



**Future Ready Pathways for  
School, Work and Life**

# **Communication & Leadership**

*Lessons for lower  
elementary students  
aged 5-8*

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# Communication & Leadership

*Lessons for lower elementary students  
aged 5-8*

Editors:  
Janna Nobleza  
Suresh Korapati  
Andrew Culley  
Emelen De Jesus

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# Teacher/Parent Guide

## Welcome

Communication and leadership are skills children begin developing from a very young age—often long before they have the words to explain what they are doing. This workbook is designed to help kindergarten through 2nd grade students explore what it means to listen carefully, share ideas, make fair choices, and positively influence the people around them.

This workbook can be used in classrooms, small groups, or at home, and is designed to support ongoing conversations about communication, leadership, and everyday decision-making. The goal is not to create “leaders” in a traditional sense, but to help children understand that they already practice leadership every day—through listening, speaking, and caring about how their choices impact others.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of these lessons, students will be able to:

- Recognize that leadership begins with listening and practice whole-body listening, including waiting their turn and using silence to pay attention.
- Understand that their voice matters and practice sharing ideas clearly, confidently, and respectfully.
- Use simple reasoning words, such as because, to explain their thoughts and opinions.
- Ask curious and respectful questions to learn more, include others, and make fair choices.
- Understand the importance of honesty, fairness, and inclusion when making decisions that affect others.
- Recognize that choices have an impact and begin to understand how actions can influence people around them.
- Take responsibility for their actions, including acknowledging mistakes and working to make things right.
- Practice leading by helping others, compromising, and using kind, encouraging words rather than bossy or controlling behavior.
- Understand that leadership is not about being in charge, but about communicating, listening, and making choices that support the group.

These objectives support students in building foundational communication and leadership skills in ways that are concrete, developmentally appropriate, and meaningful for early elementary learners.



# Teacher/Parent Guide

## Learning Rationale

Communication and leadership are foundational skills that support children’s social, emotional, and academic growth. In kindergarten through second grade, students are learning how to listen, express ideas, make choices, and understand how their actions affect others. These early experiences shape how children communicate, solve problems, and participate in group settings.

When young learners are explicitly taught how to listen attentively, share their voice respectfully, and make thoughtful decisions, they begin to understand that leadership is not about control or authority, but about responsibility and care for others. Students learn that their words, choices, and actions have an impact—and that they can use these skills to contribute positively to their classroom and community.

Building early communication and leadership skills helps:



Develop strong communication skills: Students practice listening, speaking clearly, and asking questions to understand others and share ideas.



Encourage confidence without dominance: Children learn to use their voice in calm, respectful ways while recognizing the importance of turn-taking and fairness.



Support responsible decision-making: Students begin to understand that choices have consequences and learn to think about how decisions affect others.



Promote fairness and inclusion: Learners explore what it means to be honest, fair, and inclusive in everyday situations.



Build accountability and influence: Children practice taking responsibility for their actions and recognize that their behavior can influence peers.



Lay the foundation for ethical leadership: Early experiences with listening, helping, and cooperation prepare students to lead with care and integrity.



# An Introduction for Teachers & Parents

These lessons are designed for lower elementary students (ages 5–8) and can be used in classrooms, homeschool settings, or small learning groups. Each lesson includes a short, guided reading section for an adult to introduce communication and leadership concepts, followed by hands-on activities that help children practice listening, speaking, making choices, and helping others in developmentally appropriate ways.

## The lessons are:

**Flexible** – Each lesson includes multiple activities so you can choose the ones that best meet the needs of your learners. Optional discussion prompts, drawing activities, and simple role-play scenarios allow the lessons to be used as stand-alone experiences or as part of a consistent weekly routine.

**Engaging** – Lessons use a variety of activity types—such as picture-based scenarios, sorting tasks, drawing prompts, partner discussions, and real-life examples—to keep children interested and help leadership and communication skills feel meaningful and accessible.

**Practical** – The skills children practice—such as listening carefully, sharing ideas clearly, asking questions, making fair choices, taking responsibility, and helping others—can be applied immediately at school and at home. These are everyday skills that support positive participation in group settings and classroom communities.



You do not need to be an expert in teaching communication or leadership skills to use this pack. Simply read the sections labeled **“A teacher, parent, or older sibling should read this”** aloud, guide the conversation, and support children as they complete each activity. The icon in the margin will show you exactly what to read out loud.

