

21st Century Skills - Active Listening

Objective: To improve ability to actively listen to a speaker.

Grade Level: Middle School

Time: 45-50 minutes (1 class period)

Materials Needed:

- Topic Cards printed and cut (1 set per pair of students)
- Visible Timer
- Students need something to write their reflections on

1. Warm up (7 minutes)- Ask students to consider what skills they will need to have in their future careers that their grandparents would not need.
 - a. Students will likely come up with technology related ideas
 - b. Introduce the idea that future work places are relying more on communication skills than ever before
 - i. Today we will focus on “Active Listening” - prompt for schema
 1. What is it? When would you use it? Why is it important?
2. Activity (30 minutes) - Students will be assigned as Partner A or Partner B. Partner A will choose a topic card and talk about that topic for 2 minutes while Partner B listens only (no responses, stay focused on the speaker). After 2 minutes, Partner B will summarize what they heard and Partner A will give feedback. Then students switch roles.
 - a. Explain the activity, ask a pair to model
 - b. If needed, provide sentence frames for feedback
 - i. “Nice job, you got the main points!”
 - ii. “You got most of it, but you missed a couple things”
 - iii. “Here are some main points you missed...”
 - c. Pass out the topic cards, make sure students understand their role and set the timer.

- d. Give both partners a chance to do the talking and listening, then prompt a short (5 minute discussion) about what made it easier to actively listen.
 - i. Some ideas may include keeping eye contact on the person talking, noticing if your mind wanders and bringing it back to what the person is saying, etc.
 - ii. Ask the class to write down one thing they think they could do better as an active listener and one strategy for accomplishing that goal.
 - e. Have each partner try a second round with a new topic, utilizing the strategy they identified, and giving feedback again
3. Reflection (7 minutes)- Ask students to reflect in writing on these prompts:
- a. What was easy about this task?
 - b. What was difficult about this task?
 - c. Did you improve the second time around?
 - d. How could you improve more?

Topic Cards

<p>If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?</p>	<p>Who, in the United States, do you think has the coolest job? Why?</p>
<p>What do you think is the most dangerous thing for a teenager and why?</p>	<p>If you could have one super-hero quality, what would it be?</p>
<p>Where would you go and what would you watch if you could be invisible for a day?</p>	<p>What qualities do you look for in a friend?</p>
<p>If your house was burning and you had time to grab one item, what would it be?</p>	<p>What would be the best compliment you could receive?</p>
<p>What is your biggest pet peeve?</p>	<p>Which teacher has made the biggest difference in your life?</p>