

# The Ripples of Respectful Listening

This lesson will provide students with the basic skills and key elements of respectful listening. Use the basic structure provided in this lesson and incorporate unique classroom needs.

## Respect Sub-Concept(s)

Self-Care, Kindness

## Lesson Timeframe

30-35 minutes

## Required Materials

- Lacey Walker, Nonstop Talker* by Christianne Jones
- White board, chalk board, large piece of paper to take notes on in front of the class, Smart Board
- Gold stones for the Kindness Pond. If stones are not available, use pennies or another item.

## Standards Map

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.



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AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM  
FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.  
See last page for details.

## Lesson Objective

Students will:

- Identify key elements of respectful listening.
- Demonstrate respectful listening in small groups and during classmate presentations.

## Teacher Connection/Self-Care

As we dive head on into this unit, take time to ask yourself, “How do I show respect to myself? How do I practice self-care?” You must fill yourself up first before you have anything to offer your students! Try creating one positive goal related to self-care each school day to ensure you are putting your needs at the top of the list. Some examples might be: “I choose to focus solely on eating during my lunch break and not grade papers!” or, “I choose to write a positive affirmation on the board each morning to remind myself (and everyone who reads it) that each one of us is a valuable member of our classroom and school community.”

## Tips for Diverse Learners

- Advanced students may be able to have a short discussion about the difference between hearing and listening: <http://keydifferences.com/difference-between-hearing-and-listening.html>
- ELL students can share how to say the word “listen” in their native language.
- Kinesthetic learners can devise a physical movement or gesture that symbolizes learning and connect it with the dictionary definition.
- Students who come from a culture that does not look someone in the eye when speaking (Native American students may be this way, culturally), encourage them to show they are listening in another way, perhaps by bowing their heads, sitting still, and keeping hands folded or open (as demonstrated below). If students are simply shy, you could encourage them to make some eye contact and to focus their eyes on something that tells the other speaker you are paying attention even if you are not looking right into their eyes.



## Share

5-7 minutes

Write the word SILENT on the board or use cut-out letters that can stick to the board, wall, or felt board; this could also be done digitally if using a Whiteboard.

*Can anyone tell me what this word says?*

Invite student response.

*Yes! This is the word “silent.” Can someone tell us what the word silent means?*

Invite student response.

*Great! When are some times that we are or should be silent? What are we often doing when we are silent?*

Invite student response. Ideally this question prompts students to say “listening”.

*Now, can anyone see the secret word that is hidden in the word “SILENT” if you rearrange the letters? It has to do with what we were just talking about! (This may be tricky for this grade, so the teacher may not want to spend too much time here.) After some guesses, the teacher rewrites, rearranges, or digitally shifts the letters from SILENT to LISTEN.*

*Can someone tell the class what “listen” means?*

Invite student response.

*How are the words silent and listen similar?*

Invite student response.

*What qualities make a good listener?*

Invite student response. Write these qualities on the board or in a visible space.

Ideally student answers will include using their mouth, eyes, arms, legs in some way to go along with the MEAL acronym explained in the Empower section.



## Inspire

10-12 minutes

Explain that today we are going to talk about respectful listening and how we can show kindness to others when we use our whole bodies to listen. Ask the kids to listen to the story using the qualities that you just talked about and wrote down.

Read *Lacey Walker, Nonstop Talker* by Christianne Jones or watch this read aloud <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B98jUpqHBv4&t=>

Questions for discussion:

- What happened when Lacey talked all the time?
- What happened when Lacey had to be silent? What did she learn?
- When we are silent and listen to others, how does that show kindness to the person we are listening to? (This may be a complex question: look for students to talk about giving others a chance to share, about showing we care by being interested in what someone else is interested in, instead of only doing what we are interested in, etc.



## Empower

10-12 minutes

This activity will give students a chance to practice whole body listening, using mouths, eyes, arms, and legs. Follow suggested prompts/dialogue below to facilitate whole body listening instruction and role play.

*Did you know that we use our whole body to listen? We don't only use our ears. We also use our mouths, our eyes, our arms, and our legs! You can remember this by thinking about the word MEAL: Mouth, Eyes, Arms, Legs. This helps us enjoy a conversation with another person just like we might enjoy a really nice meal!*

Here is how you might [model](#) this before kids get started:

Ask for a student volunteer or demonstrate with a classroom helper:

*I am going to ask \_\_\_\_\_ to tell me what (he or she) had for breakfast this morning. Then, I am going to use my eyes, ears, arms, and legs to listen and respond.*

*First, I will use my eyes to look into \_\_\_\_ eyes.*

*Second, I use my mouth to either restate what I heard \_\_\_\_ say or to ask a question about that he/she said. I will also smile!*

*Third, I will use my arms and legs to have an open, inviting posture, like this: (Stand with legs about shoulder distance apart and arms open but down at your side.)*

*This posture tells \_\_\_\_\_ that I am ready to listen to his/her story! If I cross my legs like this (cross your legs) or if I cross my arms like this (cross your arms) or if I am looking off in the distance or frowning, I communicate to \_\_\_\_\_ that I am closed up. I am not ready to listen. So, start a conversation with a nice, open posture, where you look your partner in the eye and smile.*

*Okay! Let's practice!*

Do a short role play with your classroom helper where you model whole-body listening.

*Now it is your turn. I am going to put you into groups of three. There will be a speaker, a listener, and an observer (someone who watches). You will get a*

chance to do all three jobs. I want you to take turns with the speaker and the listener having a short conversation about what you had for breakfast this morning, just like \_\_\_\_\_ and I just did. I want the third member of the group to observe the MEAL taking place between the speaker and the listener. When the conversation is over, the observer tells the group how the listener used his or her mouth, eyes, arms, and legs to listen. Then rotate jobs: the observer becomes the listener, the listener becomes the speaker, and the speaker becomes the observer. Rotate until everyone has done all three jobs. When we are done, we will meet back as a class to talk about what we experienced!



## Reflect

5 minutes

Okay, everyone! Let's review really quickly. What does MEAL stand for? Invite student response.

Great! How do we use our mouths? How do we use our eyes? How do we use our arms and legs? Invite student response after each question.

What are some things you felt when you used whole body listening? When you were a speaker, how did it make you feel to know that someone was truly listening to you? How do we show kindness to others when we listen to them?

Great! We are going to use MEAL and whole body listening in our classroom this year. Do you remember what Lacey got when she was a good listener at school? Yes! She got a gold star! Well, when I see students using good, whole body listening, I am going to put a GOLD stone into our Kindness Pond! If you notice others listening well, you can put a gold stone in the Kindness Pond too during certain parts of our day (maybe morning meeting or at the end of the day). There is a container of them right here by our container of respectful classroom stones. Let's see how many gold stones we can get in our pond, just like we want red kindness stones for respecting ourselves and others. Remember, that when we listen well and listen carefully to others, we are showing them respect, just like we do when we are a helper or when we include others in what we are doing. Our good listening creates ripples that go out and encourage others to listen, too.



## Extension Ideas

- Remember to drop gold stones for acts of respectful listening throughout the month/term. You may want to give students the opportunity to drop gold stones during designated parts of the day: morning meeting, end-of-day wrap up, or before/after lunch, etc.
- You can have students create a MEAL poster as a visual cue for respectful listening that could be hung up in the classroom.
- To make this a math lesson, you could have a set number of stones for "listening" (say, 50 stones) and do a regular "stone count" to help your students see how many stones are in the pond versus left "on shore" in the container.
- To make this a science lesson, you can measure the water line before the stones are dropped and then measure the water line after the stones are dropped to see how much the mass of the stones have displaced the water.



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The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>