The goal of this pack is to help children understand that leadership is something they practice every day—through listening, using their voice respectfully, making thoughtful choices, and caring about how their actions affect others. By developing these skills early, children build confidence, responsibility, and the ability to positively influence the world around them.



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# Universal Design for Learning

## Overview

This workbook is designed using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to ensure that all children—with different strengths, needs, learning styles, language backgrounds, and abilities—can access, engage with, and benefit from the lessons.

UDL recognizes that children learn in different ways. Some learn best by talking, others by drawing or moving, and others by watching, listening, or doing. This pack intentionally provides multiple ways for children to engage with ideas about listening, communication, responsibility, fairness, and leadership. Adults can adjust how activities are completed without changing the learning goals.

The goal is access for all learners—not one “right” way to participate.

## Multiple Means of Engagement

(How students stay interested and motivated)

- Lessons include a variety of activity types such as sorting, matching, drawing, role-play, partner work, movement, quiet reflection, and discussion.
- Students are given choice whenever possible (which example to respond to, how to share, whether to draw or speak).
- Activities are short and flexible, allowing adults to adjust pacing based on attention span, energy level, or emotional readiness.
- Real-life classroom and home scenarios help children connect learning to their daily experiences.
- Lessons balance active participation with calm moments (such as silence activities), supporting different energy needs.

## Multiple Means of Representation

(How information is presented and understood)

- Key ideas are presented using simple language, clear visuals, icons, and repeated phrases.
- Anchor picture books introduce concepts through storytelling before abstract discussion.
- Visual supports (faces, symbols, body icons, checklists) reinforce understanding.
- Concepts are repeated across activities to strengthen memory and comprehension.
- Sentence starters and modeling help make expectations predictable and clear.



# Universal Design for Learning

## Multiple Means of Action and Expression

(How students show what they know)

Students can demonstrate understanding by:

- Drawing
- Coloring
- Matching
- Pointing
- Acting
- Speaking
- Using gestures
- Dictating responses to an adult

Writing is never required to demonstrate understanding.

Role-play, partner practice, and hands-on activities allow children to practice communication and leadership skills in low-pressure ways.

## Flexible Use Across Settings

There is no required order for activities within a lesson. Adults may:

- Shorten activities
- Combine activities
- Revisit activities multiple times
- Skip or modify components based on learner needs

The learning goals remain the same, even when the format changes.

## Emotional Safety and Developmental Support

Lessons are designed to promote growth without shame or pressure.

- Behavior is discussed in terms of choices and impact, not labels.
- Mistakes are framed as part of learning and improvement.
- Students are never required to share personal experiences.
- Adults are encouraged to observe and listen before correcting.
- Participation options allow children to respond through characters, drawings, or fictional scenarios instead of personal stories.



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# Pre-Assessment



# Pre-Assessment Lesson Plan

## Learning Objectives

By the end of the pre-assessment activity, students will:

1. Show what they already understand about listening, sharing ideas, and working with others.
2. Demonstrate how they currently use their voice to express thoughts, needs, or opinions.
3. Reveal how they make choices in group situations and how they respond when decisions affect others.
4. Show how they currently take responsibility for their actions, including how they respond to mistakes.
5. Establish a baseline understanding of early communication and leadership skills before beginning the lessons.

## Learning Rationale

The pre-assessment helps teachers and parents understand how students currently communicate, listen, and make choices in everyday situations. Young children vary widely in their ability to express ideas, wait their turn, consider others, and take responsibility, and these differences often influence group dynamics and classroom routines. This activity is not a test; it is an opportunity to observe, listen, and begin meaningful conversations about leadership as it shows up in daily interactions.

### **By exploring what students already know and do, adults can:**

- Tailor instruction to each child's strengths and areas of need, ensuring the lessons meet learners where they are.
- Identify habits or misunderstandings that may be impacting communication, such as interrupting, avoiding responsibility, or using a bossy tone instead of collaborative language.
- Document growth in listening, communication, responsibility, and influence across the unit.
- Encourage self-awareness by helping students recognize the leadership skills they already use and the ones they will continue to develop.
- Create a supportive environment that emphasizes learning, growth, and positive influence rather than perfection or control.



# Pre-Assessment Lesson Plan

## Step 1: Introduce the Activity

- “Today we’re going to think about how we listen, share our ideas, make choices, and work with other people. These are skills we are all still learning, and everyone gets better with practice. There are no right or wrong answers — we just want to see what you already know and do.”
- Show the response icons ( happy face, thinking face, confused/upset face).
- Explain: “When I read a statement, point to or circle the face that shows how well you understand or do this in your everyday work.”

## Step 2: Read Statements Aloud

Read each statement slowly, pointing to the icons.

## Step 3: Clarify the Format

- If working individually: Students can circle or mark the face that matches their answer.
- If working in a group: Students can point to the face they agree with.

## Step 4: Optional Discussion

- After each statement, you may ask quick, open-ended questions, such as:
  - “What does listening look like to you?”
  - “How do you share your ideas with others?”
  - “What do you do when you want something different from a friend?”
  - “How do you decide what the fair thing to do is?”
  - “What do you do when you make a mistake?”
  - “How do you help others when you notice they need help?”
- Do not correct their answers — just observe and listen. This is not a teaching moment yet; it is for learning about their current skills and habits.

## Step 5: Record Insights

- Adults may take notes about student responses, patterns, or areas of uncertainty. This information will serve as a baseline for understanding students’ communication, responsibility, and leadership skills throughout the unit.

## Step 6: Set the Tone

- Reassure students: “You’ll be learning lots of new ways to listen, use your voice, make fair choices, and help others.”
- Keep the activity light, positive, and playful. The goal is to build awareness, not judgment.

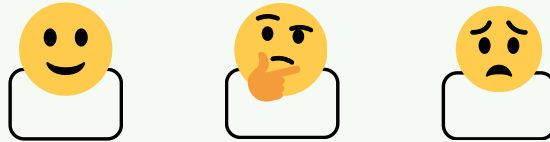


# Pre-Assessment

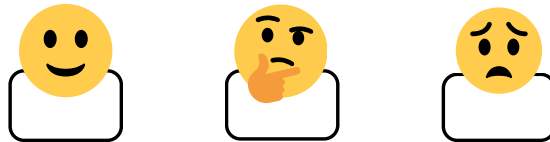
For each statement below, rate how well you understand the idea by choosing one of the following:

- I understand this well 😊
- I am not sure if I understand this 🤔
- I don't understand this well 😞

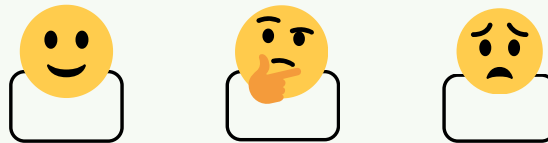
**I know how to listen with my whole body.**



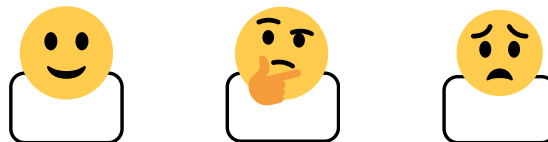
**I can wait my turn to speak.**



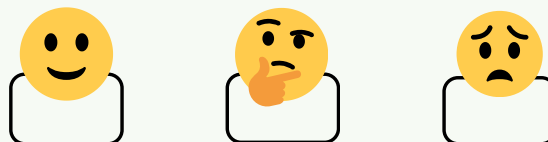
**I know that being quiet can help me listen better.**



**I can share my ideas with others.**



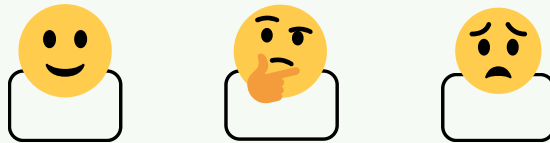
**I can explain my ideas by saying because.**



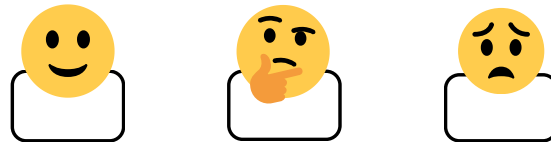


## Pre-Assessment

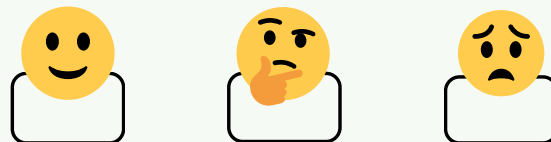
I know how to make fair choices.



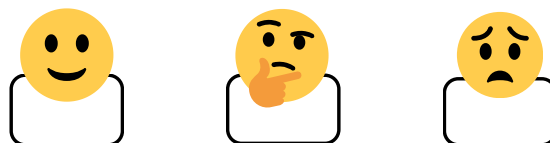
I can ask questions to learn more or include others.



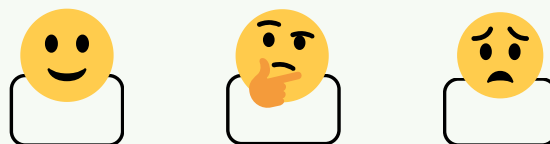
I know that my choices can affect other people.



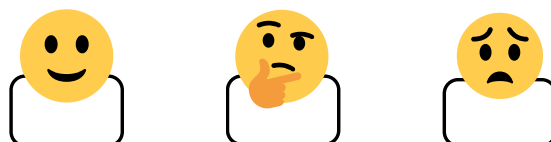
I can take responsibility when I make a mistake.



I can work with others even when we want different things.



I know that leaders help and include others.





# Lesson 1

# The Listening Detective

## **Essential Question**

How does listening help us learn, work together, and lead?

## **Core Idea**

Good leaders listen carefully. Listening includes using our whole body, noticing others, and sometimes choosing silence so we can understand what is happening around us.



# Lesson Plan: The Listening Detective

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Recognize that listening is an important leadership skill.
2. Identify what whole-body listening looks like and sounds like.
3. Practice waiting for their turn to speak.
4. Understand that silence can help them listen and think.
5. Demonstrate listening behaviors during discussions and activities.

## Learning Rationale

Listening is a foundational communication skill and one of the earliest ways children practice leadership. In kindergarten through second grade, students are still developing attention, impulse control, and awareness of others. Explicit instruction helps make listening visible, concrete, and meaningful for young learners.

By learning to listen with their whole body and use silence intentionally, students begin to understand that leadership is not only about speaking or taking action, but also about noticing, waiting, and understanding others. These skills support classroom participation, cooperation, and positive group interactions.

Teaching listening skills early helps:

- Support classroom routines and group learning.
- Reduce interruptions and misunderstandings.
- Build respect and patience during conversations.
- Lay the groundwork for confident speaking, fair decision-making, and collaborative leadership in later lessons.

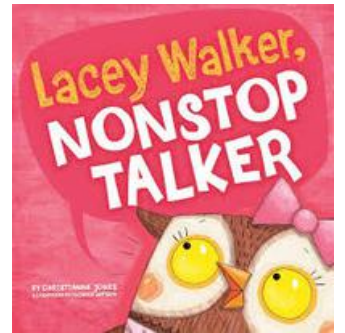
This lesson establishes listening as the first step in communication and leadership, helping students see that effective leaders begin by paying attention.



# Lesson Plan: The Listening Detective

## Materials Needed:

- The anchor text: **Lacey Walker, Nonstop Talker** by Christianne Jones
  - If you don't have a copy, you can use a free YouTube reading of this book. Here is one example: [https://youtu.be/4ZkAQxl7htl\\_si=I\]Q|u|HTn9loO8X](https://youtu.be/4ZkAQxl7htl_si=I]Q|u|HTn9loO8X)
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers



## Lesson Plan

Read the **Student Lesson** out loud. The lesson will lead you into reading *Lacey Walker, Nonstop Talker*, with optional questions you can ask before, during, and after you read.

### Activity 1: Listening Detective Clues

- Read the directions to your students.
- Allow students to point instead of speaking their answers.
- Model language: “I see eyes looking. That’s a listening clue.”
- For students with attention needs: Limit to 2–3 scenarios
- You can also complete this orally instead of on paper.

### Activity 2: Whole-Body Listening Match

- Read the directions to your students.
- Act out each body part together before starting
- Allow students to:
  - Match orally
  - Point instead of writing
- For sensory needs:
  - Allow quiet fidgets
  - Focus on “listening body” rather than stillness
- Emphasize: listening looks different for different people



# Lesson Plan: The Listening Detective

## Lesson Plan Continued...

### Activity 3: Draw a Listening Detective

- Read the directions to your students.
- Accept:
  - Stick figures
  - Labels
  - Oral explanations instead of drawings
- For students who struggle with drawing:
  - Let them circle features using pre-drawn body outlines
- Reinforce effort, not accuracy
- If your students are able, let them finish the sentence stem after they complete their drawing. Non-writers may finish the sentence verbally.

### Activity 4: Sound Detective

- Read the directions to your students.
- Keep silence brief (10–30 seconds)
- Let students:
  - Whisper responses
  - Draw instead of speak
- For students sensitive to sound:
  - Let them keep eyes open
  - Sit near the teacher
- Emphasize noticing, not naming “correct” sounds

### Activity 5: Advice for Lacey

- Read the directions to your students.
- Model one example of kind advice before students begin.
- Keep expectations simple (one sentence, short phrase, or drawing).
- Provide sentence starters if needed:
  - “Lacey, try to...”
  - “You could...”
  - “Remember to...”
- If students give advice in a harsh tone (“Stop talking!”), gently model how to rephrase it kindly.



# Universal Design for Learning

## Lesson 1: The Listening Detective

**Multiple Means of Representation** - How information is presented

- Read all directions and scenarios aloud.
- Model listening behaviors before asking students to practice.
- Keep whole-body listening visuals visible during activities.
- Use icons and simple cues ( eyes looking, ears listening, mouth quiet) to reinforce meaning.
- Break instructions into short, clear steps.
- Connect activities back to the anchor book (Lacey Walker, Nonstop Talker) for context.

Reminder: Demonstrating what listening looks like is often more effective than describing it.

**Multiple Means of Engagement** - How students stay motivated and involved

- Offer choice in response format (draw, circle, point, act, speak).
- Allow partner or small-group discussion before whole-group sharing.
- Keep listening practice short and interactive.
- Balance movement activities with calm moments of silence.
- Frame listening mistakes as part of learning and growth.
- Encourage students to notice effort, not perfection.

Reminder: Some students need movement or fidgets to listen effectively. Listening does not always mean being perfectly still.

**Multiple Means of Action & Expression** - How students show what they know

Students may demonstrate understanding by:

- Drawing a Listening Detective
- Circling or pointing to listening behaviors
- Acting out whole-body listening
- Sharing verbally with a partner
- Using gestures
- Dictating ideas to an adult

Writing is never required to demonstrate understanding.

Reminder: Focus on awareness of listening behaviors, not compliance or stillness.



# The Listening Detective



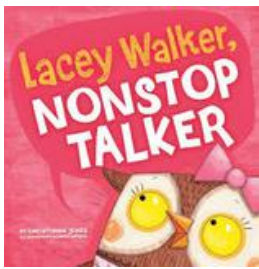
**A teacher, parent, or older sibling should read this:**

Communication is how we share ideas, learn from others, and work together. One important part of communication is listening. Listening helps us understand what other people are saying and how they are feeling.

Listening is more than just hearing words. We can listen with our whole body—using our eyes, ears, brain, and body to pay attention. Sometimes, being quiet and waiting our turn helps us listen better. Silence can help us notice important things we might miss if we are talking.

Good leaders are good listeners. They listen before they speak. They wait, notice, and try to understand others. When we practice listening, we help our classroom and our friendships feel calm, fair, and welcoming.

Now let's read a story about a girl named Lacey who loves to talk. As we read, think about how listening (or not listening) affects Lacey and the people around her.



**A teacher, parent, or older sibling should read *Lacey Walker, Nonstop Talker*.**

Before Reading.

- What do you think “nonstop talker” means?
- Why do you think listening might be important?

During Reading.

*(Choose 2–3 per reading so it stays quick and engaging.)*

- How does Lacey act at the beginning of the story?
- What clues show that Lacey is not listening?
- How do other people feel when Lacey keeps talking?
- What happens when Lacey loses her voice?
- What does Lacey start to notice when she is quiet?

After Reading.

- How did being quiet help Lacey understand others?
- How did the people around Lacey feel when she started listening?
- What are some ways you can be a Listening Detective at school or at home?



### Activity 1: Listening Detective Clues

Look at each picture. Decide if the person is listening or not listening. Circle the picture that shows good listening. Can you explain what clues helped you decide if the person is listening or not?

