

Communication Builders



What are Communication Skills?

They include how we listen, speak, and express ourselves clearly and respectfully to others.

Communication Skills
Middle School



Different communication styles are effective in different situations.
Rate how often you use each style (1-5):

1 = Rarely

5= Very Often

Area	Rating
Assertive: Clear, direct, and respectful; expresses needs while considering others	
Passive: Indirect, avoids conflict, tends to defer to others' needs	
Aggressive: Forceful, puts own needs first, may disregard others' feelings	
Passive-Aggressive: Indirectly expresses negative feelings, often through subtle actions	

In which situations do you find yourself using each style?

Assertive:

Passive:

Aggressive:

Passive-Aggressive:

Which style would you like to use more consistently? Why?

Verbal Communication Skills



Rate these messages on clarity (1=unclear, 5=very clear) and explain your rating:

"The homework that was handed out yesterday needs to be turned in sometime next week."

Rating: _____ Why: _____

"Please complete the math worksheet (pages 15-16, problems 1-20) by next Tuesday."

Rating: _____ Why: _____

"You guys never clean up."

Rating: _____ Why: _____

"I noticed the recycling bin is full and the lunch table hasn't been wiped down yet."

Rating: _____ Why: _____



Revise these vague messages to be more specific and effective:

"We need to talk later."

Revised: _____

"This assignment is due soon."

Revised: _____

"Your behavior is inappropriate."

Revised: _____

"Let's hang out sometime."

Revised: _____

Active Listening Skills



Different situations require different levels of listening. Match each level with its description:

Cosmetic Listening

Conversational Listening

Active Listening

Deep Listening

(A) Appearing to listen but actually focused elsewhere

(B) Fully engaged, focused on understanding the speaker's words, emotions, and underlying message

(C) Complete presence with empathetic understanding of both content and emotions

(D) Basic back-and-forth exchange with partial attention



Check the listening barriers you sometimes experience:

☐ Identifying (relating everything back to your own experience)

☐ Environmental distractions (noise, uncomfortable setting) ☐ Digital distractions (phones, devices, notifications)

☐ Daydreaming (mind wandering to unrelated thoughts)

☐ Rehearsing (planning what to say next) ☐ Judging (evaluating the speaker instead of understanding)

☐ Advising (thinking about solutions before fully hearing the issue)

☐ Problem-solving (rushing to fix rather than understand) ☐ Filtering (hearing only parts that interest you)

☐ Debating (formulating arguments against what's being said)

For one blocker you checked, write a strategy to overcome it:

Nonverbal Communication



Our nonverbal communication often says more than our words.
For each nonverbal element, describe what positive and negative messages might be conveyed:

Nonverbal Element	Positive Message	Negative Message
Eye contact		
Facial expressions		
Posture		
Gestures		
Personal space		
Voice tone/volume		

Digital Communication



Digital communication presents unique challenges. For each scenario, identify potential problems and solutions:

Your friend seems upset by something you texted, but you meant it as a joke.

Problem:

Solution:

You're in a group chat where the conversation has turned into negative comments about a classmate.

Problem:

Solution:

Conflict Communication



Conflict itself isn't bad—how we communicate during conflict makes the difference. Rate these responses (1-5):

1 = Destructive

5= Constructive

Conflict Communication	Rating
"You always leave me out. You're a terrible friend."	
"I felt hurt when I wasn't included in the lunch plans yesterday."	
"Whatever. It doesn't matter. Do what you want."	
"I'd like to understand your perspective better. Can you explain your reasoning?"	
"Everyone agrees with me on this, so you're obviously wrong."	
"We seem to have different views on this. Let's find a solution that works for both of us."	



Use the conflict below to practice writing good messages that solves the problem:

Situation:

A classmate borrowed your notes but hasn't returned them, and you need them for a test.

Using "I" statements instead of "you" accusations:

Describing the specific behavior without generalizing:

Expressing your feelings about the situation:

Making a clear, reasonable request:

Communication Development Plan



Reflect on your current communication strengths and challenges:

My top communication strengths:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Areas I want to improve:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____



Practice constructing effective messages for conflict situations:

Skill I want to improve:

Why this matters to me:

How I'll practice this skill:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

How I'll know I'm improving:

