SKILL TREE™

6: *The Power of Communication*

7–12

A 7–12 Lesson on Expressing Ideas, Listening Well, and Building Mutual Understanding

Introduction for the Facilitator

This lesson teaches students the essential skill of **communication**, which is the ability to clearly express thoughts, listen actively, and collaborate with others. As teens step into more complex social and academic environments, strong communication becomes one of their most visible and valued abilities.

Communication isn't just about speaking well; it's about listening with intention, understanding body language, asking good questions, and choosing words that build connection and trust. It's a skill that creates opportunities, strengthens relationships, and solves problems before they grow.

It becomes a vital part of each student's **personal competitive advantage**, influencing how they show up in classrooms, workplaces, friendships, and leadership roles. It's also a direct contributor to the kind of **lifestyle** they want—one filled with respect, clarity, and human connection.

This lesson includes:

- **A Real-World Scenario that highlights real communication challenges**
- **8 Group Discussion Questions with follow-ups**
- **8 Journal Prompts (draw or write)**
- **10 practical and reflective communication Activities**
- **A printable Worksheet for communication growth and planning**

CAREER TREE®

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Real-Life Scenario

Your friend seems upset. You ask, "Are you okay?" and they snap, "I'm fine." But their tone says otherwise. You don't know what to say next.

Later, in a group project, someone cuts you off mid-sentence. Again.

You feel invisible. But when you try to speak up, your words come out jumbled—or not at all.

You start to realize: communication isn't just about talking. It's about timing. Awareness. Listening. Confidence.

It's about finding your voice and learning how to use it with purpose and respect so others can use their voices, too.



Group Discussion Questions

1. **What makes someone a strong communicator?**
   Follow-up: What do they do that builds clarity and trust?
2. **Why do misunderstandings happen, even when people are trying to get along?**
   Follow-up: How can we prevent or fix them when they happen?
3. **What's the hardest part of communication for you: speaking, listening, or knowing what to say?**
   Follow-up: What could help in that moment?
4. **Why is body language just as important as words?**
   Follow-up: What mixed signals have you seen or sent before?
5. **How does tone affect a message?**
   Follow-up: Can the same words mean different things depending on how we say them?
6. **How does communication change depending on who we're talking to?**
   Follow-up: How do we stay respectful and clear in different settings with friends, teachers, family, etc.?
7. **How does communication build your personal competitive advantage?**
   Follow-up: How can it affect job interviews, leadership roles, or social trust?
8. **What kind of lifestyle do you want to live?**
   Follow-up: How will strong communication help create and protect that lifestyle?

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Journal Prompts

(Students can write or draw their answers depending on learning style or preference.)

1. **Write or draw about a time you communicated clearly and how it helped the situation.**
2. **Describe a time a misunderstanding created conflict. What would you do differently now?**
3. **What's one thing that helps you speak with more confidence?**
4. **Sketch or describe your "communication style"—how do you tend to talk, listen, or express emotions?**
5. **When is it hardest for you to speak up? What do you usually do?**
6. **What does being a "good listener" look like in action?**
7. **What's one communication skill you want to work on, and why?**
8. **How does strong communication help grow your personal competitive advantage?**

Activities

1. **Tone Check Challenge**
   Say the same sentence ("I didn't say you were wrong") with five different tones. Students guess the meaning based on voice and body language.
2. **Silent Signals**
   Communicate a message using only body language and facial expressions. Then reflect on how much we say without words.
3. **Active Listening Practice**
   In pairs, one student speaks for 2 minutes while the other listens—no interrupting. Then summarize what they heard. Switch roles.
4. **Message Relay Game**
   A phrase is whispered down a line of students Compare the original vs. final message and discuss how clarity breaks down.
5. **Communication Conflict Skits**
   Small groups act out miscommunication scenarios, then replay them with stronger communication tools.
6. **Fill the Gap Exercise**
   Share vague messages ("I'm fine," "Whatever") and ask students to rewrite them with clarity and emotional honesty.
7. **Nonverbal Feedback Round**
   Practice giving and receiving silent feedback using nods, eye contact, posture, and facial expressions. Discuss what felt clear or unclear.
8. **Communication Self-Assessment**
   Students rate themselves in areas like clarity, tone, listening, body language. Then choose one skill to strengthen.
9. **Conversation Builders**
   Provide students with open-ended sentence starters ("What do you think about...?" "Tell me more about...") to help build deeper conversations.
10. **The 3-Step Talk Tool**
    Teach this strategy: 1) What I see, 2) How I feel, 3) What I need. Practice using it in mock situations.

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My Communication Toolkit

Name:

Helpful Words:

- **Communication** = expressing myself and listening to others with clarity and respect
- **Lifestyle Goal** = the kind of life I want to live
- **Personal Competitive Advantage** = the strengths that help me connect, collaborate, and lead

Directions:
Use **words or drawings** to reflect on your communication growth.

Use the back of this sheet if you need more space.

1. **One strength I have as a communicator is:**

2. **One area I want to improve is:**

3. **A strategy I can use when I feel misunderstood is:**

4. **Here's what "good listening" looks like to me:**

5. **My Communication Superpower helps me do these things:**

6. **Strong communication helps me grow my personal competitive advantage by:**

7. **This is how communication supports the lifestyle I want to live:**

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