How do you think it makes people feel when they're not listened to?
- What can we do to make sure we're really hearing someone when they talk?
- What does it mean to paraphrase what someone says?
- How does paraphrasing help in a conversation?
- How did the S.T.A.R. strategy help the friends listen better?
- What can happen if we jump to conclusions without listening carefully?
- How can we use our strengths, like Ollie's planning or Betty's problem-solving, to help us listen better?
- What do you think is the hardest part about active listening?

Do an Activity (20 minutes)

- Students will practice

Activity: Active Listening Role-play (20 minutes)

1. Introduce Activity

“Today we’re going to play a game that helps us become *amazing listeners*—and not just any kind of listener, but *active listeners*. That means we’re not just hearing the words, we’re showing the other person that we really understand them.

I’m going to give each pair a card with a short scenario. One person will be the speaker, and the other will be the listener.

Let’s say your card says something like, ‘*You’re telling your friend about your favorite game.*’ The speaker will share a few details about their favorite game, and the listener’s job is to do something very important: **listen closely and then repeat back the key points**—in their own words—to show they understand.

You might hear something like this:

- Speaker: ‘I love playing soccer because I get to run fast and score goals.’
- Listener: ‘So, you really enjoy soccer because you like being active and scoring goals?’

See how that works? That’s called *paraphrasing*—and it’s one of the best ways to show someone you’re really listening.

You’ll each take a turn being the speaker and the listener. When both of you have had a chance, raise your hand so I know you’re ready.

After we finish, we’ll come back together and talk about how it felt to be listened to—and how it felt to really listen carefully to someone else.”

2. Activity Instructions

- Divide the class into pairs and hand out *Active Listening Game Cards*. Each card has a short scenario where one student will speak, and the other will practice active listening by paraphrasing what they hear.
- Each student in the pair takes turns speaking and listening. For example, one card might say: “You’re telling your friend about your favorite game. The listener has to repeat back the key points and show they understand.”
- After each round, ask the listeners to paraphrase what they heard. The speaker will confirm if their message was understood.

d. Bring the class together for a reflection after practicing in pairs. Discuss how it felt to be actively listened to and how it felt to listen to someone else carefully."



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.

"Okay, great work, everyone! Let's take a moment to think about what just happened.

- How did it feel when your partner really listened to you and repeated what you said?
- What did you notice when you were the one doing the listening?
- Was it hard to remember and repeat what someone said in your own words?

What we practiced today—*active listening*—is one of the most important skills for being a good friend, classmate, and teammate. When people feel heard, they feel respected and understood. That's the kind of classroom community we want to build every day.

So let's keep practicing our listening superpowers—even when we're not playing a game!"

Review and Reflection Teacher Script

1. Gather in a Circle for Reflection:

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

2. Closing

- "Great job, everyone! Today, we practiced how to really listen to each other. We learned that active listening isn't just about hearing someone—it's about understanding and making sure they feel heard. How did it feel when someone really listened to you?"
 - (Allow students to share.)
- "Active listening can help us avoid misunderstandings and make sure our friends feel respected. Remember, next time you're talking with someone, try to listen



with more than just your ears—use your full attention, and don't be afraid to paraphrase what they say."

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, your child participated in a lesson about *active listening* and learned how important it is to listen with more than just their ears. We discussed how practicing *active listening* helps us understand each other better and avoid misunderstandings. The students used the S.T.A.R. strategy (Stop, Think, Act, Reflect) to improve their listening skills.



Encourage your child to practice active listening at home by paraphrasing what others say and making sure they understand before responding. This skill will help them not only in school but in all their relationships.

Thank you for your support!

With Gratitude,

You're telling your friend about the best part of your weekend. The listener has to repeat back what the best part was and why you liked it.

You're explaining why you enjoy your favorite subject in school. The listener has to summarize your reasons for liking that subject.

You're talking about a new game you learned to play. The listener has to describe the game back to you, including the key rules you mentioned.

You're sharing what you did during recess today. The listener needs to reflect on what activities you enjoyed and why.

You're explaining a funny story about something that happened at lunch. The listener has to repeat the main points and explain why it was funny to you.

You're talking about your favorite movie. The listener has to name the movie and explain why it's your favorite based on what you said.

You're describing a time when you felt nervous about something at school. The listener has to paraphrase what you were nervous about and how you felt.

You're telling your friend about a new book you're reading. The listener has to explain back to you what the book is about and why you're enjoying it.

You're talking about a sport or activity you like to do. The listener has to describe what the sport or activity is and why it's fun for you.

You're sharing your plans for winter break. The listener has to explain what you're most excited about based on what you said.

You're talking about something that was difficult for you at school today. The listener has to reflect on what was challenging and how you felt about it.

You're explaining how to play your favorite board game. The listener has to describe the rules and how to win the game based on your explanation.

You're describing a pet you have or would like to have. The listener has to explain what kind of pet you have or want and why it's special to you.

You're telling your friend about a place you'd like to visit someday. The listener has to repeat back where you want to go and why you're interested in visiting.

You're talking about your favorite holiday tradition. The listener has to summarize what the tradition is and why you enjoy it.

You're sharing a goal you're working on at school. The listener has to explain what the goal is and why it's important to you.

You're explaining something new you've learned recently. The listener has to describe what you learned and why it was interesting to you.

You're telling your friend about a time you helped someone. The listener has to explain what you did to help and how it made you feel.

You're talking about your favorite thing to do after school. The listener has to repeat what the activity is and why you enjoy it.

You're describing your perfect day. The listener has to summarize what you would do on your perfect day and why it would be special.